



November 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

Gathered Together with Thankful Hearts



Mary & Martha Guild preparing for LWML Fall Rally (see page 2)



FEET gathering kids & adults (see page 3)

Daylight Saving Time ends.

Fall back on Sunday, Nov. 6 at 2:00 a.m.



Many fire departments encourage people to change the batteries in their smoke detectors when they change their clocks because Daylight Saving Time provides a convenient reminder.

“A working smoke detector more than doubles a person’s chances of surviving a home fire.”

Pumpkin Carving-October 30

With so many Street Fair conversations, we are anticipating a full house for our annual Pumpkin Carving Festival on Oct. 30! This is a festive fall opportunity to shine the love of Jesus into our community. **Please pray for this outreach** and consider how you can be used by Christ to reach others by signing up for a job ASAP. Contact Tahirih or Chris to discuss possibilities.



Street Fair making Mercy bags to distribute



Street Fair activity (see page 4)

Mary & Martha Guild



October was a busy month at SOLC. Mary & Martha members were busy planning and hosting the **LWML Fall Rally for Zones 3 & 4**,



Oct. 22. **Thank you to:** Inga, Tahirih, Laurel, Samy, Fay, Diane, Elaine, Jim Windsor, Mike Renneker, Candy Baker, and Andrew Baker who helped us make the Rally run smoothly. LWML donated about \$1,200 to Habitat for Humanity in Ventura County with 10% going toward funding the Mite grants. Laurel Seaver and Tahirih Petryha serve on the executive board of LWML Zone 4.

Some members baked and served treats at the Sherman Oaks Street Fair and supported the pumpkin carving community event. There will be **no meeting in November**. We voted to **cancel the Potato Bake** fundraiser because we do not have the number of workers necessary to

successfully execute the event. Our **next meeting will be January 14, 10:00 am**, where we will discuss the "Cookie Walk" fundraiser scheduled for Sun., February 12.

All women are invited to our December breakfast outing. Please contact Inga Windsor (818-259-9608) for details. We need an accurate count **by December 1**. Have a blessed **Thanksgiving season!**



Children's Center

by Miss Kimberly Ogas, Director

Wow. October was an incredibly busy month for the preschool. We had so many events going on! Listed below are some of our successes and highlights:

- ◆ The school's hot lunch program started with delicious food! The children and staff are enjoying the healthy and convenient meals.
- ◆ Officer Quintanilla kindly gave his time to visit the school with his police car. He talked to us about the importance of safety.
- ◆ We had a fire drill and successfully managed to exit the building in under 3 minutes. We also executed an earthquake drill and got ourselves safely tucked under tables.
- ◆ The fire fighters of Fire Station 88 visited the school and they taught us about "Stop, drop, and roll," and the importance of 911. They even extended the ladder of their fire truck to reach all the way up to our roof and climbed safely up to the top. Each class made a baked good, which we gave to the firefighters to show our appreciation.
- ◆ We had many families support the school by purchasing food at our **Family Dinner Night at California Pizza Kitchen**. We raised about \$282 for the school and had a good time visiting with each other. A **special thank you to Chris & Jeff Gordon and Eric & Catrina Lee** for coming to the event in support of the school. We will use these funds for playground repairs.
- ◆ Sampul Dance Academy held a free dance demo class for all of our students. The children twirled and jumped to energetic music. Weekly dance classes began and are now held every Tuesday in the Fellowship Hall.
- ◆ Back to School Night was highly attended. The parents had a chance to mingle with each other and also to connect with church members. Moms and dads spent time in their child's classroom to learn what a typical day is like and to speak with the teacher.
- ◆ Everyone had a great time at the church Pumpkin Festival. It was a special event that strengthens the bridge between the church and the preschool with games and activities.



And now it's on to November where we will be learning about thankfulness. The children will learn to give thanks for all of the gifts and blessings God has given them. Each classroom will hold their own Thanksgiving feast.

We will also be **selling See's Candies as a fundraiser**. Chocolates will be delivered before the school's Christmas break on Dec. 19, 2022.

We hope and pray that you all have a blessed holiday, surrounded by family and friends.



October
FEET Event

Families Equipping and Encouraging Together (FEET) Time

Our October gathering was on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 2, at Griffith Park where we picnicked and played games together.



We welcomed 3 new families from our preschool and had a wonderful time just connecting!

Our November FEET gathering will be Sunday, the 20th after church.



We will practice hospitality by sharing a feast of thankfulness together. And, too, encourage an ingathering of food for those in need this Thanksgiving.



Stewardship

Thanksgiving Isn't Just a Day

by Andréa Vasilo

It may be hard to believe, but the holidays are already upon us. This month marks the beginning of Advent, but before we find ourselves in the midst of the Christmas season, we'll celebrate Thanksgiving.

The overall busyness of our day-to-day lives tends to distract us from spending time with God in prayer and offering thanks for all the blessings God has provided us. It stands to reason that having a holiday like Thanksgiving would encourage us to pause and reflect, but the holidays are often the busiest time of year for most people!

In addition to the annual holiday, we probably think of *thanksgiving* in terms of worship – giving our thanks and praise to God in church, surrounded by

others doing the same. But the truth is, thanksgiving isn't solely reserved for worship. Paul taught the Thessalonians to *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

We are to give thanks in all circumstances. Not just in church, and certainly not just once a year. Rather, we should think of it as a lifestyle. (In fact, the phrase “give thanks” occurs in the Bible almost eighty times!) It's at the heart of being a good Christian steward.

So, what if we put this idea of thanksgiving-as-lifestyle into practice? Rather than expressing

(Continued on page 6)



The street fair, Oct. 16, was a great opportunity to be present in the community. This year we:

- gave out free water, lemonade, and balloons;
- invited families to the pumpkin carving;
- had a prayer station;
- invited people to fill mercy packs;
- had a free bounce house;
- shared smiles, joy, and the Gospel of hope to our community.

A big “thank you” to the many volunteers who helped make this happen!



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



Birthdays:

		Alan Cohen	11/9
Charlene Irwin	11/5	Gary Apgar	11/10
Nancy Neumann	11/5	Irene Jonassen	11/11
Brei Brantley	11/6	Larry Nixon	11/11
Madeline Peterson	11/6	Alessandra Anderson	11/15
Andy Carpiac	11/8	Ben Seiler	11/17

Anniversary:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Eric & Alessandra Anderson (5 yrs) 11/17

Laurel Seaver 11/18

Ray Blumhorst 11/24



Calendar for Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church

All dates and times are subject to change

November 2022

Sun, Oct 30	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m. Pumpkin Carving , noon-2 p.m. Creation Ministries presentation, 6 p.m.
Mon, Oct 31	Halloween—Have a safe trick-or-treating!
Tues, Nov 1	All Saints Day — Remember those are with the Lord High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the loft
Thurs, Nov 3	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>
Sat, Nov 5	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
	Daylight Saving Time Ends—fall back 1 hour (before you go to bed)
Sun, Nov 6	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Tues, Nov 8	Election Day — Be sure to let your voice be heard—VOTE School Board, 6:00 p.m. Elders meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Thurs, Nov 10	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>
Fri., Nov 11	Veteran's Day— Offices and School closed
Sat, Nov 12	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, Nov 13	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Tues, Nov 15	The Oakleaves Articles Due , noon in Liz's "in box" Council meeting, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person</i>
Thurs, Nov 17	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>
Sat, Nov 19	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, Nov 20	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m. FEET gathering, after worship
Thurs-Fri, Nov 24-25	Thanksgiving break — Happy Thanksgiving to all
Sat, Nov 26	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, Nov 27	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m.
	Wednesday-Tuesday, November 30-December 6—Pastor is on vacation!
Thurs, Dec 1	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>
Sat, Dec 3	Contemporary Worship 5:00 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, Dec 4	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m. Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Thurs, Dec 8	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person & via Zoom</i>



Upcoming Events:

Children's Choir will set up for **Christmas practice** on Sunday, Nov. 6 at 9:30 am for all who would like to participate.

Mark you calendars:

Annual Christmas Concert is slated for **TUESDAY, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.**

Our **Living Nativity** will be **Sunday Dec. 18** from 5:30 to 8 p.m.



LWML Fall Rally lunch (see page 2)



("Thanksgiving Isn't Just a Day" continued from page 4)

our gratitude for just one day, we could spread it across an entire month. That may seem overwhelming at first, but November is the perfect time to try!

Start by setting aside just a few minutes each day: say a prayer; reach out to a loved one, especially someone who may feel lonely this time of year; and maybe, on Black Friday, donate old items instead of purchasing new ones. The possibilities are endless, so see where God takes you.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

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, the Vanco app, the Tithe.ly app, online "bill pay" through your bank, or giving online at www.shermanoakslutheran.org.

Called to *Serve* Thank you!

by Breilyn Brantley

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign." Revelation 11:17

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

- ☺ all those that helped make the Rally Day possible, and to **Pastor** for being a good sport in the dunk tank. (See the Oct. Oakleaves for pic!)
- ☺ all who helped Rianne while Pastor was assigned to extended jury duty.
- ☺ those who volunteer their time to help with all the goings on at the church.
- ☺ all who donated pumpkins! And for those who volunteered for the Pumpkin Carving festivities!
- ☺ the Rubins and Ann McClung, for your generous donations of supplies for Mercy Packs. Remember you still can through Amazon.
- ☺ Miss Kimberly's open heart in working alongside the church in the shared ministry between SOLC and SOLCC.
- ☺ Ms. Anna and Ms. Jessica for their faithfulness in preparing for and teaching the Children's sermon lesson every Sunday.

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.

Refill our Mercy Packs

We added a Mercy Packs packing station to the Street Fair this year and the community helped fill over 40 bags for our unhoused neighbors. That means there are plenty of bags ready for distribution and the supply baskets are empty again.

Please consider placing an order through our Amazon wish list or grabbing a shopping list (from the Narthex) for your next grocery run.



Council highlights ~

Oct. 18, 2022 mtg in person!

by Ann McClung, Council Secretary

◆ **Pastor's Report:** Pastor opened with a devotion about unity within a church which requires humility, gentleness, patience, and a bond of peace. He emphasized that we are all one body in Christ. Pastor is now finished with Jury Duty. He has been in contact with our Preschool families, as well as, families he met at the street fair and other connections. Pastor's vacation will be Nov. 30-Dec. 6. He reported the average Sunday service attendance in the last 5 Sundays is 57.5 people. Heather added there were a larger number of offerings after her appeal to the congregation. We will begin the tradition of passing the plate again (instead of leaving the plate at the back of the church).

Saturday services will have a new format beginning November 6, starting in the Fellowship Hall, for a more intimate setting, then move to the Sanctuary for Communion.

◆ **President's Report:** David Seaver reported that the Internet service has been upgraded and expanded to the school and church! The new phone system will be VOIP (voice over) system. David stated that church committees will have the rights and responsibilities of making decisions that come from the committee, as long as they stay within budget. Council approval would only be needed for special considerations.

◆ **Vice President's Report:** Dick Robertson reported from the School Board meeting that there will be a new website for the preschool reflecting the changes under its new Director.

◆ **Elders Report:** Dick will be the Usher Coordinator. He is hoping to get more women and youth involved.

◆ **Stewardship Report:** Laura Murcott is hoping to get her committee together to create a plan for more formalized stewardship.

◆ **Treasurer's/Financial Secretary's Report:** Heather Wolter gave both reports. The Accumulation report reflects that we are 33% behind last month (as compared to last year). The school withdrew \$5,000 out of savings, in large part due to the month of September being a 3-pay period month. Heather will give an update to the congregation on finances in a few months. Street Fair expenses totaled \$1,400 which spent the remaining Fellowship of Care money, due to no

Street Fair budget. The church account total FYTD (fiscal year to date) is \$41,887.72 and for the month of September it was \$13,483.14.

◆ **Mary & Martha Guild Report:** Dorene Rubin reported there will not be a meeting in November or December. A MMG event is Sat., Dec. 12 at 10 a.m. (breakfast at Mimi's). They will decide how to distribute the funds in the bank which includes Evelyn's memorials. The potato bake has been cancelled for this year, due to lack of workers.

◆ **Trustee Report:** Dick reported that the original memorial plaques were not meant to be outside exposed to weather, so there are about 75 which need to be replaced, as well as one purchased for Evelyn and several others. They are approximately \$16.50/plaque.

◆ **Christian Education (CE) Report:** Chris Gordon reported for the CE Committee and raised the question about the constitutional understanding of how the Board of Christian Education works along side the Sunday School Superintendent and Sunday School teachers. Once the definition of these roles is cleared up, the ballot in the next election can accurately reflect the roles. She thanked the Elders for their partnership with Rally Day. The CE group is working with the preschool to connect with families to be more visible at events, such as Back-to-School Night. The FEET program continues to meet once a month and is going well. Chris, Jessica, Sonia, and Anna are working hard to serve our children. Thrivent has provided funding for the Pumpkin Carving event. Some items will be cut out due to budget constraints and a worker shortage.

◆ **School Board Report:** Dorene Rubin reported that the lunch program, enrichment classes, family dinner night and Back-to-School night all have positive responses. Enrollment has increased to 50 with more tours scheduled. The new marketing strategy, including an updated website, is attracting more interest. The church member discount has been changed from 40% to 20%. Those currently enrolled will keep the 40% discount.

◆ **Outreach Committee Report:** Rhonda Renneker supported everything that was said by Chris and sends out prayers to everyone.

◆ **New Business:** The church, thanks to some members who funded it, is again a member of the **Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce**.

Offering As Worship: Giving God the First Fruits

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

A few weeks ago, we resumed a long-standing practice of the church of passing the plate as part of the worship service. The reason for doing so wasn't just to get back to the old way of doing things, or to try to raise more money. Rather, we take an offering during worship because offering *is* worship. It is often easy to see the offering as simply serving a *practical* purpose: providing funds to further the work of the church. But it also has a very important *theological* purpose: that as your hand puts money in the plate, your heart exalts Jesus as Lord.

Throughout biblical history, bringing offerings has been a form of worship, from the offerings of Cain and Abel to the early church sharing their goods. But perhaps the best example of bringing an offering that helps us understand the "theological purpose" of offerings is the example of the widow's mite in Luke 21. While many rich people come to the temple and put in large offerings, a poor widow drops in two copper coins. Jesus says concerning her: "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." The widow's offering did very little materially to support the work of God's people, but it was so valuable precisely because it was a beautiful form of worship. The point was that in her giving, she was orienting her heart toward God and exalting him as first in her life. That's what worship is all about.

My prayer is that as you put your offerings into the plate during the service, it truly is an act of worship for you also. The reality is that it is often easy to just mindlessly drop in your offering. But worship is never mindless; it is heartfelt and intentional. Accordingly, I'd like to give you some biblical teachings to reflect on and some ideas to consider implementing for your offerings.

First, here are some biblical teachings to reflect on while making an offering:

- ◆ **Offerings are a way to respond to God's grace.** The defining movement of the divine service is that God comes down to us in His grace, *giving to us* His forgiveness, His Word, etc. *We respond* in thankfulness by *giving God* thanks, praise, and gifts. The offering is a way of saying "thank you" for what God has given to you.
- ◆ **Bringing an offering declares God is our master, not money.** In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says "You cannot serve God and money." That is to say, money can be the chief concern of your

heart, or God can be that first priority, but not both. When you bring an offering and make your money serve God, you are declaring that God is the master, *not* money.

- ◆ **Bringing an offering is a way of declaring that everything we have is a gift from God.** It is so easy to get attached to "our money" and "our possessions," when in reality everything we have is a gift from God. God made the world, God owns it all, and we are but stewards. Accordingly, as you bring your offering, declare in your heart "I am only giving back to God from what God has so graciously given me."

Secondly, here are some ideas to consider implementing:

- ◆ **Give God your firstfruits through automatic giving.** Ironically, the first idea that I'll present is to consider *not* using the offering plate, but to set up recurring giving online on the church website. I actually just learned this idea from one member who recently shared with me their giving practice: they use online giving as a way to bring God their "firstfruits." "Firstfruits" is a recurring theme in the Bible which says that rather than bringing God the leftovers from your harvest or income, as if God was an after-thought, give God the very first that comes in. This member had set up online giving so that the gift to God would come out first thing, before anything else: it is the firstfruits. I rather like this as a form of worship and am considering changing my practice to match!
- ◆ **Put a \$1 bill in the plate and reflect on the biblical teachings above.** For any week that you don't have an offering to put in the plate (such as if you took up the practice of online giving) offer up a rather small amount of money, like a dollar bill or even a penny. As you do, really *focus your heart* on God's truths. Hold that dollar, and say "This is money, and it is not my god. It is a gift from the true God, and I am but a steward of it. I offer it back to God in praise and worship."
- ◆ **Parents, have your child(ren) put the offering in the plate and explain these teachings to them.** Putting the offering in the plate is both a great opportunity for the children to be active in the service and an opportunity to teach biblical truths about money. Also, consider giving each child \$1, as mentioned above.

I pray that when it comes time to pass the plate each weekend, you will not simply "drop off your donation," but seize the opportunity to engage in heartfelt worship.

-Pastor Utecht