



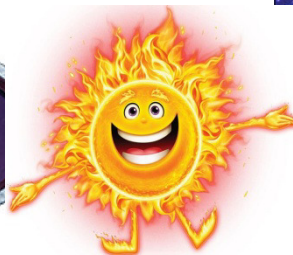
August 2023

The Oakleaves

SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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When life feels dark...
shine Jesus' light!

Highlights from Vacation Bible School

July, 2023

by Chris Gordon

Faith Building Fun! I like what Ann McClung put up on the parking lot sign because it perfectly defines what happened here at Stellar VBS last week! Even though you walked into a different galaxy where the energy was high and the music was loud; the FAITH BUILDING message of JESUS was shared in every moment and beautifully practiced by all ages! It is doubtful that any of you have missed that message at this point but it is worthy of



repeating: Shine Jesus' Light! What a privilege to be chosen and **bathed** in the love and light of Christ. It is our choice to **bask** in God's love and light and then **blast** that same love and light into the world! We were beyond blessed to have **54 children and their families** registered for VBS this summer. They came from every-where: within our church, preschool, other churches and our surrounding neighborhoods. To God be ALL the Glory! Our Lord is good to bless God's people as they unite for God! While it was 'just 1 week'; the fruit of our labor is eternal! Thank you to ALL who leaned in to Shine Jesus' Light on this Extraordinary Mission! Our work is not finished yet, please continue to pray over changed hearts and gospel spread. It is a privilege to serve alongside each of you!

Just a few (LOL) thank you's:

Tahirih - for joyfully co-directing;

Pastor - for hands-on support, stellar leading, cosmic connecting with visitors, kids and volunteers;

Liz - for being a patient leader (the rock) in Mission Control;

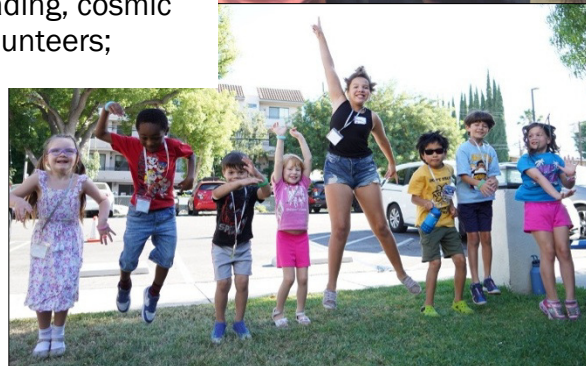
Jeff - for stepping in to direct decor and hold me together;

Jim - for being available, willing to do anything, and all the hours he put in;

Mike - for all things tech and social media with an easy "sure";

Mark - for being our super rad Rocket man!

Shauna - for being a constant God Sighting;



(continued on page 3)



When people are sad...
shine Jesus' light!

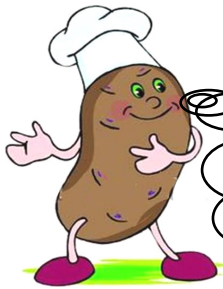
Mary & Martha Guild

We will resume the Women's Bible Study on **Saturday, September 9, 9:00 a.m.** Bring your Bibles.



Our next Mary & Martha Guild meeting will convene on **Sat., October 14.**

Upcoming fundraisers will be:



**Potato Bake on
Sun., Nov. 5,
2023**

**Cookie Walk on Sun.,
February 11, 2024**



from the Children's Center

by Director, Kimberly Ogas

SOLCC's summer camp session will be wrapping up in mid-August. Our **last day of summer fun is August 11**. We've had a whale of a good time with Wild Rep-tacular Animals, a desert reptile hunt, a pet fashion show that we called "The Pet Gala," a puppy experience where we learned about and snuggled with real puppies, and bathing suit days with water tables, squirt bottles, and sprinklers. It has been a hot summer, but a **COOL** experience for everyone.



We will miss all of our older children as they leave SOLCC to go to other schools for kindergarten. We hope they all come back to visit us soon! They will always be a part of our SOLCC family.

Our **regular school session begins on Thursday, August 17**, after the teachers have transformed their rooms back to their preschool learning environments. The teachers work very hard to get all of the work done during their 3-day "Teacher Work Days." We are very proud and appreciative of our outstanding staff.

Our new year of preschool will focus on themes that include: Welcome Week, Friendship, All About Me, and My Family. We will be concentrating on getting to know one another and easing any separation anxiety that is sure to take place. Some of our little ones are separating from their parents for the very first time. This can be a frightening event for them. We hope you will be in prayer with us, praying that the new school year brings us all joy, new friends, and a closer relationship with God. *Thank you for your support!*

**Remember to check out
our new website:
Solpreschool.com**

PS: 11 of our students attended the recent church sponsored Vacation Bible School. They were excited to share this fun event -- **in space!**



Sherman Oaks Lutheran Children's Center
14847 Dickens Street, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
Tel: (818) 784-9480 · Fax: (818) 784-5736



(VBS Thank you's continued from page 1)

Dick - for the "Out of this World" crew party;
Deserie and Nina Norgaard - for driving from Torrance daily to Shine Jesus' love on our littles;



Ray - for sharing his incredible photography of the Heavens

Advertising Team - for covering every angle: Rhonda, Dick, Alan, Sandra, Liz, Fay, Lorrie, Janet, and Robert.



Registration Team - for preparations and patient endurance - Heather, Beth, Dick and Diane.



Decorating Team - Stellar work creating from other's leftovers! Jeff, Tahirih, Michael, Jim, Quinten, Ava, Axl, Jessica, Tiffany, Fay, Sonia, Chansom, Vanh, Sammy, Miriam, Janet, Robert, Elaine, Nick, Kayla,

Christian, Charlotte, Carl, Pastor, Anna, Brandon, Diane, Shauna, Larry N, Adam, Joy, Rick, Evan, Laura, Cindy, Larry H, Rianne, Akyra, Hephzibah, Zephyra, Abby, Megan, Michele, Dorene, Dave-Ryan, Elijah, Jonah, Hope, Christy, and Cyrus.

Crew Leaders - for keeping all our littlest astronauts and space cadets safe and

focused - Dave-Ryan, Mary Elizabeth, Gabriel, Megan, Trevor, Noah, Lucia, Ariana, Tahirih, Hope, Nina, and Deserie.

Station Commanders - praying, preparing and propelling the children forward in Faith Building Fun - Pastor, Anna, Hope, Shauna, Rianne, Mary, Jessica, Cindy, Kayla, Sonia (with helpers: Michele, Fay + Vahn), Christian, Elaine and Caleb.

Family Dinner Crew - Tahirih, Inga, Isaac, Jim, Jeff, Christian, Tristen, Fay, Vanh, Michele and Ann McClung.

For ALL who donated, gathered and PRAYED...you powered us! (more on pg 4, 6)

In the Light of His grace, Chris Gordon



Utecht girls driving the Rover home! That's a wrap!

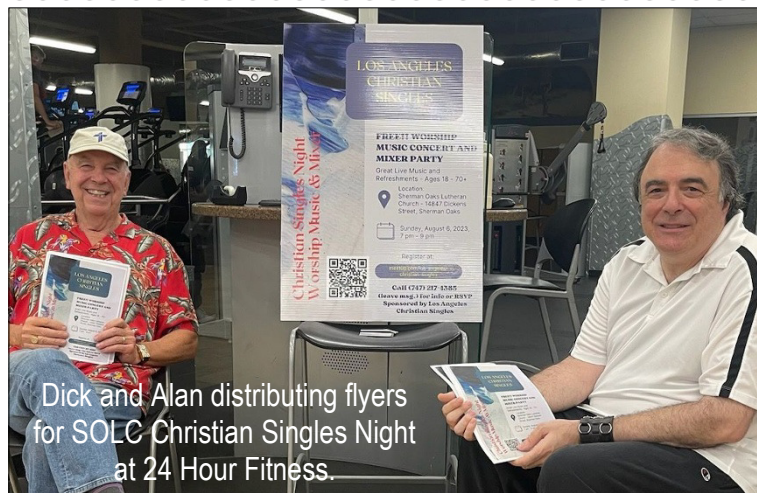


Christian Singles Concert and Mixer Party at SOLC Sunday!!!

Sunday night, August 6, 7 pm-9 pm, in the Fellowship Hall, we are holding our first Christian Singles Worship Music Concert and Mixer Party!

This singles event is open to Christian believers of all denominations, ages 18 - 70+, and features live worship music from Alan Cohen and his ensemble, as well as a

performance by Mike Renneker. Refreshments will be provided, and the event is free! Bring friends, and make new ones! For more information, or to RSVP, leave a voice message at (747) 217-4385, or visit [meetup.com/los-angeles-christian-singles](https://www.meetup.com/los-angeles-christian-singles). See you there!



Dick and Alan distributing flyers for SOLC Christian Singles Night at 24 Hour Fitness.

Mission Project for this year's Vacation Bible School

In keeping with our theme "Shine Jesus' Light!" we spotlighted **Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry**. Our "stellar" VBS youth were able to accomplish their mission. Mission Control tabulated the following health and school supplies, and food items for needy children across the border in Mexico. **Thank you for the donations!**

soaps	27	band-aids	22
toothbrushes	64	wash cloths	8
nail clippers	18	bath towels	3
hair brushes	15	baby wipes	8
shampoos	23	dental floss	4
scissors	17	backpacks	3
crayons (boxes)	4	diapers 1 bx of 108 +	
travel bassinets & co-sleeper	4		

plus various food items.



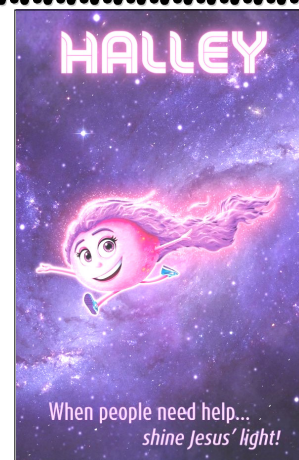
(LBCM) is located in San Diego. Their coordinator is Pastor Ramon Contreras.

Churches in Mexico are connected through Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry. There are many people within those church communities who have material and spiritual needs. Pastor Contreras

Lutheran
Border
Concerns
Ministry



VBS kids donating for LBCM



has worked since 2010 to: expand programs to feed and sponsor children, help youth stay in school, and train lay pastors at the Bible institute level. On Sun., Aug. 6, Jeff and Chris Gordon will meet Pastor Contreras in San Diego to give LBCM donations collected at VBS.

A New Pictorial Directory is available in

either a hard copy (8.5"x 14" or 11"x17") or from our database. Call or email the church office for your copy.

Thank you to our Ushers August 2023

8/6	Dennis Werner & Charlene Irwin
8/13	Eric Anderson & Robert True
8/20	Chansom Zayabouth & Chuck Spitler
8/27	Christian Hinrichs & Dennis Werner



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



Birthdays:

Donovan Perez	8/1	Rhonda Renneker	8/23
Cindy Hanna	8/10	Dick Robertson	8/23
Akyra Utecht	8/21	Dorene Rubin	8/23
		Elaine Werner	8/28
		Rolain Tankou	8/29

Anniversary:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Alan & Dorene Rubin	43 yrs	8/3
Don & Sandra Bostrom	59 yrs	8/14
Terry & Cathy Dallas	19 yrs	8/15
Jim & Inga Windsor	44 yrs	8/25

August 2023

Calendar for Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church

All dates and times are subject to change

Tues, Aug 1	Elders meeting, 7:00 p.m.		
Thurs, Aug 3	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		
Sat, Aug 5	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.	
Sun, Aug 6	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
	Christian Singles Night, Fellowship Hall, 7:00-9:00 p.m.		
Tues, Aug 8	High School Youth Group, in the Loft, 6:30-8:00 p.m.		
Wed, Aug 9	School Board, 6:00 p.m.		
Thurs, Aug 10	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		
Sat, Aug 12	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.	
Sun, Aug 13	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, Aug 15	Council, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person</i>		
Thurs, Aug 17	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		
Sat, Aug 19	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.	
Sun, Aug 20	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, Aug 22	The Oakleaves Articles Due, noon in Liz's "in box"		
Thurs, Aug 24	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		
Sat, Aug 26	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.	
Sun, Aug 27	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Sat, Sept 2	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.	
Sun, Sept 3	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Mon, Sept 4	Labor Day — Offices and School Closed		
Tues, Sept 5	High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Loft		
Thurs, Sept 7	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		
Sat, Sept 9	Women's Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, Sept 10	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.	Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, Sept 12	Elders meeting, 7:00 p.m.		
Wed, Sept 13	School Board, 6:00 p.m.		
Thurs, Sept 14	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>		

Called to *Serve* Thank you!

by Breilyn Brantley

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Colossians 3:16-17

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



- ☺ all who volunteered for VBS.
- ☺ the 54 kids who were registered to attend. (see more VBS Thank yous on pages 1, 3, 5, 6)
- ☺ the many who have donated to the **Above and Beyond** fund this month.
- ☺ all who donated to the mercy

packs, **you still can donate through Amazon.**

- ☺ those who volunteer their time to help with all the activities at our church.
- ☺ all the great Sunday School teachers.
- ☺ Jim Windsor for making the Loft closet more functional for our events by installing a hanging rack (see pic 1). It will



help esp. for the Living Nativity. Anyone want to get started on organizing costuming now?! Call Chris Gordon.

☺ Tahirih with the Loft closet redo (see pic 2). The old shelving will be repurposed by Central Lutheran and their food bank.



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

VBS Thank yous... PS - A sincerely, warm *thank you* for those who shared their written encouragements in the gorgeous Galaxy Bible given me for Stellar. You have brightly Shone Jesus' Light and overflowed my heart! There is still plenty of room to include your message, if you missed the chance.



A special thank you to 1 of our visiting VBS families, the Schmit family, who overflowed Jesus' light with abundant offers of help, resources, and a generous financial donation.

Items Needed to make more **Mercy Packs**

"Giving to help others."

Mercy Pack baskets remain empty.



Please consider a donation or supplies to fill bags of hope for the unhoused in our community.

Use the **Amazon** link for easy ordering!
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3JEGWVF-P3N-50V?ref=wl_share



Our Mercy Packs have been a wonderful SOLC ministry. Many people have been blessed by these bags of goodies. **Cash donations** are always **welcome**. Just mark an envelope for "Mercy Packs" or write a check to SOLC with *Mercy Packs* on the memo line.



(VBS continued from page 3)

PSS - All decor left on the patio is up for grabs. Please let any churches, schools, clubs or neighbors know they may have it for free!

Thankfully Pastor Bill, Marlene and Pastor Manny from Chapel of the Cross came and got what they will need for their VBS; still there is plenty left, thanks to the generosity of: Trinity Lutheran in Simi Valley
 Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley
 Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena
 Church of the Rocky Peak in Chatsworth



Council highlights ~ June 20, 2023 mtg in person!

by Beth Cleary, Council Secretary

◆ **Pastor's Report:** Pastor Utecht is excited to have four people attend Sunday worship who live on his street.

◆ **President's Report:** David Seaver reminded Council to get their family picture in the new directory.

◆ **Vice President's Report:** Dick Robertson reported on a marketing program which targets families with preschool age. The goal is to help fill our preschool classes. At a meeting on June 25 it was approved to sign-up with the vendor and launch. We will aim for ads in July and August for the new school year.

◆ **Elder's Report:** Dick Robertson reported for Luigi who stated all Elders are being held accountable to reach out to non-attending members hoping to increase our average week-end attendance from 78 to 100 by January, 2024.

◆ **Trustee Report:** Larry Hanna reported that Michael O'Byrne has worked on some lights. Tree trimming at the parsonage is scheduled. Larry will schedule a church work party, soon. Larry also reported that the church needs a new roof-*sooner than later*. We have \$10,000 in a designated fund, but will look at options to finance this big expense.

◆ **Treasurer's & Financial Secretary's Reports:** Leslie & Heather shared that the financial reports show slight improvements. It was recommended the money in the LCEF account be designated as our "3 month reserve" savings. This is a permanent savings account and is not easily touched.

◆ **School Board Report:** no report this month.

◆ **Stewardship Committee Report:** Laura Murcott is sharing a book recommended by Pastor for the Stewardship Committee to read.

◆ **Christian Education Report:** Chris Gordon recommends tracking attendance, so if someone is absent for more than 2 weeks we reach out. **VBS registration is open!** There is an opening for the Sunday School Superintendent.



◆ **Outreach Committee Report:** Rhonda reported Lorraine Salcedo is joining the Outreach Com. Asmik is taking a break from teaching ESL classes until September. Rhonda recommended that we revive the Greeters program.

The new **church pictorial directory** is almost finished. We will print the directories ourselves in two sizes 8.5"x14" (bulletin size) and 11"x17" (Oakleaves size). We also will notify those in the directory for the way to get to the on-line directory in our database.

◆ **New Business:** Rhonda reported Alan Cohen requested Council approve the Christian Singles Night to be held in the SOLC Fellowship Hall, possibly once a month. Sunday, August 6 is the first one planned (see page 4). Attendees must be 18 years old to participate. Alan is responsible for clean up and leaving the room as it was prior to the start of the event. The motion to approve the Christian Singles Night was carried.

Healthy Life Program meets
Every Sunday • noon-1:00 p.m.
in the Narthex www.healthylifeprogram.org
"Eat Right, Think Right,
and Get a Move On!"

SOLC Financial Picture

As of June 30, 2023 & YTD is 7/1/22-6/30/23

	Month	Year-To-Date
Contributions	\$12,152.59	\$172,633.67
Compared to 2021-2022		-8.3%
Preschool tithe	\$ 8,732.00	\$ 73,958.36
Compared to 2021-2022		1.07%
Expenses	\$21,315.23	\$296,456.07
Budget	\$21,259.77	\$294,986.31

Above & Beyond as of 7/23/23 \$36,434.74
 (This number **includes** the matching funds.)

A Message from Pastor...

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

Preparing for Big Things through the Small Things

Nearly everyone is familiar with the stories of Daniel in the lion's den and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. These are powerful examples of people who were willing to stay true to God and live out the faith in some really big ways. Yet many are unfamiliar with a much lesser known story from earlier in the book of Daniel, which tells how they practiced faithfulness in a much *smaller* way.

Daniel 1:8-16 tells of how these four men were first taken into captivity in Babylon and brought to serve in the king's court. As such, they were given food to eat from the king, with the expectation that they should be well-fed and strong. However, the food that was given would have "defiled" them. (The text doesn't specify why, but it seems that either the food violated the dietary laws of the Old Testament or perhaps some of the meat had been sacrificed to idols.) So, they went to the chief eunuch who was in charge of the food and asked to eat only vegetables. He resisted initially, since it was his job to make them as healthy as possible and this would be a poor way to do it, but they eventually persuaded him.

This story demonstrates their faithfulness in a much lower-stakes encounter. They weren't being asked to full-out worship a false god, just to fudge on a dietary code (which would have been easy to justify since they had been taken into captivity!) It also wasn't a matter of life and death—there was no fiery furnace or lion's den to be seen, just a hesitant eunuch and peer pressure. I believe that through this small practice of faithfulness, they were being prepared for the greater trials that were to come.

In the same way, I believe that each one of us can be continually preparing for big moments through the small ones. This idea first struck me as part of our conversation in our Sunday morning Bible study "Christ in Traffic." How do you react to the rude driver that cuts you off and then honks at you for no reason? Normally we

don't attach much spiritual significance to such an event or our reaction, but what if instead it became an opportunity to practice Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"? Forgiving and praying for someone who cut you off may be a small (but difficult!) way to prepare yourself for a much more difficult test you will one day face, such as forgiving a close friend who betrayed you badly or a boss who has terribly mistreated you. Like Daniel and his three friends, use the small moments to prepare your heart for the big ones.

This same concept can be applied in many different ways. Perhaps, like Daniel, you might face a "small persecution" like your friend

"...use the small moments to prepare your heart for the big ones."

rolling their eyes at you because you are going to church on Sunday morning instead of going to the park with them, yet this is preparation for a lion's den of persecution that will come later. We could also see facing the "small affliction" of catching a cold as a preparation for the much bigger affliction of

"catching cancer." I've read accounts about how Dietrich Bonhoeffer (a German pastor during WWII) was known for bringing great encouragement and joy even to his fellow prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. If you or I were put in a similarly challenging context, would we have the faith and strength to be able to provide such encouragement, or would our spirit be overcome by the hardship? The answer may very well have to do with whether we are building those "faith muscles" right now by being an encourager and joy-bringer in the midst of "difficult" situations today like a stressful work or home environment.

So today, I encourage you to consider where there might be opportunities for you to live out your faith in small ways. This way, when your "lion's den moment" comes, by God's grace you will be ready. Amen.

In Christ, Pastor Utecht