

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

The Beauty Of Humanity/Divinity

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.

Despite the fact that two people fall in love with each other... admire/adore each other... spend time (a lifetime) with each other... have a family together... travel together and enjoy similar artistic expressions..., they are entirely different people.

How do we reconcile humanity as being similar to each other, while, at the same time, admitting that each person is unique?

My wife and I have never ordered the same entrée at a restaurant. (*What are you going to order? Oh, that was what I was thinking of ordering. I'll choose something different.*)

We have never shared a dessert option. (*Don't you dare reach over the table with that fork to get at my chocolate! You're asking for a broken arm.*)

Shirley's favorite flavor of ice cream was vanilla. Laverne's choice was "rooty-fruity swirled with lots of sprinkles...".

It would be a good idea to put both Laverne and Shirley on the same committee.

Diversity adds and complements presentations. Diversity provides a challenge to all sides to re-consider the "knee jerk" responses. Diversity allows us all to respect our neighbors... to challenge us to consider that our "neighbor's" voice might be that of the Holy Spirit.

This is how we were prepared and formed in God's intention for humanity.

This might be one of the most distinguishing marks of being human – someone who can disagree or consider the "voice" of another. (Do we see sheep arguing with each other about where to get the best food? Does one fish decide to go "down stream" when a companion opts to go "up stream"?)

The community that is called together (whether being a congregational meeting, Council or committee meeting, or two members deciding upon the donut choice) is the intent that supports and encourages growth and creativity.

Give thanks and appreciation for the diversity in your midst. It is God speaking.

Pastor John

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:
Joel Knox; Betty Madsen;
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; 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.*

The Sierra Pacific Synod Office Has Moved!

With the start of a new year, the synod office has gone to Seminary! We are thrilled to announce that we are moving in and sharing space with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in downtown Berkeley. For those of you familiar with the space at the PLTS, our suite of offices will be to the left of the reception desk. We couldn't be more excited. Imagine the partnership and synergy made possible by this arrangement. It is a concrete example of the partnerships and collaborations we hope to see among Lutheran partners throughout our Synod.

Our new address is:
Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA
2000 Center Street, Suite 200
Berkeley, CA 94704

Mailing Address:
Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA
PO Box 119,
Berkeley, CA 94701



COUNCIL NEWS
January 8, 2024

Computer/Printer is still being looked into for the church's secretary.

The banner that will be put out in front of the church is still in the works.

A meeting with Healthy House to create a new contract will be held.

Congregation meeting happening January 28th, 2024. Breakfast casseroles will be made!

The constitution will be reviewed as it is written for possible changes that could be made before the May Congregational Meeting.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Ash Wednesday Worship Service will be held on Wednesday, February 14 at 10 AM.

Please plan to join us as we begin the season of Lent.

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

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

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Alan Arnold	03/06
Dorothy Woody	03/07
Monte Hamamoto	03/08
Bill Turner	03/08
Carol Girard	03/09
Carolyn Stephens	03/10
Dan Woods	03/10
Christine Boyenga	03/11
Dylan Cherf	03/20
Dottie Andersen	03/23
Susan Kateley	03/23
Ken Sullivan	03/26
Carolyn Daberkow	03/26
Claudia Fournier	03/26
David Pressly	03/27
Patti LiWang	03/28
Brent Sales	03/29
Tiana LiWang	03/31

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany **February 4**

Isaiah 40:21-31
 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
 Mark 1:29-39 Green

Transfiguration of Our Lord **February 11**

2 Kings 2:1-12
 Psalm 50:1-6
 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
 Mark 9:2-9 White

First Sunday in Lent **February 18**

Genesis 9:8-17
 Psalm 25:1-10
 1 Peter 3:18-22
 Mark 1:9-15 Purple

Second Sunday in Lent **February 25**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
 Psalm 22:23-31
 Romans 4:13-25
 Mark 8:31-38 Purple

Why Give? (1 Timothy 6:18-19)

I like to think I am a cheerful giver. But what does that mean?
 As a child growing up on a farm in Iowa I seldom went shopping. It was a big event to try on new shoes to begin each school year. I had no knowledge of the actual money transactions my dad did to run our 100-acre farm. I was given small coins for my weekly church offering.

As I review my finances for 2024, I realize the importance of understanding how much income I receive and how I use the funds available to me. I am fortunate now to have our ongoing teacher pensions, a home that is paid in full, and investments saved during our years in education. I must continue to evaluate and consider how I divide my income to provide for my basic and future needs, my love for travel, and my support of nonprofits, including Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church.

I want to be generous and willing to share my wealth with others and continue to lead a meaningful life with family and friends. I thank our church family for all the support my family has received through the last fifty-six years. I encourage you and your family members to continue your volunteering of time, attendance, spiritual and monetary support for our congregation, our outreach in the community, and the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Blessings,
 Christine Boyenga, SOV Financial Secretary

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

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

Join us this month on
Thursday, February 22nd
 at 11:30 AM
 for food and fellowship!
 We will be meeting at Chili’s,
 1075 W. Olive Avenue in
 Merced.

PROPERTY REPORT

January 8th, 2024

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

GARAGE: Garage door being used by Healthy House giving some problems still.

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 callbacks yet.

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

HOMELESS: Since last meeting. only had a bike and socks left near the church.

GROUNDS: 2 trees will need to be removed. Will have to mow down weeds again toward the east side.

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

**BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH
January & February Benevolence
Scholarship Fund**

As you know, our benevolence for January and February is our Scholarship Fund. Even though community college is free for two years, students continue to incur expenses, and I wanted to share these thank you notes from our 2023 recipients to show how our scholarships affect their lives.

From **Rhianna Irao**: Thank you so much for your generosity and kindness! I am incredibly grateful to be a recipient of this scholarship and assure you that I will be putting it to good use. This past school year I unfortunately accumulated a large sum of textbook fees for my classes and will be putting this money to help pay those off. As I continue my journey at Merced College and later transfer to university, I will remember the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church and the impact that the scholarship had in supporting my academic endeavors. Again, I sincerely thank you for allowing me to be a recipient of the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church Scholarship.

From **Drake Bair**: I wanted to say thank you for the grant that you have given me. It will immensely help me pursue my education financially because as we know, college is not cheap. I hope to continue to update you all on how my schooling and career pans out in the future and hope to show you that your investment in my life will pay out. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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

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.

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 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, February 12 6:00 PM***

FEBRUARY 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 February 4	Sunday February 10	Sunday February 18	Sunday February 25
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>
Ushers	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>	<i>Cherf Family</i>	<i>Dave Bettis</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Tim & Pat Shaw</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>

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

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



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED