

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

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

Last month, we had the opportunity to sing, *"He knows when you are sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows when you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake... You better watch out!"*

My father-in-law grew up in LeGrand. He lamented one characteristic common to small, close-knit communities. He explained, "Whenever I was naughty and got into trouble somewhere, my mother knew all about it before I got home."

Mothers and God know all about it.

In places like LeGrand, everyone knows everyone else, and everyone knows everyone else's "business". Such it is for close-knit communities like congregations. We're interested in the lives of all of our neighbors just as God is interested in our lives and loves us even when we are "naughty". God knows all about it even before we even get home.

The church's council has struggled with the appropriate mechanism to share the "business" of the church and continues to propose possible communication channels.

The current adjustment is to allow the pastor to share all "mission/worship matters" as seems suitable. Thus, these matters will be shared by all including those who do not visit the social hall, and those who attend via Zoom/Facebook.

Matters pertinent to the community but are not "mission/worship" related will continue to be offered in the social hall. Anyone can volunteer to present a matter considered suitable.

We hope this serves our curiosity.

Pastor John



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for healing:

Dave Bettis; Joel Knox; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Karen Darby; 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, **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.

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.

KNITTING CLUB

A new knitting club is being proposed by Jan and Mona. It is still in the planning stage and if you are interested in joining or know someone who might be, please contact Jan Collins or Mona Kowalczyk. The beginning knitter's club is to produce newborn baby hats to deliver to the hospital.

CHURCH COUNCIL TIDBITS

At the December 9 Shepherd of the Valley Church Council meeting, council members discussed our "Festival of Lessons and Carols" service at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Pastor John Russell-Curry said he likes to ask those who don't usually lead worship services to help with the lesson readings from Genesis, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke and John. The readings alternate with Christmas carols, concluding with the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. The sanctuary will be decorated with 25 poinsettias that have been purchased to honor or to memorialize family members and/or friends.

The Advent study will continue until Dec. 22 following Sunday worship services, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Pastor John is leading the study focusing on the names of Jesus.

Council discussed the church's fix-it list. After listing 15 projects on the original list in June, we are down to ten, half of which are larger projects. It was also reported that the church is now on the EyeOnWater app which indicates our exact water use month by month.

Council President Marc Medefind said he and his son, Adam Gray, transported the SOV scooter to Hughson for Jeane Hetland to use. Many thanks to council member Jan Collins for donating the scooter.

Items on the consent calendar included decisions to purchase new "Shark" vacuum cleaners and get the piano tuned.

Council decided that our annual congregational meeting will take place on Jan. 26. Lunch will also be served that day.

In other new business, the council discussed updating the congregational roll, church benevolences for the coming year, responding to a request from Synod for mission support, and changing how announcements are made during Sunday service. It was mentioned that too many people are missing announcements in Lineberger Hall after services and that it should return to the end of the service. Pastor John will deliver any announcements so members are asked to let the pastor know should you have an announcement for him to make.

JANUARY 2025

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
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
Mary Rahn	02/21
Mona Kowalczyk	02/24
Pat Shaw	02/24
Syd Saldivar	02/25
Adam Campos	02/28

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

We will be meeting on Thursday, January 16. Watch for more information as to where the group will meet.

Giving Envelopes & Statements

If you have not picked up your 2025 Giving envelopes, please do so as soon as possible. If you did not receive a box and would like one, please contact Chris Boyenga.

Giving Statements for 2024 will be available by Sunday, January 26, 2025.

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 5

Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12
Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom 10:15-21
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9) 10-18

White

Baptism of our Lord

January 12

Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

White

Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 19

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

Green

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 26

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Green

Dear Shepherd of the Valley Family,

We wanted to take this opportunity to share our bitter-sweet news. We have moved to Samaritan Village in Hughson and have a very cute apartment. We both felt it was time to have a little more help—a smaller place to keep up, less or no cooking, and no other maintenance projects for the house or yard. Our new home is perfect for us at our stage of life. We are enjoying the nice facilities, friendly neighbors and the wonderful staff—housekeepers, maintenance, food services and the management team. They are all so friendly, helpful and just down-right kind. By the way, we have an actual restaurant here so definitely come eat with us. The food has been very good, and we look forward to some new dishes.

Having said all of this—we miss our friends and you folks at the church. We have been associated with Shepherd of the Valley for over 40 years and have seen many changes and exciting times throughout the years. Both of our daughters were confirmed at Shepherd of the Valley, and we both have been involved in committees and on the church council. I know you are enjoying having John as your pastor—we consider him a good friend. We keep track of you via the newsletter and by folks sharing any news. If you are ever in our vicinity or plan to be, please reach out and come see us at 7700 Fox Road, Apt. G103 in Hughson, CA 95326. My cell phone number is (209) 489-8682 and David's is (209) 489-8969. We no longer have a landline phone.

Love and a blessed Christmas Season to all of you and special wonders for you in the New Year.

Love, Jeane and David Hetland

PROPERTY REPORT

December 15, 2024

HVACS: Haven't had any problems. Filters were replaced for winter.

FENCE: Abutting property owners are not wanting to replace our shared fences because of the cost. We will be looking at alternatives.

OUTDOOR LIGHTS: Bulbs were ordered and are getting replaced. Front sign light may have a short or just got a batch of bad bulbs.

FIRE SAFETY CHECKS: Over the past month or so, all our fire safety inspections were completed with the help of Carolyn D. overseeing that they were done in a timely manner.

SPRINKLERS: Leak in a main valve box in front is being looked at by a gardener. Thanks to the rainy season getting here, we don't have to hand water for a while.

POWER POINT, ZOOM, PA SYSTEM: We have a constant 40-50 views of our weekly ZOOM services on Facebook. Our power point operator says that we do not have enough RAM for the power point program, which in turn, causes the screen outages.

SPRINKLERS: I have turned down the sprinkler times to a minimum. We have always shut off the sprinklers until spring, but I was told that this causes the sprinkler gaskets to get stuck and decay making lots of sprinklers needing to be fixed next year.

HOMELESS: So far this winter we have had no incidents with our homeless community. We will continue to monitor.

All seems to be going well, 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

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

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 2024, we awarded two \$250 scholarships to Merced College students: Laura Reynoso, Nursing; and Finley Olson, Animal Science. These students are always so appreciative of our help, and we are grateful to our church family for their support of this worthwhile project.

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

ANNUAL FISCAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The meeting will be held January 26, 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.

Reports for the meeting should be submitted to the church office no later than Wednesday, January 8.

Watch for more information.

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.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Term ends May 2025

Jan Collins
Steven Hand
Mary Jo Knudsen

Term ends May 2026

Karen Arnold
David John Cherf II
Marc Medefind
Barbara Ward

Mona Kowalczyk—Treasurer & Bookkeeper
Christine Boyenga – Financial Secretary

2024-2025 Council Officers

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

*Next Meeting Date: **Monday, January 13, 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 5	Sunday January 12	Sunday January 19	Sunday January 26
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Tim Shaw</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</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
					SOV Weekly News sent via email	Church Clean-up 9 AM
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Worship: 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Council Meeting 6 PM			Birthday Luncheon 11:30 AM Meeting place to be determined.	SOV Weekly News sent via email	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Office Closed				SOV Weekly News sent via email	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Annual Fiscal Meeting 11:15 AM					SOV Weekly News sent via email	



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
1455 E Yosemite Ave
Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED