

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

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.

I have been told there was a time when a text study was held weekly on Wednesday mornings to consider the biblical texts for the subsequent worship services.

This is a "good thing" to do. At some later date, we will consider reinstating this.

(I suspect that the inconvenience of COVID caused us to lose some of our most active participants for one reason or another.)

It is our un-written tradition to offer a theme-based text study for "special seasons". The Advent study this past year went well – meeting after worship for a 45-minute session. The theme considered "names/titles" for the Christ-child.

As Lent approaches, I have searched "high and low" for appropriate ("timely") text studies. Some were inappropriate due to the presented format. Others were not considered for impertinence or aren't interesting. Many places simply didn't respond.

Until... I found exactly what I was looking for. I found a text study that uses the same format as our recent successful Advent study.

Due to recent interests in political involvement between "church and state", I, personally, have been challenged to respond to current circumstances appropriately.

Our proposed Lenten text study is called "Faithful Citizenship".

We will examine and consider aspects of being faithful to our religious foundations while being responsible as citizens.

The study is not a partisanship endeavor. The study is intended to allow participants to become comfortable with a faithful life.

We will meet after worship at 11:30 and will conclude each session at 12:15.

Please consider participating.

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, **Love INC.** 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.

NOMINATION FOR CHURCH COUNCIL
The nominating process to elect four new council members at the May Congregational Meeting has begun. Nominating forms are available in the narthex. Please fill out the form and put it in the offering plate, hand to an usher or return to the church office no later than Sunday, March 16.

CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES
February 11, 2025

- Pastor John will facilitate a Lenten study on "Faithful Citizenship."
- We changed our Council meeting time to 10 a.m. on the third Monday of the month.
- Pastor John discussed plans for our Ash Wednesday service on March 5 at 10 a.m.
- Easter lilies will be offered for purchase at \$15 each (and, like our Christmas poinsettias, may be used to honor/memorialize.)
- Discussed a request to remunerate Sunday AV volunteers (this will be discussed further at our March meeting.)
- Benevolence for March was changed to Love, INC.

We brought closure to work on:

- 1) Listing who has keys to the church, our "Time and Talents" roster, and updating our annual benevolences; and
- 2) Finalized plans for annual reviews of both the Pastor and Administrative Assistant.



Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 9 at 2:00 a.m. Don't forget to "spring forward." Set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.

KNITTING CLUB

Our first Knitting Class began Friday on 2/21/25 at 2 - 3:30 pm. Consisting of new to experienced knitters, we all shared each other's levels of experience and began our goal towards delivering white, knitted baby hats to the newborns at the maternity ward, Merced Hospital.

Packets containing knitting needles, yarn and a pattern were distributed. A contribution of several bags of yarn was gratefully accepted.

The first lesson was to learn to cast on and knit. They took their 1st lesson home to practice.

Our following classes are to assist the ladies in moving onto purl, increasing, decreasing, recovering a missed stitch and more. The hats are a good beginning for all levels of knitting. All are welcome!

Mona and Jan

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
Phil Rahn	03/14
Dylan Cherf	03/20
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

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

David Cherf	04/03
Connie Lineberger	04/03
Rita McDonald	04/19
Karen Arnold	04/20
Lilliana Gallaway	04/25
Charlotte Sofranek	04/25
Dakotah Timpson	04/28

BIBLE TEXT READINGS

Transfiguration of Our Lord	March 2
Exodus 34:29-35	
Psalms 99	
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2	
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)	White
First Sunday in Lent	March 9
Deuteronomy 26:1-11	
Psalms 91:2-2, 9-16	
Romans 10:8b-13	
Luke 4:1-13	Purple
Second Sunday in Lent	March 16
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18	
Psalms 27	
Philippians 3:17-4:1	
Luke 13:31-35	Purple
Third Sunday in Lent	March 23
Isaiah 55:1-9	
Psalms 63:1-8	
1 Corinthians 10:1-13	
Luke 13:1-9	Purple
Fourth Sunday in Lent	March 30
Joshua 5:9-12	
Psalms 32	
2 Corinthians 5:16-21	
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32	Purple

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

We will be meeting at 11:30 AM on Thursday, March 20 at Toni's Courtyard Café, 516 W. 18th St. Join us for food and fellowship.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Ash Wednesday Worship Service will be held on Wednesday, March 5 at 10 AM. Please plan to join us as we begin the season of Lent.

SUNDAY LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Pastor John will be leading a Lenten Bible Study running March 9-April 13. The study called "Faithful Citizenship" will meet in the conference room starting at 11:30 AM. Plan now to attend.

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.

EASTER LILIES

Help beautify our sanctuary this Easter and honor special people in your life. You can order 6" Easter Lilies for \$15 each. They will grace the sanctuary on Sunday, April 20 and you can take them home after the service on the 20th. You can place your check/cash in a special envelope in the offering plate along with the order form or give it to Barb Ward or the church office. Checks may be written to SOV and mark Easter Lilies on the memo line.

Deadline for orders is Sunday, April 6.

PROPERTY REPORT
February 10, 2025
January - February

HVACS: Have one HVAC on the west side that does not produce heat. Will be going up in the attic to check the system.

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 replaced.

SPRINKLERS: Leak in a main valve box in front is being looked at by a sprinkler repairman.

POWERPOINT, ZOOM, PA SYSTEM: We have a constant 40-50 views of our weekly services on ZOOM on Facebook. Our PowerPoint operator says that we do not have enough RAM for the PowerPoint program, which in turn causes screen outages. ZOOM has been staticky and fluctuating in volume. Suggested to buy remote-control cameras to lessen wear and tear on cables.

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 in the spring.

HOMELESS: So far this winter we have had only 1 incident with our homeless community. We will continue to monitor.

OFFICE DOOR: We are continuing to monitor this problem.

All seems to be going well, we have been fixing problems as they arise.

David Cherf, Property Manager
cell/text: (209)489-7757

2025 Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we are able to fund two scholarships for Merced College students as well as members of Shepherd of the Valley. The criteria and application information will be available in the narthex, and all confirmed members are encouraged to apply by June 3.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH
March Benevolence

Love INC
P.O. Box 2141
Merced, CA 95344
Office Line: 209-383-7034
Help Line: 209-383-1265
info@loveincmerced.com

Love INC of Greater Merced serves the communities of Merced, Atwater, Planada, Winton & Le Grand.

Within these communities we have 32 church partners that provide resources to people in need and volunteer assistance. We work as a liaison among individuals, agencies, organizations, and churches who desire to reach out and serve those in need. Together, we come alongside those individuals and families who have multiple needs, but desire to break free from the cycle of poverty.

Donations may be given to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church with Love, INC on the memo line to be forwarded.

Annette Macias from Love INC will be here on March 2 to relay what Love INC does. She will be in Lineberger Hall after service selling tickets for their big fundraiser at the end of March and answering any questions.

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.

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: Third Monday of the month
Monday, March 17, 10:00 AM

MARCH 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 March 2	Sunday March 9	Sunday March 16	Sunday March 23	Sunday March 30
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Tim Shaw</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Church Clean-up 9 AM
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom			Ash Wednesday Service 10 AM		SOV Weekly News sent via email	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Lenten Bible Study 11:30 AM Conference Room					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Lenten Bible Study 11:30 AM Conference Room	Council Meeting 10 AM			Birthday Luncheon 11:30 AM Toni's Courtyard Cafe	SOV Weekly News sent via email	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Lenten Bible Study 11:30 PM Conference Room					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
30	31					
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Lenten Bible Study 11:30 PM Conference Room						



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Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED