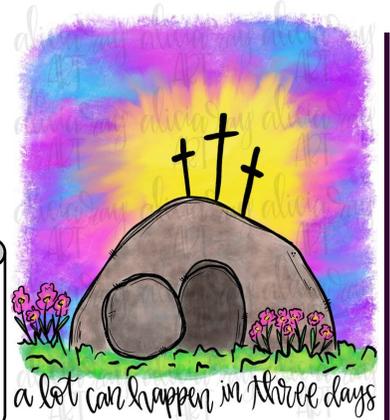




April 2022 The Oakleaves



SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*
818-789-0215 • Fax: 818-789-037 • 14847 Dickens Street, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
e-mail: shermanoakslutheran@yahoo.com • www.shermanoakslutheran.org



Holy Week Services

✝ Maundy Thursday, April 14, 7 pm



Holy Thursday



✝ Good Friday, April 15, 7 pm

Holy Week

✝ Holy Saturday—Experience Holy Week, April 16, 5 pm

✝ Easter Sunday, April 17: Sunrise Service, 6:21 am (that day's exact time of sunrise)

Easter Service, 8 am; Pancake Breakfast, 9 am; Easter Festival Service, 10 am



Easter Egg hunt, after the 10 am service

Easter Lilies

Easter is a chance for us to beautify the chancel area with Lilies in honor of or in memory of family members or special people in our lives.

If you would like to purchase an Easter Lily, email the following information to shermanoakslutheran@yahoo.com



Your Name, I will purchase _____ Easter Lilies.
"In Honor of" or "In Memory of" who?

Mail or bring in your check, (made out to Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church) and place in the offering plate.

Turn in your completed form and check by Monday NOON, April 11, 2022.

(You may take your plant home after the final Easter service.)

The cost of each Easter Lily plant is \$10.00.

"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

1 Corinthians 15:20



We are looking for volunteers to make Soup for our Lenten Services.

The sign-up sheet is off the Church Narthex or call the office.

Open dates are: March 30 & April 6

Mary & Martha Guild



by Evelyn Christel

LWML
Lutheran Women in Mission

Just the word “April” makes me smile! It brings thoughts of sunshine, flowers growing, etc. And most of all “Easter!” which brings back many happy events—the girls almost always received a new dress (and maybe even a hat). Helping mom with making the Easter eggs different colors. Mom and dad hiding the Easter eggs in the house and outside for kids to find. Hope you had memories like that and continue the events, especially if you have young children. God bless everyone throughout this wonderful month!

The past months have been difficult. I am looking forward to better times and hope that you are too. We are working on projects that may or may not happen, but will keep you posted.

Tea Time—Spring Celebration

We (**all women**) have been invited by the LWML Guild at Canoga Park Lutheran Church to attend their Spring Celebration on **Saturday, April 30**, 11:30 a.m. for registration through mid afternoon. Come for lunch, Bible Study, special music, great conversation, and a variety of teas and delicious desserts.

We are asked to **dress for a tea party** and **bring our tea cups/mugs and teapots**. (Cups will be provided for those who cannot bring one.)

Bring **food** gift cards for the CSUN Food Pantry Ingathering, (Ralphs, Vons, Pavilions, Wal-Mart, Target).

An offering will be gathered to benefit **Lutheran Bible Translators/Federwitz Family** via Circuit 3 Mission Society. Checks should be made out to **LWML Zone 3**.

The cost is \$10 which includes lunch. A sign-up sheet, **on the door of the Mary & Martha closet in the Fellowship Hall, with the deadline April 20**. Please consider attending.



Children’s Center

by Diane Nixon, Director

Last month the children with their teachers celebrated Dr. Seuss’ birthday all week with crazy hats and crazy hair days along with many other fun activities. The children had their pictures taken and grouped together for a class picture to remember their teacher and friends they were with this year.

Everyone will have an opportunity to discuss, ask questions and learn about the journey to the cross. They are looking forward to hunting for eggs, enjoying class parties and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Teachers are practicing songs with their children to sing for their families at the Spring Sing on Friday, April 29th at 9:00. Our teachers are amazing at encouraging and teaching the children to sing and sometimes even get a little choreography mixed into the program. Spring is in the air, classes have been going on nature walks looking for God’s little creatures and colorful flowers. This is the time of season when God has graciously gifted us with warm weather and a palate of stunning colors. My prayer is we all take the time to embrace and enjoy God’s beautiful gifts.

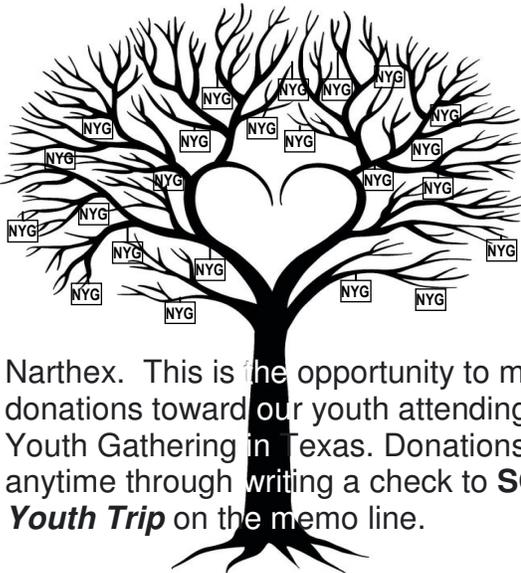
Youth Group News...

2022 LCMS National Youth Gathering - *In all Things*

July 9 - 13, 2022 in Houston, TX

Check it out at: <https://lcmsgathering.com>

Thanks for your support in previous fundraisers. There will be many more coming up!



The Giving Tree fundraiser is back! Look for the small tree with envelopes on the branches in the

Narthex. This is the opportunity to make cash donations toward our youth attending the National Youth Gathering in Texas. Donations can be made anytime through writing a check to **SOLC** with **Youth Trip** on the memo line.



by Chris Gordon

We are still *short* about **\$1,700** in fundraising for the National Youth Gathering.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Time for Spring **CLEANING** and **CLEANSING!**

If only you had more time and extra hands...

Hire our Youth Team of Lexi, Torrey and Cal...individually or all together for whatever project you have been wanting to tackle.

Will work for donations made toward the trip to the National Youth Gathering.

To work out the details, you can speak to the kids directly after service, call the church office or email your request to animator95@sbcglobal.net

Weekend schedule for Children's Education:

On Saturdays:

- Sermon lesson time in the Fellowship Hall (targeting a younger age group ~ 2nd grade and under)
- Children's Bible study time option at 6:30 pm during the adult Bible study (targeting an older age group ~ 3rd grade and up)

On Sundays:

- Children's Sunday School time for **all ages** starts at 9 am in the Shining Stars room during the adult Bible study
- Children's Choir time begins at 9:30 am
- Sermon Lesson Time in the Fellowship Hall (targeting a younger age group ~ 2nd grade and under)
- Nursery Services are available for the entirety of the Sunday Service for children **under 4** years old in the Shining Stars classroom



An Easter Experience for Families

Sunday, April 10 (noon-2pm)

What better time to gather and celebrate but the Easter Season!

Together, we will explore the Journey to the Cross and experience the life changing message of HOPE.

Lunch will be served. **Please RSVP** to your Sunday School teacher, for the fun-filled and reflective Easter event, by Sunday, April 3.



Stewardship

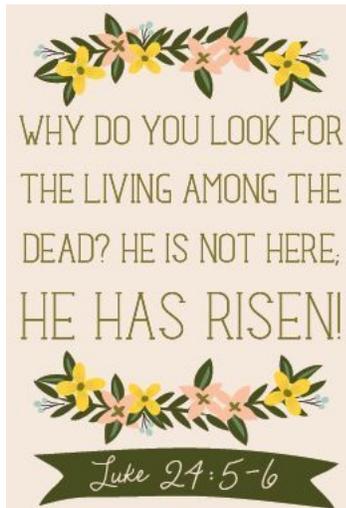
The Living Among the Dead

by Andréa Vasilo

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?'" (Luke 24:1-5)

So the Scripture begins the account of Jesus' Resurrection, which we celebrate this month on Easter Sunday. But before we get to the good stuff – the "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" – let's examine the quote from the end of this passage: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" As it turns out, this not only applies to Jesus' victory over death, but also to the daily struggle of all Christians.

Despite our faith in God, how often do we seek joy and comfort in earthly things? How often do we pursue material wealth in the hopes that it will bring us spiritual wealth as well? In other words, how often do we seek **the living among the dead?**



As sinners, we are all guilty of worshipping false idols from time to time, setting our eyes and hearts on things rather than the Lord who provides them. But He calls us to use these gifts not for our own advancement, but for the advancement of His Kingdom. As children of God, we've been entrusted with His world and everything in it, and so we should take care of these blessings accordingly.

As Pope Francis said in one of his Easter addresses, let's ask ourselves this question "when we close ourselves within many forms of selfishness or self-complacency; when we allow ourselves to be seduced by the earthly powers and the things of this world, forgetting God and neighbor; when we place our trust in worldly vanities, in money, in success."

This Easter, and every day, let us remember Jesus and His sacrifice for us. Let us put our trust in God the Father. And let us use His gifts to help those in our midst. "He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" Happy Easter!

Don't forget: if you are not yet comfortable attending in-person worship services, you can still support SOLC by mailing offerings to the church, downloading the Vanco app, Tithe.ly app, online "bill pay" through your bank, or giving online...www.shermanoakslutheran.org.

Thank You!!! Ralphs and Amazon Smile



Between Dec. 1, 2021 & Feb. 28, 2022, 14 SOLC households were important

supporters in our community. Through the Ralphs Community Rewards program we were given \$79.44 for our ministry at Sherman Oaks Lutheran! Thank you to the 14 households for linking their rewards card to SOLC!!! If you are linked, you will see at the bottom of your receipt "Contribution to Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church!"

AmazonSmile

Foundation donated \$11.33 to SOLC for the AmazonSmile program activity between Oct. 1 & Dec. 31, 2021.



Check out our church website under "online giving" to the icon "GIVE to SOLC," click on it, **thus giving through Vanco.** The best thing about this is, Vanco directly sends the report into Servant Keeper, which is our database and where the yearly giving statements are generated!

As we incorporate Vanco into our weekly routine we will start using the many functions that Vanco offers to congregations.



Join us in wishing God's blessings on those celebrating their birthday or anniversary this month:



Birthdays:

		Maria Marks Lee	4/15
Cathy Dallas	4/4	Jewel Leak	4/16
Randy Vargas	4/6	Dolly Kintaudi Lukata	4/16
Bethany Brinton	4/7	Ryder Villari	4/17
David Seaver	4/7	Isaac Gordon	4/18
Claire O'Byrne	4/12	Christian Malmin	4/19
		Tatiana Faus	4/22

Anniversary:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Jamie & Beth Cleary	(26 yrs)	4/13
Brandon & Tatiana Faus	(8 yrs)	4/24
Anthony Lee & Maria Marks	(?? yrs)	4/24
Jerry & Tahirih Petryha	(17 yrs)	4/30
David & Bette Quesada	(11 yrs)	4/30



Children's Hunger Fund adventure

by Chris Gordon

This was an impromptu visit to fill some last minute openings

on a Friday morning; but it was just the right time for 3 newbies to join us!

What a blast to serve together with Dick, Inga and Jim as we checked expiration dates on donated Food Packs from local churches.

Then the hair nets went on so we could make soup mixes to go to families around the world.

Watch for another



opportunity to serve coming soon!



Mercy Packs

Thank you to those who continue to send in orders of hygiene products and tracts from Amazon. We are good in those areas for now.

However, our food bins are empty.

Please shop for:



proteins like tuna or nuts



individually packaged crackers (no chips)

Small Cracker packs



granola or protein bars



full water bottles



Cash donations are always welcome if you don't have time for the shopping part.

Just mark an envelope for "Mercy Packs" or write a check to SOLC with Mercy Packs on the memo line.

REMINDER: We are also collecting any and all **non perishables** to assist Central Lutheran in making bags of groceries for families in need. These donations can all be placed on the stage in the Fellowship Hall, near or in the red bin. *Thanks!*

(See more info on Mercy Packs on the top of page 6.)



CHF Poverty Encounter

Located within *Children's Hunger Fund*; **Poverty Encounter** is a 16,000 square foot exhibit that takes you into four immersive environments in the developing world. After boarding an airplane and taking a simulated flight, you will visit a dump in Guatemala City, walk the earthquake-damaged streets in Haiti, go inside a brickyard in Nepal, and enter an underground sewer in Romania. Each environment highlights the story of a real child living in these circumstances. Onsite tours include a service activity, allowing you to respond Biblically by providing both help and hope to those in need.

Plan Your Visit

- Appropriate for all ages.
- Advance tickets are required; just \$7 a person for a group of 15 or more. Ages 5 and under are free.
- The experience includes a 75-minute guided tour of the Poverty Encounter exhibit and a 30-minute food packing activity (allow about 2 hours).
- Please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your tour start time.
- We recommend guests dress comfortably and wear closed-toe shoes.

Poverty Encounter is located at: 13931 Balboa Blvd. Sylmar, CA 91342 (818) 979-7090.

Reach out to Chris Gordon if you are interested in going as a group. **Once we have 15 people she will schedule a Saturday morning time for us to attend.**

Refill our Mercy Packs

by Chris Gordon

Now is a good time to refill our Mercy Packs! All non-perishable, boxed or canned food items can be placed in the red bin in the Fellowship Hall.

Remember, too, you can go on line at Amazon with a click of a button - no need to go out and shop or wonder what might be a current need - it's all on our **Mercy Packs SOLC Amazon list!** (You are always welcome to go out and shop for items needed though, too!!) ☺

This list, on Amazon, allows us to inform you what are the current "high priority" needs, adjusted as supplies and donations come in and as seasons and weather change.

This is also an easy and efficient way to use monetary donations. If you prefer to donate via check or otherwise, your donation can easily be applied to the most current, high priority need using this list. Please reach out Rianne Utecht with questions.

Called to *Serve* Thank You!

by Breilyn Brantley

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere." 2 Corinthians 2:14

Let's **give thanks** to those who have given their time and talents here at SOLC in **March, to:**

- ☺ those who donated to the mercy packs. Remember you can still give through Amazon.
- ☺ all who continue to support our youth through their fundraising efforts to attend the LCMS gathering this year.
- ☺ Dustin and 'friends' for the beautiful transformation of the Prayer Garden.
- ☺ Tom Pelton and all who have brought treats for fellowship.
- ☺ all the great Sunday School teachers.
- ☺ all who volunteered to make soup for the Lent soup suppers: Laurel Seaver, Faus family, Isaac Gordon, Jim & Inga Windsor.
- ☺ Tiffany and Asmik for covering extra details for the worship services while Mike was away on family matters.
- ☺ Jamie Cleary for getting the beautiful Holy Week banners put up in the Fellowship Hall and to Liz for keeping us on track.
- ☺ ALL putting in extra to make this Easter season memorable. Join us in praying for all who God will draw near during this time.
- ☺ **Cindy Hanna** for years of dedicated service, too many to count, as the SOLC Director of Christian Education. Cindy has touched the lives and hearts of countless children through her sound, loving, Biblical instruction and sacrificial leadership of endless programs to make church 'the place to be.' She is 'retiring' that particular *hat* but we know she will still be working for the Lord as God calls, and for that we are blessed.

If there are anyone out there you feel deserves thanks for giving their time and talents to the church, please email me at brei04@hotmail.com.



Council highlights ~ March 15, 2022 mtg in person!

by Ann McClung,
Council Secretary

◆ **Pastor's Report:** Pastor revamped the High school group format. A VBS family reached out to Pastor, showing the wide reach of VBS. The Easter services were discussed and clarified (see on Oakleaves cover), including the traditional 9:00 breakfast.

The Utecht's fourth baby girl, Alaytheia, is due May 24.

English District Convention, **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."** Luke 10:27, June 20-22 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church (PDC) Conference is June 28-30 at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest in Orange County. Church members are welcome to attend at their own expense. Details to follow. Our youth are still raising money for the **National Youth Gathering, July 9-13, in Houston, Texas.**

◆ **Vice President's Report:** Eric Anderson shared the usher training went well. There are about 8 people ready to serve as ushers. If you are interested, speak to Eric Anderson.

◆ **Treasurer's Report:** Leslie O'Byrne provided Reports: Financial Institution, Profit/Loss Budget Performance, and Contribution Accumulation. The church has done a great job keeping expenses down so we are officially in the black. A new church copy machine/printer will be needed in the near future. Time is getting short for youth to raise the remaining minimum \$1700 needed by July for the National Youth Gathering. Easter sales will help, but church may need to pitch in some money. Members have allocated Thrivent Choice dollars to be applied for this good cause, must let Liz know of any specific allocation of Choice funds donations. The school contributions are up 14%.

◆ **Financial Secretary's Report:** Heather Wolter reported the February contributions are on target.

◆ **Mary & Martha Guild Report:** Evelyn Christel reminded the Council that the M&M G's main purpose is to make money to give away. Due to Covid they have not been able to have fundraising events. They continue to support a Concordia Seminary student. Keep watch for Mother's Day cake sales. Have any new ideas? See Evelyn. They are always on the lookout for other events.

◆ **Trustee Report:** Larry Hanna reported the Memorial Garden looks really good since Dustin Lee refurbished it for his Eagle Scout project. A dedication of the remodeled Sanctuary will be scheduled as soon as we can get it together (from two years ago). A work party is needed to spruce up the church and grounds before Easter.

◆ **School Board Report:** Dorene Rubin reported the school budget is completed, thanks to Dennis and the other Task Force members. The projected tithe to SOLC is \$66,000. [This year's tithe is \$60,000.] Each month the school enrollment fluctuates. Masks are now optional, but staff still gets tested weekly. Board approved a new salary matrix that considers years of service/experience and education. The matrix used is from the Pacific Southwest District.

◆ **Outreach Committee Report:** Rhonda Renneker reviewed the past Easter Vigil Saturday service experience, to possibly make it similar to the Living Nativity format. Ideas are encouraged. The corner sign project was discussed. The decision was made to give Larry, Rhonda, and Dick six months more to see about overruling the city permit process for the electronic sign. If they aren't successful, changes to the current sign to make the letters more visible will be considered. Thanks to Dick Robertson for all his research and expertise in this area.

◆ **President's Report:** David Seaver reported that the Leadership "Advance" is Saturday, April 2. **Council positions are opening up... Would you like to get involved by servicing on Council???** Speak with one of the Nominating Committee members: Larry, Dick, or Rhonda.

February 2022 Financial Facts:

Total Contributions	\$15,406.99
SOLCC Contribution	\$6,164.00
Total Expenses	(\$19,546.72)
Liability/EQ Premium	(\$2,000.00)
In the black:	\$23.28

A Message from Pastor...

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

Law and Gospel: The Foundation of the Faith

I remember being a student back at seminary in Fort Wayne and reading the following thesis by C.F.W. Walther, the first president of The LCMS: *"The doctrinal contents of the entire Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, are made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other, viz., the Law and the Gospel."* (God's No and God's Yes, Thesis I.) That is to say that all of Scripture should be interpreted in terms of Law and Gospel, and that properly understanding this distinction is the key to understanding the Scriptures. In fact, Walther presents another thesis concerning Law and Gospel, and it is this: *"The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book."* (Thesis IV)

So what is the distinction between Law and Gospel?

Part 1: The Law. The Law sets forth what God demands of us. It shows how God demands that we live a perfect and sinless life, that we be holy, as God is holy. The 10 Commandments are a great example of the Law. They set out clearly what we are supposed to do and reveal God's wrath and punishment against those who break that Law. We must remember that God is holy, and says "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. 19:2) Every sin, every evil thought, every selfish action rightly deserves God's anger and punishment. This is the teaching of the Law. When we hear the Law, it should drive us to realize just how sinful we are, how much we deserve condemnation from God, and how little we deserve God's favor.

Part 2: The Gospel. When we understand the Law and just how much God demands from us, it is then that we can understand the full sweetness of the Gospel. The Gospel tells us of God's free gift of

grace to unworthy sinners who deserved only condemnation. The Gospel tells of the work of Jesus, and how he died in our place to take on himself the punishment that we deserved on account of the Law. (Think of verses like John 3:16.) It tells of how "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 5:10)

This Gospel message is God's final word to us, and it is a word of love. We might summarize the whole of Law and Gospel like this: The Law shows us what wretched sinners we are and deserving of punishment, and the Gospel shows us that for the sake of Jesus Christ we receive grace and every blessing instead.

This understanding is foundational to understanding the Scripture, and it is foundational to what it means to be a Christian. After all, to be a Christian is nothing less than to profess that even though I deserved God's wrath on account of all the things I have done wrong (Law), yet I look to Jesus Christ in faith to receive his undeserved grace and forgiveness (Gospel).

The Law-Gospel paradigm permeates everything that we do and who we are as Christians. Every weekend we do "Confession and Absolution," where we confess that we have sinned against the Law, and yet hear forgiveness spoken because of the Gospel. Law and Gospel provides the foundation for good works, for we understand that we do good works not so that we can please God and fulfill the Law, but in thankful response to the forgiveness given to us in the Gospel. Law and Gospel forms the basis for our relationship to others, for we live as "forgiveness people" who are willing to forgive one another, just as Christ has forgiven us.

May we all continue to live with our eyes opened to God's Law, in order that we might realize just how undeserving of God's love we are, and also with our eyes wide open to the Gospel, that we might know how great is God's undeserved love to us.

-Pastor Utecht