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.

STAFF

Pastor John Russell-Curry
jrussellcurry@comcast.net

Administrative Assistant:
Carolyn Daberkow
shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com
209-383-0632
Office Hours
8:00 – 11:00 AM Monday-Friday

web page: www.thesovlutheran.net
Also on Facebook

Council President:
Barb Ward
Cell: 209-617-7592
barbew4352@aol.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.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

"Do You Want Your Arm Broken?"

Special occasion. Nice restaurant. Good ambiance. Great food. Waitress approaches asking, "Would you like to see a dessert menu?"

"Well, sure. How about you, Pattee?

"I'm kind of full. Would you like to share a dessert?"

*"Share?! Do you **not** see I'm holding a fork and a sharp steak knife? I dare you to try!"*

At Synod functions, combined Lutheran/Episcopalian congregations are beginning to be the "norm".

At the most recent Council meeting, we were asked about "sharing". The Church of the Resurrection introduced a new bishop who promoted increased sharing of church activities with us. We already do some sharing with special services and occasions.

Members all agreed to seek opportunities to share with worship and activities.

We were also challenged to provide increased use of our outdoor pavilion with such groups as Healthy House.

We can promote services like *Lessons and Carols, Good Friday*, and animal blessings with other congregations and the community.

Building on the success of the knitting group, we "ok'd" a request to begin/support a sewing group.

U.C. Merced student groups are to be considered for mission efforts.

We are being asked, "Would you like to see a dessert menu?"

We have plenty to share and plenty to gain… can we share?

Pastor John



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:
Ken Sullivan; Dave Bettis; Family of Carol Linneman; Jan Collins; Brad Brandstad; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Eric Smith; Gleneda Muralt's niece, Shereida; Nan Dailey; Kimberly Castillo's daughter Jillian and mother-in-law Lupe; Pam Andersen; Pastor John Russell-Curry and his family; Warren Westerberg; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Annie Sofranek; David Cherf; and people who are ill around the world.

We lift prayers for our Benevolence of the Month**, Senior Brown Bag Program** 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.

PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests, please contact Pam Andersen at 209-631-4594 to start the Prayer Chain.

IN MEMORIAM

Long-time member Carol Linneman passed away on August 15, 2026.

A Memorial will be held Saturday, November 7, 1:00-4:00 at Vista Ranch, 7326 East CA-140, Merced.

Her daughter's address is:
Jessica Maggard
5595 Lakeshore Drive
Littleton, CO 80123

Church Council Highlights

Chris Love, Council Secretary
Council met on Monday, October 12

Sierra Club Facilities is renting Lineberger Hall and kitchen for Saturday, January 23rd from 6-9 pm; facilities use contract will be signed prior.

Financial Committee will meet in November, prior to January Congregational Meeting.

Mona provided Synod Zoom report.

Pastor is preparing and looking forward to Advent lessons.

Alan Arnold, our property manager, has made or overseen many repairs to restrooms, lights, fire system; also our extinguishers are serviced, and a back pew was removed for accessibility to members. Thank You!

Neighboring fence is being repaired.

A stewardship letter will be sent in October prior to our Thankfest on November 22nd.

A Thankfest Sign Up poster will be displayed; sign up and come enjoy a great meal after the worship service.

Piano tuning will be done yearly prior to Advent.

Check out our Website Updates: 2026 Blessing of the Animals is posted; fun event!

The Fall clean-up is scheduled for Friday and Saturday November 13th & 14th, 8 am – noon. Friday inside, Saturday, outside. Any and All help is appreciated!

We are so blessed and love seeing new people in our pews and others via Zoom. God bless you this season.

AAUW Sew and Sip Meeting
Sunday, November 8, 3:30 – 5:30 PM

The AAUW Sew and Sip group meets on the second weekend of the month, alternating between Saturdays and Sundays. The group will not be meeting in December. For more information, contact Lora Burnett.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Tim Shaw	11/02
Ana Boyenga	11/04
Gwen Cherf	11/06
Karen Goldsmith	11/06
John Pruett	11/07
Danica Christofferson	11/13
Kylie Christofferson	11/13
Dominic Basso	11/23

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Poupard	12/07
Dave Sofranek	12/09
Eileen Fite	12/12
Erin Ward	12/15
Candice Medefind	12/16
David Bettis	12/17
Janell Wilkerson	12/26
Cary Yanagi	12/27
Lynn Tatum	12/31

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The birthday luncheon will not be held in November and December.
Watch for more information as to where we will meet in January.

REMINDER

All SOV members who enter the church during the week are reminded to double and triple-check that doors are locked when leaving.
Thanks so much.

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

All Saints Day	**November 1**
Revelation 7:9-17	
Psalm 34:1-10, 22	
1 John 3:1-3	
Matthew 5:1-12	White
Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost	**November 8**
Amos 5:18-24 or Wisdom 6:12-16	
Psalm 70 or Wisdom 6:17-20	
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	
Matthew 25:1-13	Green
Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Pentecost	**November 15**
Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18	
Psalm 90:1-8 (9-11) 12	
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	
Matthew 25:14-30	Green
Christ the King	**November 22**
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24	
Psalm 95:1-7a	
Ephesians 1:15-23	
Matthew 25:31-46	White
First Sunday of Advent	**November 29**
Isaiah 64:1-9	
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	
1 Corinthians 1:3-9	
Mark 13:24-37	Blue

Shepherd of the Valley Website

The website is active and being monitored by Carolyn Daberkow, Administrative Assistant. Take a little time to review the website.

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.

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.

. **STEWARDSHIP NEWS**

The Stewardship Pledge Drive is in November. You will soon be receiving a pledge letter in the mail. We would appreciate it if you would prayerfully consider your pledge for 2027. Every pledge is important as it helps the Finance Committee plan next year's budget.

IT'S THANKFEST TIME AGAIN!

As we culminate our Stewardship drive in November, we traditionally celebrate with a potluck lunch together after worship. We will be doing the same again this year so get out your best recipes and bring something to share. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex leading up to our Thankfest on
Sunday, November 22nd.

Fall Clean Up

It's time to give the church a good scrubbing before the holidays. Please join us on Friday & Saturday, November 13-14 from 8:00-noon to spruce up the church inside and out. We will concentrate on the inside on Friday and the outside on Saturday.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD REMINDER

For those of you who filled a shoebox or multiple shoeboxes, this is just a reminder that they need to be returned to the church by November 22rd. If you will not be able to return them by that date, please let me know in advance so arrangements can be made to pick them up from you. Thank you for your generosity.

Love in Christ,
Annie Sofranek

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH
November and December Benevolence

SENIOR BROWN BAG PROGRAM
2000 W. Olive Avenue, Merced, CA 95348
Earla Anderson, Senior Brown Bag Program Manager (209) 726-3663
email: earlaa@mmcfb.org.

The Senior Brown Bag Program provides supplemental nutritious groceries twice a month to over 3,850 seniors at 16 distribution sites in Merced and Mariposa Counties. Without the Senior Brown Bag Program, many seniors in Merced and Mariposa counties would be extremely isolated and at increased risk for malnourishment and illness.

There is no cost to the individuals served and eligibility is determined by using the federal income guidelines for poverty. The Senior Brown Bag program is designed to help those whose main source of income is Social Security, and who normally have to choose between nutritious foods and crucial medications.

Senior Brown Bag Program participants are also provided with opportunities to volunteer at their food pickup site, which offers them social connections and a sense of belonging and purpose as they contribute to the Food Bank.

Every month, more than 200 volunteers gather at the various Senior Brown Bag sites to sort, bag, and distribute food to their peers. Many participants have built new friendships and a sense of community by volunteering.

Donations may be given to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church with Senior Brown Bag on the memo line to be forwarded.



Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 1 at 2:00 a.m. Don't forget to "fall back." Set your clocks back one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Term ends May 2027
Mary Jo Knudsen
Mona Kowalczyk
Christine Love
Christopher Tomford

Term ends May 2028
Alan Arnold
Lora Burnett
Susan Gumm
Barb Ward

Mona Kowalczyk – Treasurer & Bookkeeper
Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary

2026-2027 Council Officers

President: Barb Ward
Vice-President: Christopher Tomford
Secretary: Chris Love

Next Meeting Date: Second Monday of the month
Monday, November 9 10:00 AM

NOVEMBER SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

To help serve the glory of God in worship - please contact Chris Boyenga, 209-769-8544 to participate as Greeter, Usher, or Reader/Assisting Minister for our 10 A.M. Sunday Worship Service.

	Sunday November 1	Sunday November 8	Sunday November 15	Sunday November 22	Sunday November 29
Greeters/ Attendance	*Mary Jo Knudsen*	*Barb Ward*	*Chris Boyenga*	*Stacy & Kylie Christofferson*	*Chris Boyenga*
Ushers	*Alan Arnold*	*Greg Burnett*	*Hunter Price*	*Alan Arnold*	*Hunter Price*
Reader/Assisting Ministers	*Barb Ward*	*Susan Gumm*	*Mary Jo Knudsen*	*Terry Foote*	*Marc Medefind*

“Our Harvest Home”
Reflection by Nan Dailey

A few years ago, I wrote a reflection suggesting how the Lord’s Prayer might be approached if the words feel dull or even monotonous. I first heard the idea in a homily given by a priest at the Washington National Cathedral. She suggested reading each line aloud and then speaking with feeling – perhaps excitement or sorrow or joy - whatever thoughts or feelings there might be in the line for each of us. So, for example the first two words. “Our Father”: might spark a reaction like: “Our father, can you imagine, HE is our FATHER!!!.”

I suggest we use that same idea this Harvest and Thanksgiving month, with the well- known hymn:” Come Ye Thankful People, Come.” For a long time and maybe still today it was **the** quintessential Thanksgiving hymn in the Episcopal Church I attended growing up and it’s hymn 892 in the Lutheran Service Book.

The hymn has four verses, eight lines each, any and all of which could be read aloud in this way. But since space is limited here, I’ve only included the first verse. I’ve given you my feelings/thoughts for the first three lines and left the other lines for you to complete if and as you desire.

Come, ye thankful people, come.

The invitation is to a community.

Raise the song of harvest home!

*Sing loudly because we’re coming **Home**, with a goodly harvest of service to God.*

All is safely gathered in

We’re safe and we’re provided for.

Ere the winter storms begin.

God, our Maker, doth provide

For our wants to be supplied.

Come to God's own temple, come,

Raise the song of harvest home.

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Worship **10 AM** Sanctuary & Zoom Donald Gumm Study Group **After Worship**					Knitting Group **2 PM** **SOV Weekly Email News**	
8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Worship **10 AM** Sanctuary & Zoom Donald Gumm Study Group **After Worship**	Council Meeting **10-AM**		**Veterans Day Office Closed**		Fall Clean Up **8 AM -Noon** Knitting Group **2 PM** **SOV Weekly Email News**	Fall Clean Up **8 AM -Noon**
15	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
Worship **10 AM** Sanctuary & Zoom Donald Gumm Study Group **After Worship**					Knitting Group **2 PM** **SOV Weekly Email News**	
22	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**
Worship **10 AM** Sanctuary & Zoom **Thankfest**			**SOV Weekly Email News**	**Thanksgiving Day Office Closed**	**Office Closed**	
29	**30**					
Worship **10 AM** Sanctuary & Zoom Advent Bible Study **After Worship**						



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED