

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

In 1948, my father bought my sister's crib on the mezzanine of the Montgomery Ward store at 645 W. Main Street.

Later, the city converted the space into the Merced Multicultural Arts Center which carried the motto, "Arts For All". I was the chair of the design committee and promoted physical accessible accommodations to be "true" to the motto.

When the Center opened, the space offered appropriate accessibility for the offices, galleries, classrooms, corridors, and performance spaces. I was proud of access attention not found in art facilities elsewhere:

- a. The sound/lighting booth being wheelchair accessible,
- b. All support backstage and "green room" is accessible,
- c. The darkroom for photography is accessible,
- d. Mirrors in bathrooms hinged at the bottom to accommodate wheelchair users...

Worship is likewise: access to God is available "for all"!

- a. Gluten-free communion bread is being offered,
- b. Congregation members are providing transportation to worship for those who lack such provision,
- c. Worship readers can opt to provide worship support from the pews,
- d. Worship presentation is being "tweaked" to allow participation by all to serve,
- e. Modifications are being considered for seating in the sanctuary, and...
- f. Whatever issue which might arise to be considered.

Everyone should feel welcomed. All should feel deserving. All are invited. All are served respectfully.

Pastor John

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.



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.

WANTED

Volunteers to join the Prayer Chain Team

We are short a couple members. All it requires is that you are willing to receive a phone call, make a phone call, and pray for any of our church family members who requests a team prayer. If you are interested and willing, please let Pam Andersen know by contacting her at 209-631-4594.

NIGHT OF HOPE

Community Worship Night Saturday, September 13

This event will take place at 6 PM at the Merced Theatre in downtown Merced. Doors will open at 5:30 PM and no tickets are required to attend.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

The Shepherd of the Valley Church Council met August 18. Here are some meeting highlights:

—Pastor John discussed the fact council authorized offering a “gluten-free” communion option for those who are gluten-intolerant.

—A memorial for Betty Madsen is being planned by Betty's family and the Pastor, date TBA.

—A help list will be posted for those who can transport individuals to and fro for Sunday services.

—A love offering to thank David and Devin Cherf for their audio-visual volunteer work will be collected through September 28.

—Have suggestions for hymns? Please provide them to Karen Arnold, SOV's Worship and Music Committee chair.

—The church's “Blessing of the Animals” is scheduled at 11 a.m. on October 11.

—The Council is taking a close look at SOV's accessibility for those using wheelchairs, walkers or canes, including automatic door-opening devices, doors that are lighter, and doors that don't close too quickly.

—SOV has scheduled its autumn “Thankfest” on Sunday, November 23.

—The Council agreed to participate in the Merced County Community Action Agency “Community Baby Shower” on November 14. The program provides pregnancy and postpartum care for local families. Church members are asked to donate baby items such as blankets, caps, clothing, gift baskets, and gift cards, etc.

—Marc Medefind, Council President

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jesse Saldivar	09/03
Amy Sofranek	09/05
Kimberly Castillo	09/11
Jan Carpenter	09/14
Emily Saldivar	09/27

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

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost **September 7**

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalms 1

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

Green

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 14

Exodus 32:7-14

Psalms 51:1-10

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-10

Green

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 21

Amos 8:4-7

Psalms 113

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

Green

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 28

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalms 146

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

Green

**MONTHLY BIRTHDAY
LUNCHEON**

We will be meeting at 11:30 AM
on Thursday, September 18 at
New China Cafe,
1002 W. Main Street
Join us for food and fellowship.

Voices Needed

Our choir needs your voice! If you would like
to join us, come early for worship on Sundays
at 9:15 a.m. to practice making a joyful noise!
Not sure? See Karen, Jan, or Annie with any
questions.

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.

FREE WILL DONATION

The Council has decided to do a free will donation to
thank Devin and David Cherf II for their help with IT work
each Sunday as well as their help each month with
Church clean up.

Please put your donation in an envelope designating it
for IT support and place it in the offering plate. Donations
will be collected through September 28. Once collected
we will present the total donation in October. Thank you
for your generous donation to honor Devin and David
Cherf II.

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 MCCAA 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 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
Monday, September 15, 10:00 AM

SEPTEMBER 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 September 7	Sunday September 14	Sunday September 21	Sunday September 28
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Susan Gumm</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>	<i>Donald Gumm</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Nan Dailey</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Terry Foote</i>

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Labor Day Office Closed				SOV Weekly News sent via email	Church Clean-up 9 AM
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Council Meeting 10 AM			Birthday Luncheon 11:30 AM New China Cafe	SOV Weekly News sent via email	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
28	29	30				
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom						



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED