



# JULY 2023 The Oakleaves

## VBS Bible Verses:

Day 1-Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." John 8:12

Day 2-Live in harmony with each other. Romans 12:16

Day 3-Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Psalm 100:1

Day 4-Don't let our hearts be troubled. Trust in God. John 14:1

Day 5-Let your good deeds shine..so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:26

**SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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## Vacation Bible School 2023

Please pray as we LAUNCH preparations for our STELLAR Vacation Bible School.



**Monday, July 24—Friday, July 28 • 3:30 - 6 p.m. • TK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade**

It will be **Impossible** to accomplish this **Mission** without many of you! Houston...Let's begin the **COUNTDOWN** to launch an **Out of this World Vacation Bible School** adventure.

Registration is open with children, both from our church and community, signing up.

Praise the Lord! Our teens are asking to be Crew Leaders! How cosmic is that!

Four area churches are blasting over their decorations and leftover supplies. Is it all a cosmic coincidence or is God leading us to Shine Jesus' Light into the Universe of our Community and Beyond?!

How can YOU suit up and assist with this Astronautical Outreach event?

\***Please pray** over all the preparations, volunteers, children and families as we unite in God's mission.

\*Note the **wish list** (here on page 7) and give generously toward the needed supplies.

\***Volunteer** needed to pick up supplies from other churches

\*Look for info about potential **take home projects**, like making Galaxy t-shirts for our volunteers or printing Bible Buddy collector cards for all of our space cadets.

\*Check in with NASA Station Leaders at **Mission Control** and offer assistance:

Jessica - crafts Hope - music  
Pastor and Anna - Opening/Closing skits  
Rianne and \_\_\_\_ - Bible lessons  
Elaine/Caleb - science experiments  
Sonia - snacks Mike - tech Chris—director  
Heather - registration check in/out systems

(Continued on page 6)

## Above & Beyond Program

**ends June 30, 2023**



**What:** A donor has pledged to match any donations given *above and beyond* your regular offerings, **up to \$25,000**. (The total amount above *includes* the matching funds.)

**How?** In addition to your normal offerings, place your "above & beyond" gift in the green envelope. The envelopes are located in the narthex by the "Above & Beyond" poster. Put your envelope into the offering plate.

**A New Pictorial Directory** will be available in **mid-July** either a hard copy or from our **database**. Stay tuned for more info!

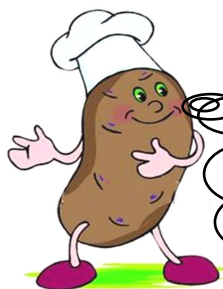
## Mary & Martha Guild

We will resume the Women's Bible Study on **Saturday, September 9.**



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

Happy Summer!

We ended our regular school year with a joyful graduation. We had 19 graduates who sang, danced, and told us what they want to be when they grow up. We were tickled to hear so many of the children tell us that they want to save others and the world! We love their kind spirits!



We have now moved into our summer session with our wild and wonderful summer camp! We have 72 children enrolled for **fun in the sun!** The children are having a blast learning about small, furry animals, science, ocean creatures, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and the magic of music. We have bathing suit and water play days planned this month, along with special entertainment activities, a bunny rabbit petting zoo, a patriotic parade, and more!

Our Trike-a-thon was a big hit last month. Parents came to cheer on their little cyclists with pom poms, signs, and noise makers. It was adorable to see the look of accomplishment on the children's faces. We raised over \$3,000 that we will use to help with front yard improvements.

Our new logo received a few slight changes, but it still has our same **Zoo Zone** theme with bright, child-friendly colors. We are currently looking for a t-shirt company to make the shirts at a reasonable cost. The shirts will be available before we begin our regular school session in mid-August.



In the meantime, we hope you will keep our school, staff, and families in your prayers. We ask for prayers of safety, friendship, comfort, and joy. Above all, we ask for the Lord to touch each of us in ways that bring us all closer to Jesus.

**Remember to check out  
our new website:  
[Solpreschool.com](http://Solpreschool.com)**



**Congratulations to our members  
who graduated from Sherman  
Oaks Lutheran Preschool:**

**Donovan Perez**



**Elijah Tankou**

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





Our final FEET gathering before summer, June 4, was a bouncing good time with festive

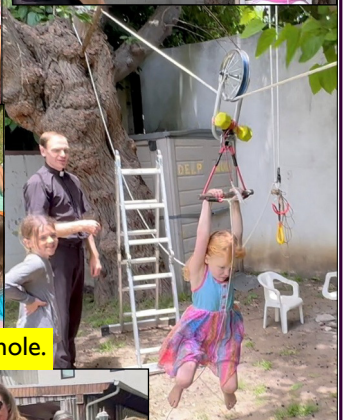
treats!

We welcomed 2 preschool families, a family new to SOLC and saw some smiling faces that we had been missing. We chatted about ways to *Stay Connected to Christ* over the Summer Break and just enjoyed fellowship with each other.

We will rezoom meeting again after Rally Day in the Fall. Until then, please lift up our families in your prayers and encourage them as they strive to raise their children in the faith.



Tire swing, group fun.



Zip-line, swings, corn hole.





# Stewardship

## Reflections on the *Above and Beyond* Campaign:

by Laura Murcott

On recent drives through the valley, I've seen a church here and there and thought to myself, "What a beautiful church!", only to get closer and realize that the church is gone and the building has been repurposed for a strictly secular use. It's a sad observation that hurts my heart and I'm willing to bet it hurts your heart too. In 2019, more Christian-denominated churches closed in the United States than were opened. Just five years earlier, more new churches opened than were closed (<https://www.npr.org/2023/05/17/1175452002/church-closings-religious-affiliation>).

Praise be to God, SOLC is still open. Our recent history has not been without struggles but God perfectly shepherded this little flock through a two-year transition between pastors that was rife with challenges **and** saw the start of the pandemic. All of this is to say that we at SOLC could certainly be excused for saying "Enough with the change...". However, the truth is that we take such an attitude at our own peril.

The Stewardship committee sincerely thanks the congregation for being involved and willing to change. The success of the "Above and Beyond Campaign" is indicative of your willingness to hear and honestly address the issues facing our church

and collectively participate in the solution. As we approach the end of the "Above and Beyond" campaign, please pause and prayerfully reflect on your "above and beyond" giving and ask yourself if you can sustain that giving level as your new baseline. If so, please consider increasing your current giving level. Even if you cannot reach to the full amount of your above and beyond gift, any sustained upward adjustment in your normal giving will make a difference to our bottom-line.

If you are a member/regular attendee who gives only sporadically or if you were unable at this time to donate to the campaign, *thank you* - your contributions are absolutely critical. Please consider "moving up the rung" to consistent giving. If you would like to set up regular giving and are not sure of the various methods available, please let the Stewardship committee know so we can get you the necessary information.

What else can we all do to engage the change necessary to survive and thrive? We can roll up our sleeves and get busy. A little "light reading" that on the challenges congregations face and the possibilities for revitalization can be found here: <https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Faith-Communities-Today-2020-Summary-Report.pdf>.

If there is something around the church that you would like to see happen, consider taking lead on the issue. Make a concerted effort to bring new people through the doors and trust that God plants the seed. Finally, keep Luke 6:38 in mind - "Give, and it will be given to you. **Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over,** will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will

be measured back to you." (ESV)

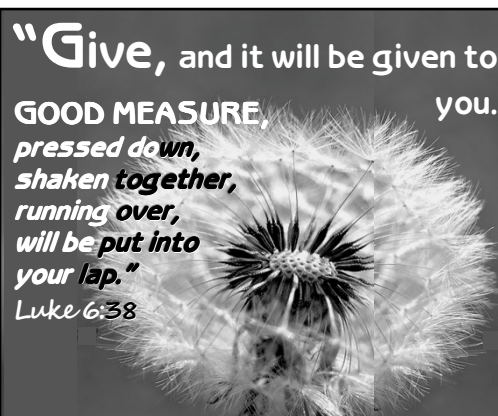
**Our God is good!**

With gratitude from your Stewardship Committee

### Thank you to our Ushers JULY & AUG 2023

7/2	Dennis Werner & Chuck Spitler
7/9	Dick Robertson & Charlene Irwin
7/16	Robert True & Jamie Cleary
7/23	Inga Windsor & Heather Wolter
7/30	Dick Robertson & Christian Hinrichs
8/6	Dennis Werner & Charlene Irwin
8/13	Eric Anderson & Robert True
8/20	Chansom Zayabouth & Chuck Spitler
8/27	Christian Hinrichs & Dennis Werner

"Give, and it will be given to you.  
**GOOD MEASURE, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.**"  
Luke 6:38





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

## Birthdays:

		Brandon Faus	7/12
Axl (Hanna) Pan	7/4	Eric Anderson	7/18
Kayla Hanna	7/8	Ann McClung	7/19
Drew Murcott	7/8	Sammy Khalili	7/25
Luigi Uwanawich	7/11	Janet (True) Bova	7/26

## Anniversary:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

Rob & Christy Engle	18 yrs	7/2
Dennis & Elaine Werner	50 yrs	7/21
Larry & Cindy Hanna	42 yrs	7/25



# JULY 2023

## Calendar for Sherman Oaks Lutheran Church

*All dates and times are subject to change*

Sun, June 25	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, Installation of Council & Bd members, 10:00 a.m.
<b>Monday, June 26—Wednesday, July 12 • Pastor is on vacation!</b>		
Sat, July 1	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, July 2	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.
<b>Tues, July 4</b>	<b>Independence Day—School and Offices closed</b>	
Sat, July 8	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, July 9	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Wed, July 12	School Board, 6:00 p.m.	
Sat, July 15	Contemporary Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, July 16	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Tues, July 18	Council, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person</i>	<b>VBS Volunteer mtg, noon</b>
Thurs, July 20	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person &amp; via Zoom</i>	
<b>Fri, July 21</b>	<b>VBS Decorating Work Party, 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</b>	
Sat, July 22	Contemp. Worship, 5p.m.	<b>VBS set up, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. &amp; 6-9</b> Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, July 23	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m. VBS set up



## Monday, July 24—Friday, July 28: Vacation Bible School

Tues, July 25	<b>The Oakleaves Articles Due</b> , noon in Liz's "in box"	
<b>Thurs, July 27</b>	<b>VBS Family Dinner, 6:00 p.m. All are welcome to mingle with our visitors!</b>	
Sat, July 29	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, 6:30 p.m. Young Adult group, 6:30 p.m.
Sun, July 30	Bible Study, 9:00 a.m.	Worship, 10:00 a.m.
Tues, Aug 1	High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Loft	
Thurs, Aug 3	Bible Study, 7:00 p.m. <i>in person &amp; via Zoom</i>	
Sat, Aug 5	Contemporary 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.
Tues, Aug 8	Elders meeting, 7:00 p.m.	

(VBS continued from front cover)

\*Leads in following areas not yet filled:

- ??? - games
- ??? - Parent hospitality center
- ??? - sets/decor set up
- ??? - Thursday family dinner
- ??? - tear down and clean up

### VBS Dates to note:

Creating times - TBA for the week of July 2

Sun, July 16 VBS Volunteer mtg, noon

Fri, July 21 VBS Decorating Work Party, 6 p.m.—9 p.m.

Sat, July 22 VBS set up, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Thurs, July 27 VBS Family Dinner, 6:00 p.m. *All are welcome to mingle with our visitors!*

Our Stellar VBS runs the week of July 24,  
3:30 - 6 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Ages 4yrs old to 5th grade

Please share the social media posts from our church sites to invite others.

**Registration information can be found at**  
**shermoakslutheran.org**

Reach out to Chris Gordon to volunteer today.  
818-625-5110 or animator95@sbcglobal.net

*See the Out of this World Wish List on page 7.*

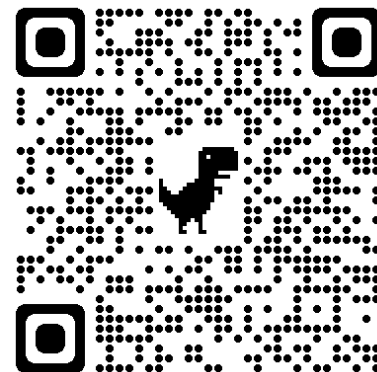
## Items Needed to make more Mercy Packs

**"Giving to help others."**

**Mercy Pack baskets remain empty.**

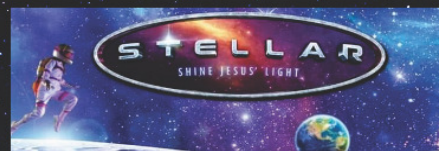
Please consider a donation or supplies to fill bags of hope for the unhoused in our community.

Use the **Amazon** link for easy ordering! [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3JEGWVFP3N50V?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3JEGWVFP3N50V?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.

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." -James 2:14-17



**FREE**

This year's VBS will launch kids on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world. "Stellar" rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun.

**July 24—28, 2023**

**3:30—6:00 p.m.**

**FREE**

TK through 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Registration **now open** at [shermanoakslutheran.org](http://shermanoakslutheran.org)

Invite your friends!



## SOLC Financial Picture

As of May 31, 2023 & YTD is 7/1/22-5/31/23

	Month	Year-To-Date
Contributions	\$16,096.78	\$162,781.08
Compared to 2021-2022		-7.5%
Preschool tithe	\$ 6,898.00	\$ 65,226.36
Compared to 2021-2022		1.03%
Expenses	\$45,213.98	\$277,560.84
(above # includes Insurance payments in May)		

**Above & Beyond** as of 6/18/23 \$27,377.00  
(This number **includes** the matching funds.)





The recent Council meeting was Tuesday, June 20, so we won't have council minutes ready for this Oakleaves. However, the following people will be Installed on 6/25/23.

We look forward to working with all the members in the coming year. The **members elected** at the Congregation meeting on June 11 are as follows. Thank you for serving.

The council is **committed to providing more useful information on our financials to the congregation in the future.** Please let us know if the info., bottom right on page 6, is helpful.

<b>President</b>	David Seaver	<b>Vice President</b>	Dick Robertson
<b>Council Secretary</b>	Beth Cleary	<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Heather Wolter
<b>Treasurer</b>	Leslie O'Byrne	<b>Sunday School Superintendent</b>	Open

#### Board of Christian Education

##### Children (0-11)

Chris Gordon Rianne Utecht

##### Youth (middle school & high school) (12-18)

Abby Connick

##### Adult

Jeff Gordon Jonah Gordon  
Charlotte Hinrichs Diane Nixon  
Sonia Uwanawich

#### Board of Elders

Jeff Gordon Eric Lee  
Larry Nixon Dick Robertson  
Luigi Uwanawich

#### SOLCC School Board

2-yr term Tanya Peterson  
2-yr term Dorene Rubin  
1-yr term Florence Tankou

#### Board of Stewardship

Brei Brantley Emily Craig  
Laura Murcott

#### Board of Trustees

Eric Anderson Jamie Cleary  
Larry Hanna Christian Hinrichs  
Michael O'Byrne Robert True  
Jim Windsor

#### Board of Evangelism-Caregivers

Anna Booher Abby Connick  
Fay Darmian Sammy Khalili  
Michele McClung Diane Nixon  
Tahirih Petryha Lorraine Salcedo  
Chuck Spitler

#### Board of Evangelism-Outreach

Alan Cohen Tiffany Hegg  
Diane Nixon Larry Nixon  
Cyrus Pan Tahirih Petryha  
Rhonda Renneker Dick Robertson  
Laurel Seaver Lorraine Salcedo  
Randy Vargas



**Remember to pray for our leaders!**

## OUT OF THIS WORLD VBS WISH LIST



Astronaut costume (2 adult mediums)  
Astronaut Ice Cream  
Black lights  
Computer monitor old one for a prop  
Costuming/helmets kids sizes  
Emergency blankets (metallic silver)  
Flashlights- 6 small  
Laser lights & Glow toys  
Lighting planet or starry sky  
Mirrors—10 small hand held  
NASA gear (Anything)

Paint: Fluorescent/Glow  
Smoke machine  
Snacks—Moon Pies, Sun Chips,  
Starburst, mini Milky Way & Mars bars  
Stomp rockets  
Tablecloths—black  
Walkie Talkies  
Water bottles -empty- 7 oz.  
Financial Support toward:  
\*the Family Dinner on July 27, 6 pm  
\*Rocket ship Bounce House

## A Message from Pastor...

*“If you have any word of encouragement... Say it!”*

by Pastor Titus  
A. Utecht

I simply love Acts 13:15. Paul and Barnabas (whose name means “Son of Encouragement”) are traveling from city to city on their first big missionary journey, and they come to Pisidia. As they did, they went into the synagogue one Sabbath and the leaders of the synagogue asked very directly for the thing that they desperately needed: “Brothers, *if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.*”

Today, that is the request I want to make of each one of you: If you have any word of encouragement for any of the people in your life, say it! Whenever you see an opportunity or a positive thought comes to mind about someone, don’t just keep it all to yourself, but “say it!”

As an example, a few months ago I was talking to my wife of stories about people we knew who exemplified certain characteristics, and I told her about one of my cousins who has always brought such energy and joy into any room he walked into and how I admired him for that.

Then my wife challenged me and asked “Have you ever told him that? I bet that would be really encouraging to hear.” I was taken back at first. Me? Actually say that? I never thought to do so, but pretty quickly I realized it was a great idea, and so I typed out the text. Really what my wife was encouraging me to do was exactly what the leaders of the synagogue said: If I have a word of encouragement, don’t keep it to myself, say it!

I believe that our world needs to hear words of encouragement. Life is really good at throwing so many *discouraging* things at us: failures, guilt, obstacles, uncertainty, loss, insecurity, and on and on. How often do you watch the news and walk away feeling really *encouraged*? How often does that drive you to *discouragement*? I think this is true of just about everyone in this world. I know it’s true of me! I need encourage-ment all the time (and I have been and continue to be so encouraged by all of

you!). Most people may not realize it so clearly, but if they were to label their heart’s need, they would be walking around with a giant sign that had Acts 13:15 on it: “If you have any word of encouragement for me, say it!”

And you, dear Christian, do have a word of encouragement. The next 26 verses describe how Paul shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the greatest word of encouragement the world has ever known. Paul shared with them the hope and encouragement he found in Christ. This was exactly what the people needed to hear. Immediately after Paul speaks this word of encouragement, “the people *begged* that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.” (Acts 13:42)

In the midst of difficult times (aka “life”), words of encouragement from others can make all the difference. The book of Acts is just a marvelous book in that all the way through it records difficulties, hardships, persecutions, beatings, loss, and suffering.

Yet all along the way, it speaks time and again about how the early Christians *encouraged one another*. (Acts 13:15, 15:31-32, 16:40, 18:27, 27:36) As they did so, despite all of the adversity in the book of Acts, that is why it is also simply brimming with joy and hope and strength. Even though the early believers faced great challenges, they could face it with joy because they encouraged one another.

So too in our day. We each face different trials and difficulties, and our friends and neighbors do as well. You however can make a huge difference for these people by sharing the encouragement of the Gospel. Brothers and sisters in Christ, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it!

In Christ, Pastor Utecht

