

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE



Shepherd of the Valley Evangelical Lutheran Church

1455 East Yosemite Avenue, Merced CA 95340 209-383-0632

Our Mission Statement: To be loving Christians, centered in God's Word and serving one's neighbor.

Our Vision Statement: Accepting people where they are and loving them as God does.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

STAFF

Pastor John Russell-Curry
jrussellcurry@comcast.net

Administrative Assistant:
Carolyn Daberkow
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com

Office Hours
8:00 – 11:00 AM Monday-Friday

web page: www.thesovlutheran.net
Also on Facebook

Council President:
David Cherf
Home: 209-725-0921
Cell: 209-489-7757
djcherf@yahoo.com

Sunday worship is live on Zoom at 10:00 AM and in-person in sanctuary. (See updates on calendar & SOV Weekly News emails.)

Please have your articles for the newsletter sent each month by the 15th to:
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com
Thank you.

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE newsletter is available as a paper copy for pickup, mailed, or sent as an email attachment, or viewed on the website.

ELCA Statements and information are available on the web sites: Sierra Pacific Synod, spselca.org, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, elca.org.

"Nobody lives in their own house," I was told at seminary.

A family's house is identified by naming the previous occupants. ("Oh, you're in the old So-in-so's house.") The next occupant will be living in the Russell-Curry house.

A house will be judged and compared to what was previously presented. ("Oh, yeah, I see what you have done. That's where the Russell-Currys would put their Christmas tree...")

My wife has recently inherited her mother's house. Everything being addressed as accommodating our current living situation will be measured by what the Currys did.

I have recently inherited a pastorship.

I might ask, "What has been done for Advent or Lent?" I might be told what was done when Pastor Dorothy was here.

Histories of houses "live" lives that are fluid. Life, by definition, entails change – for better or worse. Current inhabitants are open to change, if the history has been considered.

I might hear, "Oh, that might be a good idea. I think people would like that."

I might hear, "That won't work. We tried that back when Pastor So-And-So was here."

Ultimately, the house in which we live belongs to only One (past, present, or future). The facility and the mission of our congregation is God's house. Our lives will continue to have only one focus – and that is the intent for God's creating in this "neighborhood".

Where is it that you live?

Pastor John



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:
Joel Knox; Betty Madsen; Gleneda Mural; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Karen Darby; Eric Smith; Gleneda Mural's niece, Shereida; Lynette Figueroa; Nan Dailey; Kimberly Castillo's daughter Jillian and mother-in-law Lupe; Pam Andersen; Pastor John Russell-Curry and his family; Warren Westerberg; Jan & Joe Collins; Dottie Andersen; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Penny Waha; Annie Sofranek; Susanne Smith; David Cherf; and people who are ill around the world.

We lift prayers for our Benevolence of the Month, **Scholarship Fund**, and for our Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop, **Jeff Johnson**.

The names on the Prayer List may be removed at the end of each month unless the office is notified that you would like them left on for another month. Please leave a message at the office, 209-383-0632. Thank you.

GROWING IN FAITH THROUGH PRAYER

There are many different spiritual activities that help us grow in our faith. Our participation in worship, reading scripture, and prayer are common practices and essential for the Christian journey, and here at SOV we have opportunities to do all of these and more.

One opportunity for prayer at our church is the Centering Prayer group. There are a variety of ways to pray (no one right way) and Centering Prayer is a modern meditative practice that emphasizes the ancient Christian tradition of silence. It is a simple practice that helps to quiet our minds and consent to the action and presence of God in our lives.

After breaking for the holidays, the Centering Prayer group will resume its weekly meetings on Wednesday, January 3rd, at 9:00 am, here at the church. Participants include SOV members and members of several other faith groups. Newcomers are welcome to come and check it out. For more specific information and to ask questions, call Dave at 209 489-8969.



COUNCIL NEWS
December 11, 2023

A computer is being looked into for the church's secretary.

A banner for the front of the church that will say "Sundays:10am" is being purchased.

A meeting with Healthy House and the council will be set up to discuss topics.

Committees will be made with Head Chairmen for when questions arise about said committees.

A nominating committee will be put together in January to help with collecting names of nominees from the congregation for the changing of the council.

Financial Secretary Report

The new offering envelope boxes, to begin using January 7, 2024, were placed in the narthex on December 17, 2023. Please take the box with your family unit name and specific number, to share your generosity and stewardship in giving on a regular basis: weekly, monthly, or annually.

Twenty family unit pledges have been received and designated for giving in 2024 as of December 14, 2023, for a total of \$63,400.

Additional 2024 pledge letters and envelope boxes are available by request.

Your 2024 offerings will support the ongoing expenses of our congregation.

The 2023 Giving Reports, for tax purposes, will be available for pick up or will be mailed by January 28, 2024.

Thank you.

Christine Boyenga, Financial Secretary

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Karen Chastain	01/03
Elizabeth Sofranek	01/14
Connie McBride	01/15
Analise Gallaway	01/20
Eleanor Roduner	01/23
Jeane Hetland	01/25
Rosie Sullivan	01/25
Elizabeth Patterson	01/25
Melissa Stephens	01/26
Briana Hamamoto-Hardman	01/30
Keira Hamrah	01/30

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Kurt Faust	02/03
Armando Campos III	02/04
Hunter Boyenga	02/07
“Bud” Richard Roduner	02/08
Curtis Boyenga	02/13
Tim Dailey	02/18
Dimitri Hamrah	02/18
Marc Medefind	02/18/
Pam Andersen	02/19
Carrie O’Bara	02/20
Pat Shaw	02/24
Syd Saldivar	02/25
Adam Campos	02/28

Baptism of Our Lord	January 7
Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11	White
Second Sunday after Epiphany	January 14
1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20] Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51	Green
Third Sunday after Epiphany	January 21
Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20	Green
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	January 28
Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm 111 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Mark 1:21-28	Green

LUNCHEON RECEPTION

We are so very blessed and so very happy to announce the marriages of our daughters, Sarah to Blaze the past year, November 2023 and Amy to Rvee this month January 2024.

We would like to invite our church family to a lunch reception to celebrate them after the church service on Sunday, January 14, 2024. No gifts please. Your presence is their present.

Love in Christ,
Dave & Annie Sofranek

CALL COMMITTEE “CURRENTS”

At the Special Congregational Meeting held December 3, 2023, attendees voted and approved Pastor John Russell-Curry to serve a Call as our Minister of Word and Sacrament. The Compensation package for his half-time position was also approved to begin January 1, 2024.

Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop Jeff Johnson came and presided at Communion during the morning worship service and shared encouragement and prayers during the meeting.

The “Current” Call Committee of 2023 is looking forward to working together in planning the Installation of Pastor John in January, with a date to be announced.

May God be with all of us as we move forward together into 2024.

Chris Boyenga, Chair; 209-769-8544, chrisboyeng@aol.com; Jeane Hetland, Vice Chair; Mary Jo Knudsen, Secretary; Candice Medefind; Tim Shaw; Judy Westerberg; Marit Medefind Bond, Alternate

PROPERTY REPORT

December 11, 2023

HVACS: Haven't had any more problems from the 10 HVAC units.

GARAGE: Garage door being used by Healthy House still giving some problems. Did some straightening up in our 2 garages.

FENCE: We are watching a section of fence.

OUTDOOR LIGHTS: Still have 8 bulbs that need to be put in.

INDOOR LIGHTS: We are still replacing the old fluorescent bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs. This takes time to remove the ballasts and rewire the fixtures.

SPRINKLERS: Will need to replace some in the front courtyard. Need to find leak in center 'round' planter. Leak in main box in front. Called on but no response yet.

POWER POINT, ZOOM, PA SYSTEM: We have a constant 60-70 views of our weekly services on ZOOM and later on Facebook. Power Point issue was resolved.

HOMELESS: Had a couple of small fires set by secretary's door that were cleaned up. Disconnected and shut off courtyard outlets.

GROUNDS: Steve continues to water the tree by garage. 2 trees will need to be removed.

All seems to be going good, we have been fixing problems as they arise and as always are looking forward to starting new and finishing old projects.

David Cherf, Property Manager
cell/text: (209) 489-7757
home: (209) 725-0921

SOV WORSHIP SERVICES ARE ON FACEBOOK

Our worship services can be seen any day, at any time, on Facebook. Just type in the search box "Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Merced" and you will see the church listed. Click on our church and our Facebook page appears, with all the services.

We encourage you to send the service to your family and friends by clicking on the "SHARE" icon below the picture, and then use "Share to your friends" or "Send in Messenger" service.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

January & February Benevolence Scholarship Fund

Our benevolence for January and February is our Scholarship fund. Until COVID, our funding was primarily through estate sales; however, for the past few years there have been few opportunities for ways to support this endeavor. In 2023, we awarded two scholarships to Merced College students, and one scholarship to Amy Sofranek. These students are always so appreciative of our help, and we are grateful to our church family for their support of this worthwhile project.

Shepherd of the Valley Website

www.thesovlutheran.net

The website is active and being monitored by Carolyn Daberkow, Administrative Assistant. Take a little time to review the website. Any suggestions/articles and/or photos may be shared with Jeane Hetland to be reviewed for placement.

You will find the links to the Zoom gatherings by clicking on ABOUT US, click on WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES and click on the long link. You will need the Zoom app downloaded to your phone, tablet, or computer first.

Thanks go to Carolyn Daberkow, along with Jeane Hetland for the continuing updates.

ANNUAL FISCAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The meeting will be held January 28, 2024, at 11:15 AM in Lineberger Hall. A nominating committee will be formed of five voting members of the congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing council members, to compile a slate for election of members to serve on the Congregational Council.

There will also be an election of voting members and alternates to assemblies of the Sierra Pacific Synod and Conference.

Please prayerfully consider serving on the nominating committee, the Council, or be willing to attend the assemblies.

Watch for more information.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Term ends May 2024

Pam Andersen
 David John Cherf II
 Marc Medefind
 Carolyn Stephens

Term ends May 2025

David Cherf
 Jan Collins
 Steven Hand
 Mary Jo Knudsen

Tim Shaw – Interim Treasurer & Bookkeeper
 Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary
 Audit Committee: Karen Arnold, Chris Tomford, and Barb Ward

2023-2024 Council Officers

President: David Cherf Vice-President: Carolyn Stephens
 Secretary: David John Cherf II

*Next Meeting Date: **Monday, January 8 6:00 PM***

JANUARY SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

To help serve the glory of God in worship - please contact Chris Boyenga, 209-759-8544 to participate as Greeter, Usher, or Reader/Assisting Minister for our 10 A.M. Sunday Worship Service.

	Sunday January 7	Sunday January 14	Sunday January 21	Sunday January 28
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>
Ushers	<i>Al Arnold</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Tim & Pat Shaw</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>

**SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	New Year's Day Office Closed		Centering Prayer 9 AM		SOV Weekly News sent via email	Church Clean-up 9 AM
	8	9	10	11	12	13
Worship 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Council Meeting 6 PM		Centering Prayer 9 AM		SOV Weekly News sent via email	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Worship: 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom After Service Lunch Reception	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Office Closed		Centering Prayer 9 AM		SOV Weekly News sent via email	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Worship 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom			Centering Prayer 9 AM		SOV Weekly News sent via email	
28	29	30	31			
Worship: 10:00 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Annual Fiscal Meeting 11:15 AM			Centering Prayer 9 AM			



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED