



VISTAS



† The Seasons of Advent and Christmas † December 2018 †

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

Our Mission: *We are a welcoming family in Christ who serves by celebrating and sharing our many gifts.*



Grace and Peace be to you...

Joy to the world, the Lord is come...

In just a few short weeks we will be proclaiming these words with great joy in our Christmas services. These words are worthy of proclaiming every day of our lives. As followers of Christ, they are the backbone of the hope we have; that the power of hope is born anew... that life is being always renewed and restored. This is good news. It means the negative powers of this world do not have the last word. The birth of the baby also means that no failure is final, no one is too lowly, even the helpless have hope. It means there is always celebration right around the corner.

Advent is a bigger, happier Holy Week. It is a time of waiting, of expectation, of looking forward. From the disciple's perspective, the events of what we know of as Holy Week were confusing at first and devastating at the last. All week they hoped for Jesus to finally come into his power. By Friday they were a wreck and they didn't understand what was going on. On Saturday they were certainly numb in their grief. Maybe they were angry. Probably they were doubting their experience. Maybe they were even doubting their judgment in following Jesus. That's why on Sunday morning they couldn't believe their eyes and ears. THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE. They couldn't get out of their own way to believe because what they were seeing and hearing was unbelievable. It was too good to be true. But they did eventually come to believe it and thanks be to God they did!

It is the same with Advent. All season long we await God's power in our life. We look for the redeeming power of God's "victorious right arm." And even though we know the story, it is a scandal every year. The savior is born in a stable? The messiah is a baby born to nobody parents in a nowhere town?

If we pay attention in life, we notice that the Advent to Christmas is the rhythm of things. We go along in life with the usual highs and lows of life. We have the great celebration of the newborn king, but it took the church several hundred years to figure out that was something to celebrate! Advent celebrates the birth of the messiah and anticipates the day when God will reign supreme. Now, we are just in the in-between, the advent, the waiting.

Here at Shepherd of the Valley, you have gone through the shocking news that Pastor Dan was taking a new call and things were unsettled and confusing. Now you are in the midst of Advent. We really don't know what lays ahead for us, even though we know the birth of the King assures the result is in God's hands. And even though we don't know the timing, we do know some things. We will have a time of discernment. We will have the opportunity to look back and give thanks for what was good, and see where faith has grown and celebrate the healing and feeding that has taken place. We can look around and take stock of what resources we have and the ministry opportunities that are at hand. We will need to decide what to take with us and what to leave behind as we move forward. It will take awhile, but like the early church, we know we are not alone. Christ is with us. God is in this. And eventually, you will discover the Christmas Morning of a new pastor and a start of a new phase in ministry and the life of the church.

So all of you, I am glad I have gotten to be your pastor during this time of waiting, this Advent time, and look forward to starting the new year with you. Dwell with me on the power of waiting, of taking stock and of relying on each other. And trust me, Christmas morning is coming.

Blessings to all,

Pastor Karla

December Events

- Dec. 1** - Work Party/Christmas Tree set up 9:30am
- Dec. 2** - Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar at First Lutheran
- Dec. 3** - Bible Study, 6pm
- Dec. 6** - Quilting at SVLC 9am-1pm
- Dec. 9** - Welcome Advent Event, after second service
- Dec. 10** - Bible Study, 6pm
- Dec. 11** - *Gather* Bible Study, 10am
- Dec. 11** - Bike Building at Casa de Oro Elementary, 6pm
- Dec. 16** - SVLC Gift-giving (i.e. Crisis House) items due
- Dec. 16** - Dedication of Hellberg Memorial Bench
- Dec. 17** - Bible Study, 6pm
- Dec. 19** - ABC Barn Family Chapel/Open House, 6:30pm



Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve
6pm – Children & Family Christmas Eve Service
9pm – Christmas Eve Carols, Communion & Candlelight



News from The Closet on 54th

As of November 17, The Closet handed out 1,310 items of clothing, accessories and shoes to 157 people. Many thanks to everyone who continues to donate clothing and time to The Closet. This ministry could not succeed without your blessings. Right now we have a surplus of donations.

Here are the hours for the next few months (11am- 2pm)
 Tues. Dec 4 / Thurs. Dec 13 / Fri. Dec 21 /
 Tues. Jan 8 / Thurs. Jan 17 / Fri. Jan 24
 (open two consecutive Thursdays because Leslie will be out-of-town on Friday January 25)

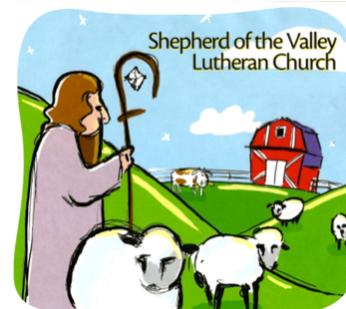
Sorting donations and restocking racks on Dec 11 (Tues),
 Dec 18 (Tues), Jan 3 (Thurs), Jan 15 (Tues), and Jan 22 (Tues)

See the sign up sheet at SVLC to volunteer or contact Leslie Atkins. (la.atkins23@gmail.com)

ABC Barn Family Christmas Chapel and Open House

Join us on Wednesday, December 19 at 6:30pm for a very special family chapel time.

We'll also have an Open House to show off the wonderful work of our students and teachers. We'll enjoy treats and a visit from St. Nick too!



All ABC & SVLC families and friends are welcome to attend this very special evening.

Bible Study at SVLC

Monday evening Bible Study will continue to meet during Advent at 6pm: Watch announcements for location.

The Tuesday morning *Gather* Bible Study will be Dec. 11 at 10am at SVLC, with a lunch outing to follow.

Continuing our Advent Tradition

The Hot Chocolate and Cookie Stand will be open on Sunday, December 9th as part of our "Welcome Advent" celebration. Cookie (bars, cupcakes) donations are needed and will be gratefully received-- please sign up in the narthex. Thank you from the Hot Chocolate and Cookie Stand staff!

Give the Gift of Dinner

The Schnurr's are expecting twin girls very soon! Please sign up in the narthex if you'd like to provide supper for their family one evening (deliver to SVLC or to them in El Cajon)

Common Ground Bike Building!

Come join the fun as Common Ground builds bikes: Tuesday., Dec. 11, 6-8pm at Casa de Oro Elementary. We are also looking for individual bike sponsors for the attendance incentive program at Avondale Elementary. Pizza provided. Bring tools if you have them.

Worship Assistants Needed for Christmas Eve

Because we have two service times for the Evening Services on Christmas Eve, we'll have a sign up sheet for our Worship Assistants that night. If you are able to serve, please sign up to greet, usher, acolyte, read, manage the sound system, ring the bell, help serve communion, serve on the altar guild or as an assisting minister.

SVLC Book Worms

Bookclub will not have a December meeting. We will pick up on January 27, 2018 at 5:30 pm with host Ann Durham. The selection for January is *Before We Were Yours*, by Lisa Wingate. Let me know if you would like to join us! April Froelich @ afroelich7@gmail.com or 423-963-0681. Thanks!!



Above: A few of the 2017 staff (Jessica, Eve, and Lizzy) pause to pose and smile.

Christmas Giving at SVLC

We have several opportunities to participate in giving through outreach programs, including:
 Common Ground Trees / Crisis House Adopt-A-Family / El Nido Family Gifts / Gifts for the children of our ABC Barn Staff
 See below for details: All gifts need to be returned by December 16 —
 Please be sure that gifts are identified with tags so they can be matched with the correct recipient ;)



Common Ground

Select a Christmas Tree tag and purchase a gift and clothing for a child or sibling from Bancroft Elementary school. A gift request and clothing sizes are listed on the tag. Suggested amount to spend is \$35-\$40. Feel free to "share" a tree with another family. For more info contact Margi Buller. Please sign the chart on the clipboard with your name and contact info.

Common Ground Collaborative is a ministry of 3 local churches (SVLC, Foothills Methodist next door and Santa Sophia Catholic in Casa de Oro) that supports the staff and serves families in need at five of our local elementary schools.



El Nido Family

Select a gift bag tagged with a specific gift for one of the El Nido family members and return with the gift requested enclosed by December 16. Gifts are not to exceed \$26 in value. Each family member will receive 3 gifts from SVLC, and the children will receive toys from another agency.



Part of the Interfaith Shelter Network, El Nido provides transitional housing, education and job training through a managed program for victims of domestic violence. SVLC sponsors an apartment and helps furnish it when a new family moves in. We give thanks for our El Nido coordinators for SVLC, Lyle and Pat Swanson.

Gifts for Children of ABC Barn Staff

Help show a little extra TLC from SVLC to ABC... Each child of our staff members has completed a "Dear Santa" Christmas gift form with their hobbies and favorites, along with a couple of gift requests. Please select a letter and return gifts wrapped or unwrapped. Suggested amount to spend is up to \$25.

ABC Barn Children's Place



Crisis House

We have adopted a family of 6 for Christmas and will provide each of the family members with new socks and underwear, PJ's, a sweater or coat and one or two gift requests. Take a gift tag from the "wish board" and then return the item (wrapped, in a gift bag, or unwrapped) to SVLC with tag attached. For more info contact our wonderful coordinator for several years, Ann Durham.

Crisis House (El Cajon) provides humanitarian services to citizens who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or in crisis with a focus on serving those residing in the East region of San Diego County.

Lutheran World Relief Matching Gift Challenge

Good news this holiday season!

Right now you can do twice as much for someone living in hunger and poverty. That's because a group of Lutheran World Relief supporters has challenged you to give a gift this Christmas, and they will DOUBLE your gift – dollar for dollar – up to \$283,300. That means every dollar you give between now and December 31 will be matched! Donate directly to LWR or through your offering at SVLC, just write "LWR" in the memo.

As Christmas approaches, and we gather with loved ones to celebrate the birth of Christ, please take action for a family in crisis, so they can fight hunger and live in dignity. Help Lutheran World Relief meet the Christmas Matching Gift Challenge with your gift today. Find out more/donate at lwr.org.



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Order **Christmas poinsettias** in honor or memory of loved ones to decorate our sanctuary for Christmas. The price is \$10 each and you may pay at your convenience (checks payable to SVLC with "flowers" in the memo.) Complete the red order form and place in the offering tray or bring to the church office by December 16.

The 2018 flower chart is posted on the kiosk.
Sign up to sponsor altar flowers on our near occasions that are special to you or your loved ones.



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Our vision: *Extending God's welcome to all we meet along the way.*

SVLC Office: 670-7656 / ABC Barn Office: 670-3898 / svlc.lamesa@gmail.com
Interim Pastor Karla Seyb-Stockton / karla.seyb.stockton@me.com / 858-883-8038
Ms. Gina Seashore, Minister of Music / g.seashore@earthlink.net
Mr. Ron Blake, ABC Barn Director / rdk3@yahoo.com
Ms. Tanya Quintero Campillo, ABC Barn Assistant Director / sweettwin@hotmail.com
Ms. Jennifer Fenner, Parish Administrator / jenny.svlc@gmail.com



Sunday Worship services at 8:15am and 10:30am
Christmas Eve services at 6:00pm and 9:00pm

Sunday School for preschool through Grade 5 takes place after the Children's Talk at the 10:30 service.
Nursery available for infants and toddlers during the 10:30am service.

DECEMBER PRESCHOOL CHAPEL / CURRICULUM THEMES

Dec. 4 - Bears & hibernation/Letter "N" *ABC Barn Children's Place*
Dec. 12 - Shepherds/ Letter "P"
Dec. 18 - Christmas/ Letter "Q"
Dec. 19- (6:30pm) - Christmas Family Chapel

Everyone welcome—not just preschool kids! Chapel is at 10am.

"PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS..."

- Visitors, guests, immigrants, and refugees.
- Welcomers, volunteers, givers and helpers.
- People who are stressed or suffering from depression.
- Those who need peace and those who work for peace.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS: FYI, We have a full basket of various Advent devotionals and Advent Calendars in the narthex, please take one or two to use during this special season. And if you haven't already, check out Pastor Karla's sermon transcripts and daily devotionals at pastorkarlablog.wordpress.com

Please send photos and articles for *Vistas* by the 15th of the month prior to svlc.lamesa@gmail.com