

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:
Marc Medefind
Cell: 209-777-9302
mrmedefind@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

When I worked for the school district, I served the whole of Merced County – driving wherever there was a student struggling for inclusion due to a physical impairment (which, by the way, is “everywhere” rather than “wherever”).

Leaving populated areas and entering the agricultural lands, I encountered a challenge. Out in the middle of a large field, there might be a huge apparatus with gigantic wheels attached. Initially, I didn't know what it was for.

This is a mechanism to water a large area with only one “sprinkler” – genius!

My question was to consider the identification of all the acreage that is not included within the area of the irrigated circle. How could this be remedied?

Some things are not for us to fret about. Some things are not approached by mortality, but are left to God. God does for us all that we cannot do for ourselves.

Such it is for the mission of the church and for our challenges to serve creation. The church sets up the sprinkler system and lays the hoses, but there seems to continue for work to be done.

God comes to us in many ways – with thunderstorms, with “down and dirty” watering “by hand”, rain, creativity...

Mission efforts are addressed divinely within large swaths of acreage.

Divine mission efforts challenge us to identify the “corners” and the “edges” of need – things requiring identification and attention – caring for those neglected by the community.

Pastor John



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:

Dave Bettis; Joel Knox; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Eric Smith; Gleneda Muralt'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; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Penny Waha; Annie Sofranek; David Cherf; and people who are ill around the world.

We lift prayers for our Benevolence of the Month, **New Beginnings for Merced County Animals** 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.

Blessing of the Animals Saturday, October 11, 2024 11:00 AM – noon

There will be a short, appropriate introductory service outdoors.

Each of our animal friends/loved ones may be presented for a personal blessing, love, and a treat!

Please join us to bless your loved ones for all they do for you!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COUNCIL MEETING-SEPTEMBER 15

Carolyn Daberkow's computer will need to be updated with Microsoft 11 software. We will need to take her computer into Action Computer for this upgrade, and they will need her computer for 48 hours.

We will have a special congregational meeting after worship on September 28 to discuss and approve the air conditioning repair/replacement.

Pastor John reported that Betty Madsen's family will take about 10 minutes in the September 21 service to memorialize Betty.

Pastor will officiate the graveside service for Karen Darby on Wednesday, September 24 at the National Cemetery at Santa Nella.

Pastor is looking into ELCA disability grants for 2026 to make our church more handicapped accessible. He met with Susan Gumm on a list of things that could be done and what are the priorities.

The Worship and Music team have chosen hymns for October and received several suggestions of congregant's favorite hymns. You can still submit your favorite hymns to Karen Arnold. Beth Loreda has secured two back up pianists.

Property: The Cherf's are still coming and hand watering some of the area. There are a few ballasts that need to be replaced in the outside lighting in eaves. We discussed adding more money to the 2026 budget for maintenance.

Financial Committee: We will start a finance committee again. They will start meeting in early November and go through the budget for 2026. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please see Mona, Marc or Barb.

The love offering for the David II and Dylan Cherf will be awarded on October 5th.

The annual Thankfest will be held in Lineberger Hall after service on Sunday, November 23. A sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex in November.

The October Council meeting has been cancelled due to a number of council members not available on that date. Any immediate business will be handled by e-mail.

Barb Ward
Council Vice-President

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Nan Dailey	10/06
Marit Medefind Bond	10/10
Kaylei Rigers	10/13
Annie Sofranek	10/13
"Ana" Anastasia Crosley	10/16
Sarah Sofranek Williams	10/17
Ron Basso	10/18
Rylee Bernal	10/20
David J Cherf II	10/20
Bryan Hofmann	10/20
James Bond	10/22
Stacy Christofferson	10/29

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

We will be meeting at 11:30 AM on Thursday, October 16 at Agaves Mexican Grill, 779 E. Yosemite Avenue, Ste. A. Join us for food and fellowship.

Share Your Favorite Hymns

The choir invites the congregation members to let us know your favorite hymns. We'd love to include them in our upcoming worship services. Thanks to all who have shared with us already, and many of those hymns will be featured during the month of October. Just give us a list (scribble cards are in the pews) or for those on Zoom, email Karen Arnold at bookgirl66@comcast.net. Thanks!

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost	October 5
Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4	
Psalms 37:1-9	
2 Timothy 1:1-14	
Luke 17:5-10	Green
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost	October 12
2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c	
Psalms 111	
2 Timothy 2:2-15	
Luke 17:11-19	Green
Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost	October 19
Genesis 32:22-31	
Psalms 121	
2 Timothy 3:14-4:5	
Luke 18:1-8	Green
Reformation Sunday	October 26
Jeremiah 31:31-34	
Psalms 46	
Romans 3:19-28	
John 8:31-36	Red
You are encouraged to wear red this Sunday.	

"HOW WE CAN HELP OTHERS"

Church Women United NoCA-NoNV Fall Assembly
October 4, 2025 9:22 AM to 2:25 PM

Women of all ages are invited to attend the Fall Assembly meeting at SOV. Sign-in and light refreshments begin at 9:22 AM.

Gathering in the sanctuary in person and via zoom at 10:02 AM will include time for music, Bible Study, prayers, free will offering (one-half to 2025 project Bread for the World), and Speaker: Executive Director Monika Grasley from Lifeline CDC.

Lunch and the afternoon session in Lineberger Hall will provide time for writing letters to promote Bread for the World projects and socializing.

Registration in person: \$20.00, Zoom \$5.00.

Contact Chris Boyenga or Carolyn Stephens for more details.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

It's almost that time of year! Shoeboxes and info will be available for your pickup in the Narthex the beginning of October. For many of the children who will receive a gift-filled shoebox, it will be the first gift and maybe the only gift they will ever receive. Please consider filling a shoebox or shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Love in Christ, Annie P. Sofranek

COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER

The Merced County Community Action Agency (MCCAA) in Merced is hosting a Community Baby Shower on November 14, 2025, at the Italo Lodge. They have asked community groups and churches to put together baskets of essential items for pregnant and postpartum women who are having challenges navigating their new life changes. These women have been referred to MCCA by their doctors and do not have any support systems.

Our church council has approved putting together items for this event. You can help by donating new gender-neutral clothing (size newborn, 3 or 6 months); a baby bathtub, bath toys; baby towels; baby body wash & shampoo; books; socks; bibs; hats; receiving blankets, etc. I will put a box in the narthex that you can add your gifts to. Or, you can make a monetary donation using the special envelopes in the pew and designate "Baby Shower". Checks can be made out to Shepherd of the Valley. **The deadline is November 2.** Contact Barb Ward for any additional details.

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.

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 for the continuing updates.

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

September & October Benevolence

New Beginnings for Merced County Animals

P.O. Box 1045

Winton, CA 95388

newbeginningsformercedanimals@gmail.com

newbeginningsforanimalsmerced.org

Sharon @ 209-769-2122

Sue @ 209-617-4131

WHO WE ARE

New Beginnings for Merced County Animals non-profit organization is dedicated to helping the animals at the Merced County Animal Shelter as well as other locations in Merced County. We do not have a facility. Animals are housed with individual foster families in the area.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create a new standard in rescue operation with education and community involvement to end the suffering of animals who are lost, abandoned, or given up to the Merced County shelter.

New Beginnings for Animals – Merced is uniquely well-positioned to accomplish this goal by focusing on our three primary activities:

- Transporting large numbers of animals out of the Merced shelter
- Treating sick/injured abandoned animals and making them available for adoption
- AND working to fund a spay/neuter program in the Merced area to address the root of the overpopulation problem—sterilizing dogs and cats to stop the litters of unwanted animals that are overloading the shelters and rescues.

Please note New Beginnings for Animals Merced County does not have a facility...we are a group of volunteers working out of our homes. All animals are kept in foster homes where available.

Donations may be given to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church with New Beginnings on the memo line to be forwarded.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS**Term ends May 2026**

Karen Arnold
 David John Cherf II
 Marc Medefind
 Barbara Ward

Term ends May 2027

Mary Jo Knudsen
 Mona Kowalczyk
 Christine Love
 Christopher Tomford

Mona Kowalczyk – Treasurer & Bookkeeper
 Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary

2025-2026 Council Officers

President: Marc Medefind Vice-President: Barb Ward
 Secretary: David John Cherf II

Next Meeting Date: Third Monday of the month

Council will not be meeting in October.

OCTOBER 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 October 5	Sunday October 12	Sunday October 19	Sunday October 26
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Mona Kowalczyk</i>	<i>Tim Shaw</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Susan Gumm</i>

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
					SOV Weekly News sent via email	Church Women United 9 AM
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	Blessing of Animals 11 AM
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom				Birthday Luncheon Agaves Mexican Grill 11:30 AM	SOV Weekly News sent via email	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	Shepherd of the Valley 66th Anniversary
26	27	28	28	30	31	
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom						



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED