



January 2025 The Oakleaves



SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Welcome 2025!

New Year's Eve @ SOLC

Tuesday, Dec. 31 worship at 6 pm

Followed by our annual New Year's Eve party until 9 pm! (NYC New Year's)

Potluck with dessert and champagne provided.

Join us in toasting in the New Year — New York City time — with
champagne/sparkling cider!



Christmas Carolers

A small but mighty crew of carolers traveled the Valley far and wide to bless our members who are less able to get to church frequently or on their own. Our FEET families prepared cookies, cards, and a Nativity ornament to gift to each member. We were able to FaceTime with Nancy Neumann, visit Joan Mann's home

and granddaughter, carol the halls of Tom Pelton's new place and enjoy time with the Carpiacs. In the end, we were FAR MORE blessed by the warm smiles on their faces and their overwhelming appreciation!!



Christmas Worship Services:

Christmas Eve Service — 7 pm

Christmas Day Service — 10 am

New Year's Eve Service — 6 pm

party to follow 'til 9 pm (NYC New Year)

SOLCC celebrated the holiday season with a fun Christmas party. Arus and her husband provided a delicious Armenian dinner before the White Elephant gift exchange, finally followed by some festive karaoke.

We wish our SOLCC staff & School Board a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! SOLCC and SOLC offices will be closed through January 3.



Lutheran Women in Mission

Thank you to all the ladies who attended our December Bible Study and Christmas Brunch.
We had a very inspirational and blessed time together.

Our next meeting is January 11, 2025 at 9 am. We are still in our Bible Study for
Our Hope and Future. All ladies are welcome.

Our next fundraiser will be February 9, 2025 after the worship service. We will have our
annual Cookie Walk and would appreciate everyone's participation, especially baking cookies
to sell. We distribute our funds to Christian organizations such as Open Arms Pregnancy,
Orphan Grain Train, Elizabeth House and Food for the Poor.

Happy New Year to all of SOLC!

Thank you to the church and preschool families for the trunk full of toys donated through the
Angel Tree. Over 500 children from needy families will receive gifts this Christmas!



Stewardship Committee

“Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to dedicate all of your time to [the Lord’s] work?” Rhonda Reneker said something to this effect to me recently at a meeting between the Outreach and Stewardship committees. I completely agree with the sentiment and have come to understand that my work on the Stewardship committee may be some of the most important work I do in my life. I am grateful for and blessed by this opportunity. The truth is, though, I should have involved myself much sooner in the life of the church from a work perspective. Not only do many hands make light work, but the work itself offers joy and fulfillment. By not engaging, I was missing out on those benefits!

SOLC has need of a real commitment from its members to work for the benefit of the church and its mission. In the new year, the Outreach Committee would like to meet individually to explore what each person enjoys doing to see how those preferences could align with current and future service opportunities within the church. The desired outcome of this effort is to secure a commitment of hours on a monthly basis from our members/regular attendees to work on behalf of the church.

Additional parameters:

Start small with your time commitment.

This is critically important. We acknowledge that we are all pulled in so many different directions with our various life obligations. It is, however, very difficult to plan our wonderful church events without commitment. What this means is that we will call on you to honor your time commitment. To make it workable from both sides, be conservative in your time estimate.

Be honest though!

Each Sunday, my phone tells me that I spend somewhere between two to three hours PER DAY(!) doomscrolling. Obviously, I can set my phone down and get to work. Are you like me in this respect? Self-assessment is a useful thing so what good are you able to work if you set aside a not-so-great habit? Dedicate that time to the church!

Also, speak honestly to us about your work preferences. The goal is to align skills and time with service opportunities so we can not only sustain our church but grow it by reaching out into that plentiful harvest field.

Look around.

What ideas would you like to see implemented around the church? Are you willing to spearhead that idea and make it happen? Let us know and then consider running with it! There are so many things we can do to have fun, build connections, experience God in action and love on our church family. Let your individual time commitment be part of the wonder!

With gratitude;

Laura Murcott



Zoo News from the Children's Center

by Interim Director,
Arusyak Dzheyranyan

The preschool is delighted to wish you a Happy New Year!

What a blessing to know we all have 365 days of blessings in store for us this year.

December was a busy, but faithful month for us at the preschool. The children performed "The Christmas Story" for family and friends in the Sanctuary. They were adorable and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Just before Christmas, our students received a surprise visitor: the Grinch! But after stealing a few toys—and even a whole Christmas tree—the Grinch realized the true meaning of Christmas and made sure to return everything, bringing along some candy as well.



In January, our students will be learning about New Year's resolutions, making fireworks art, studying weather "Winter," and learning the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

We will also be celebrating Lutheran schools. National Lutheran Schools Week is an annual celebration that promotes the important role of Lutheran schools in the United States and around the world. The theme for the 2024 - 2025 school year celebration— "Created to Be"—is a drawn from the beautiful word of Psalm 139:13-16, reminding us of the sacredness of our creation, purpose, and value in God's eyes: "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me to gather in my mother's womb".

We are excited about all of the things 2025 will bring us, and we invite you to keep SOLC in your prayers.



January 2025 Events

*All dates and times
are subject to change*

Sat, Dec 21	Living Nativity, 5:30 pm	
Sun, Dec 22	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am
Tues, Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 pm	
Sun, Dec 25	Merry Christmas!	Christmas Worship, 10:00 am
Sat, Dec 28	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Dec 29	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am
Tues, Dec 31	New Year's Eve Service + Party, 6:00 pm	
Sat, Jan 4	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Jan 5	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am
Tues, Jan 7	Youth Group, 6:30 pm	
Wed, Jan 8	School Board Meeting, 6:30 pm	
Sat, Jan 11	LWML, 9:00 am Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Men's Group, 10:00 am Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Jan 12	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am
Tues, Jan 14	Elders Meeting, 7:00 pm	
Sat, Jan 18	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Jan 19	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am FEET, 12:00 pm
Tues, Jan 21	Council Meeting, 7:00 pm	
Sat, Jan 25	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm Young Adults, 6:30 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Jan 26	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am

*Scan for
full calendar*



Men's Group

Please join us for a time of fellowship and discussion at our first gathering of the New Year on January 11th at 10 am at the home of Dick Robertson. This will be our first meeting in the new year — you won't want to miss it!



Annual Christmas Concert

Thank you to all who gave of their talents to the Christmas Concert.

We especially thank Mike Renneker, our Music Director who coordinates all of our music, including sharing original songs and creating fun arrangements.



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

Birthdays:

Carissa Lee	1/4	Craig Peterson	1/14
Leslie O'Byrne	1/5	Tristan Holland	1/18
Florence Tankou	1/8	Adam Yenser	1/25
Ava Pan	1/10	Miriam Sweet	1/30
Jordan Cleary	1/11	Tenise Holland	1/31
Caleb Gordon	1/14		



Anniversaries:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Andy & Madde Carpiac (56 years) 1/25

Thank you, Ushers

January 2025-February 2025

- 1/5** Jamie Cleary, Laura Murcott
- 1/12** Dennis Werner, Chansom Zayabouth
- 1/19** Inga Windsor, Eric Anderson
- 1/26** Dennis Werner, Chuck Spitler
- 2/2** Robert True, Dick Robertson
- 2/9** Eric Anderson, Lorraine Salcedo
- 2/16** Jamie Cleary, *2nd volunteer needed*
- 2/23** Charlene Irwin, Inga Windsor

Mercy Packs

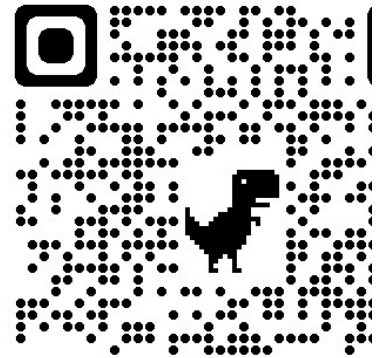
"Giving to help others."

Our baskets are ready to be filled up again by all our generous members. Thankful for your support!

Proteins, toothpaste, lotion, and shampoo are needed most to replenish our supplies. Financial donations earmarked **"Mercy Packs"** help by allowing us to buy supplies in bulk.

You can also order items through our **Amazon wishlist** by scanning the QR code or visiting [amazon.com/hz/wish list/3JEGWVFP3N50Vref =wl share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wish-list/3JEGWVFP3N50Vref=wl_share)

Thank you for
your support!



**God loves a
cheerful
giver!**

Baptismal Birthdays: members of Jesus' family

The Church Office
records show the
following
members as
having a baptismal
birthday this
month.

*(Please contact the office if
your baptism date is
incorrect.)*



Anatol	Carpiac	1/5
Ryder	Villari	1/8
Laura	Redmond	1/14
Benjamin	Selle	1/14
Jordan	Cleary	1/14
Victoria	Anderson	1/19
Elijah	Tankou	1/20
Michael	Renneker	1/22
Afsaneh	Sweet	1/29
Naomi	Engle	1/29

A Message from the Pastor...

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

Humility for the New Year

I know you're receiving this Oakleaves before the New Year and even before Christmas, but I can't help but think about New Year's for this January edition. New Year's is often a time that we pause to make goals for ourselves, think about cultivating better habits, and think about how we want to grow. I find this to be a very good Christian practice, especially when we seek to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) God desires that we should continue to put off the "old self" and put on the "new self" (Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9).

What's more, your best witness to God's grace and the most rewarding life you can have comes from truly living with the sort of Christ-like character that God intends for us. The turn of the year is a good time to reflect on how you are doing on that journey.

As we seek to grow, one of the fundamental Christian characteristics proves foundational for growth: humility. The amount of humility you have will determine your capacity to grow in character. Here's why: humility allows you to see where you went wrong and locates the problem on the inside. Pride always places the blame on the other and puts it outside of self.

For example, you were late to an appointment. Pride says it was because of traffic (the problem is external) while humility says, "I didn't leave soon enough" (the problem is internal). You could easily walk in late to your appointment and use either one of those explanations. The "traffic" answer is a lot more common and makes you feel a whole lot better than saying "it was my fault." But if

you tell yourself that traffic is the problem, then you don't need to change. Meanwhile, if you leaving when you did was the problem, then you need to change. You can't fix problems that are on the outside, but only on the inside. Humility locates the problems on the inside.

This same principle holds true as you get to bigger issues and the goals that you have for the new year. You get stressed out by messy situations at work or in life and so you drink or overeat. Is the problem that you're in a

***Humble yourselves
before the Lord, and
he will exalt you.
- James 4:10***

stressful situation (an external problem) or is it that you are responding poorly to stress (an internal problem)? Or consider a relationship issue: Is the problem that the other person does _____, or do you evaluate your own response and course of action and see how you contribute to the problem?

As long as you can only see how traffic, other people, and the world around you is causing problems, you'll be sitting around waiting for the world to change. When you have the humility to see how you could be different, that's when change and growth happen.

This is what the Scriptures teach us to do. Jesus says to get the log out of our own eye (Matthew 7:4-5). James tells us to humble ourselves before the Lord (James 4:10).

So as you begin this new year, I pray that you "clothe yourself with humility" (1 Peter 5:5) and then grow more and more into the Christ-like character God calls you to be.