



March, 2024 The Oakleaves



SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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thrivent® Congratulations to Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church from Thrivent!

In 2023 you received \$1,899 in Thrivent Choice Dollars® grant funding. We're proud to help support the important work you do and hope, together, we can do even more in 2024!

Encourage your supporters to [direct remaining 2023 Choice Dollars® by March 31](#). Thanks for your continued partnership in 2024!

Thrivent has also helped SOLC fund our Living Nativity and Pumpkin Carving events. Thank you, Thrivent!!!

Lenten Worship Opportunities

All evening Worship begins at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesdays begin with Soup Supper at 6:00 p.m.

(volunteers are needed to make soup)

- Feb. 28 Lent 2
- March 6 Lent 3
- March 13 Lent 4
- March 20 Lent 5

Holy Week

March 24 Palm Sunday, 10 a.m.
Family Easter Event noon-2 pm

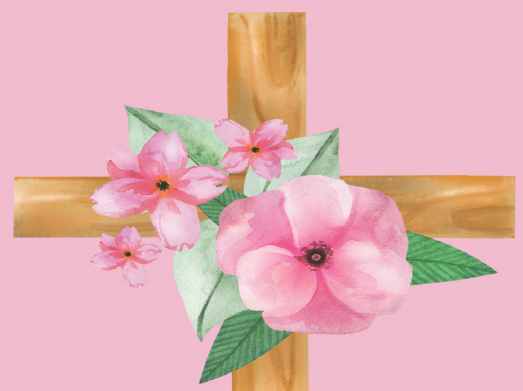
March 28 Maundy Thursday

March 29 Good Friday

March 30 Holy Saturday
"Experience Holy Week," 5 p.m.

March 31 Easter Worship
6:42 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.
Easter Breakfast 9:00 a.m.

FAMILY EASTER EVENT



FREE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

Sunday, March 24 ♥ Noon - 2 p.m.

SOLC Fellowship Hall — Lunch provided

ACTIVITIES TO KEEP OUR FOCUS ON JESUS WHILE HAVING FUN!

BRING your baskets for a small Easter Egg Hunt at the end of the event.

RVSP - 818-789-0215 by March 17



Mary & Martha Guild

Thank you to all who baked and purchased cookies at our **Feb. 11 Cookie Walk**.

We look forward to deciding where our mission funds, received at the cookie walk, will be distributed.

SOLCC Staff honored during Lutheran Schools Week



“Thank You” to our dedicated SOLCC Preschool Staff during Lutheran Schools Week for the commitment they show in leading children in their walk with Jesus.

A lunch of nourishing soup, fresh baked bread, and yummy treats was sponsored by the Sunday School teachers.

PS To the SS teachers: The staff really appreciated the delicious soup and fresh bread. Your kindness is appreciated. ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️



Zoo News from the Children's Center

by Director,
Ms Kimberly Ogas

During the month of March, the children of SOLCC will be learning about the many blessings God brings us during the spring season.

For example, each class will receive live butterfly larvae to observe in a butterfly pavilion in their classroom. The children will observe the cycle of the larvae as they make a chrysalis and emerge as adult butterflies.

Teachers tie the butterfly life cycle process into the story of Jesus' resurrection. The



butterfly has been a symbol for Christianity for centuries. It's the symbol of transformation into new life. It's the metaphor for what happens when we choose to follow the risen Jesus as our Lord. Witnessing metamorphosis is an experience that the children never forget.

The children will also learn about St. Patrick, rainbows, and rebirth. We end the month with celebrations of Easter, including classroom snack parties and an all-school Easter Egg Hunt on Friday, March 22.

Our weekly themes are intentionally planned to connect and prepare our students for our Bible studies about God's promises and the resurrection of Jesus.

“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.” –Martin Luther King Jr.



What a rich time was had at our **February FEET** meet up as we continue through our 12 month program, **Family RoadMap** to grow together in faith as families. At this Road Stop, we navigated the value of



scripture memorization and practice different ways to make it applicable and fun. We meet the 3rd Sunday of every month. Please share the program and invite others.

On that same vein, a reminder that we as a congregation have a **memory verse challenge** every month. The verse is posted on the Elder's bulletin board in the hallway to the Fellowship Hall as in our Sunday School fishing net. **February's verse is Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."**

March memory verse-John 15:5 (kids), 7-8 (3 verses adults)



⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

MONTHLY SERIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR!

MARCH'S FOCUS:

Scripture - The 10 Commandments

Let's live our faith together:

MAR 17

11:45 - 1:30 PM LUNCH PROVIDED

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES Former Member writes for LHM

Andréa Vasilo has written the Easter radio drama for Lutheran Hour Ministries. It will be available on local stations and Sirius starting March 18. People can also listen on *The Lutheran Hour* app, podcast or website throughout Holy Week.

Here's a link to an article about it in *The Lutheran Layman* (pg. 6) <https://www.lhm.org/layman/>

And also in the same edition are more of our members: *The Lutheran Layman*, Winter 2024 on page 22 are pictures of Katy Villari and our SOLC group shown in the January Oakleaves.

Very top secret....

But you will want to stay tuned...

Save the dates July 8-12.....

ACATION

BIBLICAL

SCHOOL

Stewardship

Excerpted from the LCMS Stewardship website; The Theology of Stewardship: Encouraging Generous Stewards **by Larry Ulrich** by Laura Murcott

“Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD’s contribution: gold, silver, and bronze... And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD’s contribution to be used for the tent of the meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.” (Exodus 35:5b, 21)

When it came time to build the Old Testament tabernacle, the Lord moved Moses to speak to the people of Israel and ask them to provide all the contributions needed for building the tabernacle. Day after day, they kept on bringing contributions and offering their skills for the completion of this worthy project. (Exodus 35:2-29)

The generosity of the people continued to grow and grow until those who were in charge of the building of the tabernacle came to Moses and said, “‘The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do.’ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed through the camp, ‘Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary.’ So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.” (Exodus 36:5-7)

It is helpful to remember that the people were not commanded to bring their contributions, but they were bringing their gifts from **generous hearts. Generosity is contagious.** It is easy to imagine that as some people started bringing their gifts, others joined in until there were many more contributions than needed to complete the building of the sanctuary. This account from the Book of Exodus is an encouragement to practice freewill and generous giving for the work of the Lord. Once such freewill generosity gets underway, God’s people catch the spirit of generosity and marvelous things happen!

Specific to Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church, as of Jan. 31, 2024, our accumulated congregational giving is at the highest it has been for the last five years when measured at the same point in time over the previous five years. So, as of January 31, 2019, and each subsequent January 31 through 2023, **there has been no higher accumulated total than the one we just passed on 1/31/2024!** That is wonderful news and evidence that the spirit of generosity is at work in our congregation! Let’s keep the generosity “contagion” [an influence that spreads rapidly] going strong so that we can joyfully participate in the LORD’s work.

-With gratitude from your Stewardship Committee

Thank you, Ushers • March, 2024

3/3	Lorraine Salcedo & Christian Hinrichs
3/10	Dennis Werner & Eric Anderson
3/17	Dick Robertson & Jamie Cleary
3/24 Palm Sunday	Heather Wolter & Laura Murcott
3/28 Maundy Thurs	Chuck Spitler & Inga Windsor
3/29 Good Friday	Dennis Werner & Dick Robertson
Easter 3/31 Sunrise	Dennis Werner & Lorraine Salcedo
Easter 3/31 8 AM	Chuck Spitler & Christian Hinrichs
Easter 3/31 10 AM	Eric Anderson & Dick Robertson

SOLC Men’s Group News

Our church’s Men’s Group is off to a proper New Years launch at the home of Dick Robertson on Sat., Jan. 20. We explored the story of Joseph from Genesis Chapter 50 and discussed how our lives can have ups and downs similar to what Joseph experienced! It was wonderful to put our Men’s Group slogan into action: FAITH shared with FRIENDS through FELLOWSHIP.

SOLC Men’s Group
“FAITH
Shared with
FRIENDS
Through
FELLOWSHIP”

We invite **all men of our church** to our next gathering on **Saturday, March 23**, at **10 a.m.** again at the home of Dick Robertson, 4009 Valley Meadow Rd., Encino, CA 91436. If more information is needed, call Chuck Spitler, at (951) 966-3623 or email chuckspitler@yahoo.com.



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



Birthdays:

Jessica Hanna	3/1	Carl Hinrichs	3/13
Lisa Richardson	3/2	Dave-Ryan Tankou	3/13
Bruce Salcedo	3/2	Pastor Titus Utecht	3/21
Patina Uwanawich	3/6	Eric Lee	3/22
Hephzibah Utecht	3/7	Jim Windsor	3/26
Tom Pelton	3/11	Tanya Peterson	3/28

Anniversary:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Luigi & Sonia Uwanawich	(37 yrs)	3/10
Rolain & Florence Tankou	(26 yrs)	3/18
Christian & Charlotte Hinrichs	(16 yrs)	3/21
Eric & Catrina Lee	(32 yrs)	3/28

March, 2024

Calendar for Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church

All dates and times are subject to change

Sat, March 2	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, March 3	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, March 5	Be sure to VOTE	High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Loft
Wed, March 6	Lenten Soup Supper, 6:00 p.m.	Lenten Worship, 7:00 p.m.
Thurs, March 7	Christian Education meeting, 5:30 p.m.	
Sat, March 9	Women's Bible Study, 9 a.m.	Contemp. Worship, 5 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, March 10	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, March 12	Elders meeting, 7:00 p.m.	
Wed, March 13	School Board, 6:00 p.m.	Lenten Soup Supper, 6:00 p.m. Lenten Worship, 7:00 p.m.
Sat, March 16	Memorial Service for Velma Pontius, SOLC, 10:00 a.m.	
	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, March 17	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. FEET, 11:45 a.m. Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Tues, March 19	The Oakleaves Articles Due, noon in Liz's "in box"	Council, 7:00 p.m.
Wed, March 20	Lenten Soup Supper, 6:00 p.m.	Lenten Worship, 7:00 p.m.
Sat, March 23	Men's Group, at Dick R. house, 9 a.m.	Contemp. Worship, 5 p.m. Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, March 24	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. Healthy Life, noon, Narthex
Palm Sunday	Family Easter Event, noon-2 pm	

H O L Y W E E K March 24-March 30

Thurs, March 28	Maundy Thursday worship, 7:00 p.m.	
Fri., March 29	Good Friday—School and Offices closed	Good Friday worship, 7:00 p.m.
Sat, March 30	Experience Holy Week worship, 5:00 p.m.	Young Adult group, 6:30 p.m.
Sun., March 31	Easter Services: 6:42 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. & Easter Breakfast, 9:00 a.m.	
Mon., April 1	Day After Easter—School and Offices closed	
Thurs, April 4	Christian Education meeting, 5:30 p.m.	
Sat, April 6	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, April 7	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. Healthy Life, noon, Narthex

Called to *Serve* Thank You!

by Brei Brantley

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."
Romans 1:21

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

- ☺ those who brought and bought cookies at the Mary & Martha Cookie Walk.
- ☺ all who volunteered to bring in soup for Soup Supper, especially Lorraine & Satenik, Sammy, Fay & Michele.
- ☺ our Sunday School teachers for giving a luncheon to the SOLCC staff for Lutheran Schools Week.
- ☺ Pastor and facilitators for the transformative Peacemaker study AND to all who led the final event.
- ☺ those who donated to the mercy packs and remember you can still give through Amazon.
- ☺ all the great Sunday School teachers.
- ☺ those who volunteer their time to help with all the goings on at the church.

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.

SOLC Financial Picture

As of January 31, 2024

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Fiscal</u> <u>Year-To-Date</u>
Contributions	\$17,359.41	\$118,703.91
Preschool tithe		\$ 29,189.00
Totals	\$17,359.41	\$146,217.91

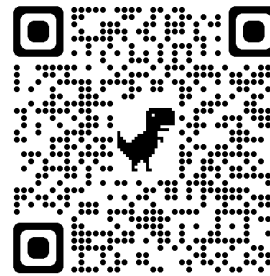
SOLC Expenses	\$15,925.14	\$153,831.71
	1,434.27	-7,613.80

Mercy Packs

"Giving to help others."

A HUGE thank you to those who ordered donations from the Amazon wish list for our Mercy Packs!

Proteins and hygiene products are needed most to replenish our supplies. Financial donations earmarked **'Mercy Packs'** help by allowing us to buy supplies in bulk.



You can order through our **Amazon wish list** https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3JEGWVFP3N50V?ref_=wl_share

Thankful for your support!

God loves a cheerful giver!



Memorial Garden Plaques can be purchased

If you have someone you would like to see on the Memorial Wall, please **contact the David Seaver** or the **church office**, 818-789-0215, or email shermanoakslutheran@yahoo.com.

Cost for each remains the same **\$25.00** as it has been (for over 20 years). The 4"x2" plaques are black with silver lettering. Check them out on the outside wall.

Information needed: person's name, dates of life or their contact with SOLC, your name, and \$25.00 for each plaque.

Do you love **Handel's Messiah**?
**Would you enjoy experiencing more of the
Passion/Easter portions of the Messiah?**

Then you will love the San Fernando Valley
Master Chorale presentation of **Handel's
Messiah 101**, **Saturday, March 23, 3:00 p.m.**
at Emmanuel Lutheran Church 6020 Radford
Ave., North Hollywood.

The San Fernando Valley Master Chorale performs
selections from Handel's Messiah including the less-
commonly performed Easter movements plus fan
favorites!



Join us for an audience-immersive performance of the Messiah like you've never seen before! Love to sing the Messiah? Curious about the history and tradition of the music? Choose your own adventure as an audience member by sitting right next to the instrument or vocal part of your choice! Bring your score and sing along with the San Fernando Valley Master Chorale as Charlie Kim breaks down the elements of the dancing baroque spirit from the harpsichord. Featuring operatic soloists: Devon Guthrie, soprano and Jonathan Matthews, tenor. This performance presents the musical story following the life, death, and resurrection of Christ in collaboration with the Emmanuel Lutheran Church of North Hollywood.

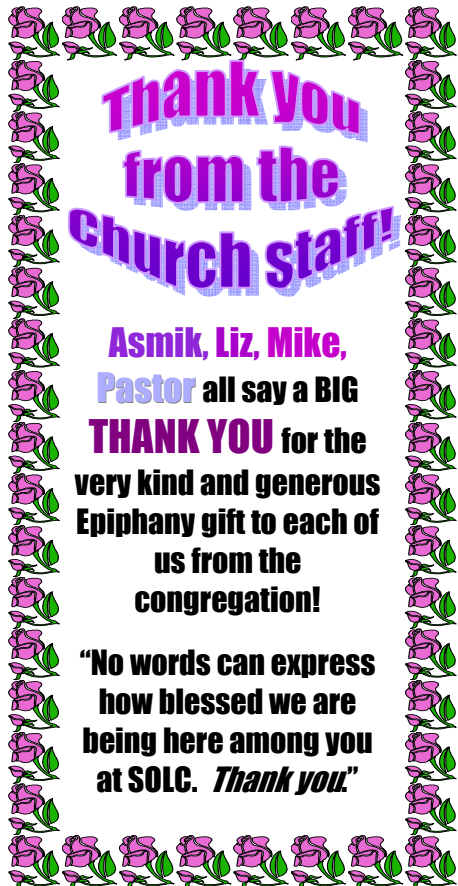
Three ways to enjoy:

1. Join the choir for rehearsal and sing on stage
2. Bring your score and sing from the audience
3. Relax and enjoy the music around you

For tickets and more info please visit www.sfvmc.com.

Tickets: \$30--General; \$25--Students, Seniors, Veterans; \$0--Children 6 and under. **On-line Presale 15% Discount ends 3/1 @ 11:55 PM:** \$25.50--General; \$21.25--Students, Seniors, Veterans; \$0--Children 6 and under.

For more information about singing onstage with the choir, contact Elaine Werner (747) 253-8133, voice or text.



Then they led him out to crucify him.

Mark 15:20

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! We praise You, Father, that You have sent Your Son not in wrath but in mercy. As we enter this most holy week and ponder together the mysteries of Your great salvation, show us the answer to Your people's prayers of "hosanna" in the Passion of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** (LCMS prayers for Palm Sunday.)

Palm Sunday & Good Friday



A Message from Pastor...

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

Confirmation and First Communion

Over the past several months, the elders and I have been discussing our church's practice regarding confirmation and first communion and have put together a proposal which we plan to present to the congregation at the Spring congregation meeting. I want to put before you now with a few more details and why I believe this proposal leads us to a more Scriptural practice. Ultimately my hope for this article is that you will grow in your biblical understanding of the Lord's Supper and what it means to receive it faithfully.

The Proposal: Separate First Communion and Confirmation

The proposal is to admit to the Lord's Supper any child (regardless of age) once they have done the following: 1) they have been baptized, 2) learn by heart the 10 Commandments, Apostle's Creed, and Lord's Prayer, and can explain in their own words what baptism and the Lord's Supper are, 3) meet with the pastor (along with parents) for instruction specific to receiving the Lord's Supper, and 4) can demonstrate to the pastor and their elder a basic understanding of the foundational elements of faith.

Also note: This does not change anything about confirmation. Children who go through this process would still be expected to go through confirmation.

The Reasoning and Biblical Basis

The fundamental guide in establishing our communion practice (and every other practice for that matter) must be Scripture. The Bible does give parameters on proper reception of the Lord's Supper, especially in 1 Corinthians 11:26-29.

Recipients should:

- "examine themselves," (they know their sin and the forgiveness given in Christ).
- "discern the body," that is, they should know what they are receiving in this sacrament.
- The act of taking the Lord's Supper also "proclaims the Lord's death until he comes." Reception of the Lord's Supper proclaims our faith. An understanding of the basics, as taught in the catechism, is thus necessary.

These are the Scriptural requirements. The concern is that requiring confirmation before first communion adds extra-biblical requirements which are foreign to Scripture.



It is helpful to know some of the history that led to where we are now. For most of the 1900's, the dominant practice in Lutheranism has been to tie confirmation and First Communion together, with the two of them happening around age 14. However, this had not always been the case.

Luther himself did not teach "confirmation" at all and admitted children to communion when they were ready, often "8 years of age or younger."

At times in Lutheran history, confirmation was a means for preparing children to receive the Lord's Supper. In those instances, it was taught differently and to children of a younger age than is the case today. In the last couple of centuries, confirmation became less a preparation for the Lord's Supper and more of a "rite of passage" or a *"time for children to take ownership of their faith."* This resulted in the older age of catechumens and long process of confirmation we have now. More recently, there has been a realization of this in the LCMS, and many congregations (~30%) have separated first communion from confirmation.



I also want to briefly note that this process requires more direct parental involvement in teaching/preparing children. That is intentional because we believe from Scripture that it is the responsibility of the parent to teach faith to their children (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) and that it is best internalized that way.

Anyhow, this has been a rather short distillation of the proposal and Scripture behind it. I welcome and encourage questions and conversations! Also, we hope to hold a few "town-hall" style events to explain more fully the proposal and have helpful conversations.

In Christ, Pastor Utecht