

# 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](http://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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](http://spselca.org), and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, [elca.org](http://elca.org).

### MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

Like so many young girls, my daughter wanted to ride horses. We found a trainer who was willing to teach her about the “art of riding”.

The trainer assured us that she had some horses on her property that were perfect for the inexperienced riders. She enthusiastically started her lessons.

I asked her about the horses and her riding. It was explained that the trainer insists that no one can presume to get on a horse without first learning certain “ins and outs” of the equestrian experience.

For weeks, my daughter learned about brushing the mane and body of the horse, how to clean the hooves, the feeding regimen, how to approach a horse, how to lead the horse for a walk around the corral... and much more before being able to get up onto the horse. Mainly, my daughter learned how to “muck a stall”. “Mucking” is the task that would presumably fall to the person on the lowest of the social scale on a ranch. “Mucking” is the task to address the manure and soiled bedding in the barns. “Mucking” is the task that is not part of a “polite society”. “Mucking” is done “behind the scenes” without fanfare.

A case can be made that the faithful among us must attend to “mucking” before the ultimate goal of a divinely inspired life. Some of the expectations of a faithful life is “dirty and stinky”. Some of the tasks are those no one else wants to do.

The challenge is that “mucking” is not an imposition or punishment. “Mucking” is serving others, especially those whose “stalls” of life have gotten oppressive by neglect.

We have been commissioned to do the presumed “unpleasant” ... and to do this with JOY, SONG, AND PRAISE for the opportunity.

*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, **Mt. Cross Ministries** 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.

**Church Women United  
May Friendship Day  
Celebration & Potluck**

May 9, 2025 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
Shepherd of the Valley Lineberger Hall  
Bring a friend and a dish of food to share.  
For more information contact  
Carolyn Stephens 209-386-3900

**CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS  
March 17, 2025**

--Council members started the first of their day meetings at 10 a.m. on St. Patrick's Day (Council agreed last month to meet the third Monday of each month.) Here are the meeting highlights:

--Chris Boyenga and Mona completed the church's annual report (membership, attendance and finances) to the Synod.

--We are welcoming six new members to SOV! They will become official members on Easter Sunday. We will have a welcome luncheon a week later on April 27.

--Pastor John announced plans for a combined Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Service at 10 a.m. on Good Friday, April 18.

--Easter Lilies can currently be ordered to decorate the church on Easter. As we did with Christmas poinsettias, these can be purchased (\$15) either to honor or memorialize someone. Order forms are available in the Narthex.

--A potluck is planned for Palm Sunday. Please sign up in the narthex.

--An SOV rep, or two, is needed to register and attend the annual Synod meeting May 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM at Hope Lutheran in Fresno (the Shaws agreed to attend the June 14<sup>th</sup> Voting Members Synod meeting, 9 to noon PT by Zoom.

-- Council agreed to fundraise in the fall to provide a "Love Gift" for the Cherf Boys as thanks for their weekly work operating our AV and Zoom link.

--Marc reviewed the requirements for becoming a Congregation Council member and asked that final nominations be made before March 23.

--Jan and Mona discussed their work on the knitting committee making caps for newborns.

**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

**MAY BIRTHDAYS**

John Carpenter	05/02
Joy Woods	05/03
Ella Boyenga	05/04
Byron Gallaway	05/05
Nicole Hamrah	05/05
Judy Richards	05/06
Frank Bettis	05/07
Warren Westerberg	05/07
Josh Richards	05/15
Kaci Gallaway	05/19
Liliane Bettis	05/29
Gleneda Muralt	05/30

**BIBLE TEXT READINGS**

<b>Fifth Sunday in Lent</b>	<b>April 6</b>
Isaiah 43:16-21	
Psalms 126	
Philippians 3:4b-14	
John 12:1-8	Purple
<b>Passion/Palm Sunday</b>	<b>April 13</b>
Isaiah 50:4-9a	
Psalms 31:9-16	
Philippians 2:5-11	
Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49	Scarlet or Purple
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>April 20</b>
Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25	
Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24	
1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43	
Luke 24:1-13 or John 20:1-18	White or Gold
<b>Second Sunday of Easter</b>	<b>April 27</b>
Acts 5:27-32	
Psalms 118:14-29 or Psalm 150	
Revelation 1:4-8	
John 20:19-31	White

**MONTHLY BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON**

We will be meeting at 11:30 AM on Thursday, April 17 at Scott's Diner, 2015 E. Childs, Join us for food and fellowship.

**SUNDAY LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**

Pastor John is leading a Lenten Bible Study that will conclude on Sunday, April 6. The study called "Faithful Citizenship" will meet in the conference room starting at 11:30 AM. Plan now to attend.

**MAUNDY/GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

We will be holding a Maundy/Good Friday Worship Service on Friday, April 18 at 10 AM. We look forward to seeing you at this special Holy Week Service.

**PALM SUNDAY SERVICE AND POTLUCK**

**Sunday, April 13**

A potluck lunch will be held after the Palm Sunday worship service. So please get out your best recipes and bring something to share. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

**EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE**

**Sunday, April 20**

**10 AM**

Bring flowers for the Easter Cross.

**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.**

**BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH**  
**April Benevolence**  
**Mt. Cross Ministries**

831-336-5179

7795 Hwy 9 • Ben Lomond CA 95005

P.O. Box 387, Felton, CA 95018

[mtcross@mtcross.org](mailto:mtcross@mtcross.org)

[www.mtcross.org](http://www.mtcross.org)

**KNITTING CLUB**

The Knitting Club meets on Fridays 2 - 3:30 pm. It consists of new to experienced knitters and we all share each other's levels of experience. Our goal is to deliver white, knitted baby hats to the newborns at the maternity ward, Merced Hospital.

All are welcome!

Mona and Jan



***Providing Profound Experiences in God's Creation***

Mt. Cross Ministries is a Lutheran summer camp and retreat facility. Established in 1948, Mt. Cross is the only Lutheran Outdoor Ministry in Northern California and Northern Nevada and is affiliated with the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA and the California-Nevada-Hawaii District of the LCMS. It is a member of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, an association of ELCA camps across the country. Mt. Cross Ministries operates consistent with the theology and culture of the ELCA.

Mt. Cross Ministries has been serving children, youth, and families at camp for over 75 years! The camp is in the Santa Cruz Mountains town Ben Lomond, and is situated near many family attractions, parks, and beaches. The name, "Mt. Cross", was the suggestion of Rev. Ylvisaker, who at that time was the pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, in Lafayette, California. He explained that "Mt" was for the terrain of the property and the "Cross" was derived from "Santa Cruz" meaning Holy Cross.

Donations may be given to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church with Mt. Cross on the Memo line to be forwarded.

**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.

**Shepherd of the Valley Website**

[www.thesovlutheran.net](http://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.

**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.

**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, April 21, 10:00 AM**

**APRIL 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 April 6	Palm Sunday April 13	Easter Sunday April 20	Sunday April 27
Greeters/ Attendance	<i>Chris Boyenga</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Pam Andersen</i>	<i>Barb Ward</i>
Ushers	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>	<i>Alan Arnold</i>	<i>Ron Basso</i>
Reader/Assisting Ministers	<i>Barb Ward</i>	<i>Tim Shaw</i>	<i>Mary Jo Knudsen</i>	<i>Marc Medefind</i>

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
					SOV Weekly News sent via email	Church Clean-up 9 AM
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom Lenten Bible Study 11:30 AM Conference Room					SOV Weekly News sent via email	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom  Potluck following service				MAUNDY THURSDAY  Birthday Luncheon 11:30 AM Scott's Diner	GOOD FRIDAY  10 AM Maundy/Good Friday Service	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<b>EASTER SUNDAY</b>  Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom	Council Meeting 10 AM				SOV Weekly News sent via email	
27	28	29	30			
Worship 10 AM Sanctuary & Zoom  Welcome Luncheon						



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1455 E Yosemite Ave  
Merced CA 95340

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED