

Seek the Lord, Study God's Word, Serve the World



DECEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m. – Traditional Service w/Communion (Organ music)
9:45 a.m. – Rejoice Service – Live Band w/Communion
9:45 a.m. – Sunday School for K-8th grade
(the children join families during later part of Rejoice service for communion)
11:00 a.m. – Blended Service w/Communion (Piano music)

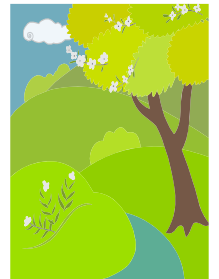
Christmas schedule

The Sunday school Bell-ringers will perform on Sunday, December 20th at all services.

Please join us for worship: **Christmas Eve 5:30 – Family Service**
7:30 – Candlelight Service w/Communion
9:30 – Candlelight Service w/Communion
11:00 – Candlelight Service w/Communion

Serving the community...

Still Waters Cafe



“A **no cost** dining service to those who are suffering economic hardship, homelessness or who are lonely and wish to have a dining companion”

Amenities at the café:

- **Mealtime is 5:00–7:00 p.m. every Thursday**
- Fresh home cooked meal served in a family atmosphere with home style table settings.
- To go snack bags are offered.
- Highchairs and booster seats are available for the younger family members.
- There are wheelchair accessible entrances and bathrooms available.
- Prayer requests can be satisfied.
- Homework help is available for school age children K-8th grade 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. and includes a snack.

For further information please call 805-526-7577

From the Pastor

My Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

I am one of those people who are unfortunate enough to speak only one language. I realize in our day and setting it would be very helpful to be able to speak Spanish as well as English. In the near future it could also be helpful to speak Chinese since China is quickly becoming a major player on the world stage. Given my struggle with languages, however, I don't expect that to happen soon – at least not in my life.

My inability to be bilingual makes me happy for symbols. It is now possible to get around many places in the world because we have developed some international symbols. Need to find a hospital? Look for the sign with the blue “H” and follow the arrows. Need to find a library? Look for the blue sign with the blue book and follow the arrows. Need a rest room? The international symbols now relieve the pressure of deciphering a foreign language and accidentally walking into the wrong room.

Symbols have been important throughout history. They were important in biblical times when the population was largely illiterate because a known symbol would help the illiterate identify or understand different words or concepts. One that we are familiar with, because it has come back into vogue in the past few years, is the fish symbol. The fish became an ancient symbol for Jesus because when the first letters of several titles of Jesus (Jesus Christ Son of God Savior) in Greek are put together they spell the Greek word for fish (ichthus).

One old symbol that catches a lot of heat this time of the year is when the word “Xmas” is substituted for the word “Christmas”. We English speakers see the first letter “X” and assume it is one of our letters, not realizing the first Greek letter in Christ is a *chi*, which looks like our letter “X”. Some people get up in arms that we are somehow trying to leave Christ out of Christmas when in fact the chi, along with the next letter in the Greek name “Christ” shows up on many of the paraments we use on the altar throughout the church year. In fact, the “chi-rho” is presently on the blue paraments we are using in the sanctuary for the season of Advent.

The exact origin of the single letter X for Christ cannot be pinpointed with any certainty. Some claim it began in the first century AD along with the other symbols. Others claim it came into widespread use by the 13th century along with many other abbreviations and symbols for Christianity and various Christian ideas that were popular in the Middle Ages.

In any case, by the 15th century Xmas emerged as a widely used symbol for Christmas. In 1436 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press with movable type. In the early days of printing typesetting was done by hand and was very tedious and expensive. As a result, abbreviations were common. In religious publications, the church began to use the abbreviation X (chi) for the word “Christ” to cut down on the cost of the books and pamphlets. From there, the abbreviation moved into general use in newspapers and other publications, and “Xmas” became an accepted way of printing “Christmas” (along with the abbreviations Xian and Xianity). Even Webster's Dictionary acknowledges that the abbreviation Xmas was in common use by the middle of the 16th century.

So there is no great conspiracy to take Christ out of Christmas. It's simply a matter of another symbol of the church that has lost its meaning over the centuries. Perhaps a working knowledge of biblical Greek would have kept the misconception from arising. But then, not many people study ancient Greek as a second language anymore. Merry Christmas to you all.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Pastor Gary

Prayers needed...



Dear Friends and Family, if there are friends and loved ones whom you would like to have prayers for, or military persons on active duty, please contact the church office at 526-7577 and we will list them in our bulletin and newsletter.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER Pastor Gary and our church leaders.

Undergoing cancer therapy Daryl Barnett, Diane Voorhes, Geoff Connors (*Ralph Nelman's grandson-in-law*), Wendy Weathers (*friend of Elizabeth Hood*) Julie Rolph (*friend of Jan Yoder*).

Under convalescent or hospice care...Tommy Timms (cousin of Jeanne Fisher)

Hazel Gade (OSLC member), Tim Simpson

Undergoing surgery, various tests, treatments, recuperating and continued comfort...

Elsie Pusateri, Mike Moriarty (SVLC member), John Moore (SVLC member), Kristofer Maass

(friend of the Baas family), Kenny Kotwitz, to regain some vision; Dorothy Myers; John Yanuklis, Pr. Kenn Bergmann; Sammi Brazenor; Christine and Paul (Pastor Lynn's friends); Lydia Christensen; Eloise Cooley (Marcia's mother); Good Shepherd Lutheran School; Laurie Kephart (John Yanuklis' daughter); Millie McDermott (Mary Kotwitz' mother); Mary Milligan (friend of Pastor Lynn); Margie Schuelke (Mary Kotwitz' aunt); Pastor Leslie Soyster; Kelly Stemler (Carol Howard's daughter); Irene Tangren's daughter, Debbie; Pr. Paul Werfelmann, John Yankulis Jr. (son of John Yankulis). Jim Geres (friend of Norma Studer), Hortensia Salcedo (Helen Anderson's mother), Becky Rodriguez (former manager for Luther's Attic).

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
2nd Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 31st 2010



WE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR AMERICA, THOSE FIGHTING IN FOREIGN LANDS AND FOR THE CONTINUED STRENGTH OF THE LEADERS OF THIS GREAT NATION

Our Military Personnel now serving: John Parker, Shane Denning, Tyson and Blake Crosby, Joe Anderson, Mike Hultman, Brian Lowen, Nick Goldsmith, Brian Richardson, Frank King, Michael Kidd, Nisha Dean, Dan Balaun, Chris Labelle, Raymond Schooler, Captain Ted Slocum, David Bond, Wayne Combs, Jeffrey C.A. Bower, Jonathan Scholberg, Brett Launer, Jorden Gutowski, Allen Steinke, Robert Deobler, Sgt Elliott Van Marion. Matthew Wilkins, Cpl. Brett Tyre, Travis Girard

HOMELESS? IN SIMI VALLEY?

The County of Ventura 2009 Homeless count has been updated. The total number of persons counted in Simi Valley was 303. There were 266 adults and 37 children. A breakdown of the data collected from adults is as follows:

- 1. **Location** 98% of persons (298) were counted on the streets and 2% (5) in facilities;
- 2. **Age** 5% of adults (12) were seniors (age 62+); 18% (48) were youth between the ages of 18 - 24; and 4 (1%) were unaccompanied youth (without parents) between the ages of 13-17.
- 3. **Gender** 69% of adults (183) were men and 31% (83) were women;
- 4. **Ethnicity** 69% of adults (183) were White; 23% (62) were Hispanic or Latino; 1% (2) were American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% (8) were African American or Black; 1% (3) were Asian/Pacific Islander; and 3% (8) stated Other;
- 5. **State Born** 67% of adults (178) were born in California;
- 6. **Children** 12% (37) of the total number of persons counted were children;
- 7. **Family Composition** 18 families were counted—10 two-parent family with children and 8 one-parent families with children. 20% of the homeless in Ventura County call Simi Valley “home”. “Lord, when did we see you hungry and homeless and invite you in?”



CONFIRMATION 6TH – 7TH AND 8TH Grade Wednesday, December 2 & 9 @ 7:00 p.m.

SCRIP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All ready for Christmas? Gifts all bought and wrapped? Or are you looking for some last minute things?

Remember SCRIP makes a great gift for anyone on your list. And each vendor donates a percentage of the purchase price to our church! This year we are giving away FREE gift wrappers for your cards. Place them in the wrapper, add them to your gift card envelope and drop them in the mail. It is so much cheaper than buying wrapping paper, ribbon, gift tags and postage.

However, the cut-off date for ordering is December 13th to guarantee delivery before Christmas. Stop by the Scrip table for a new vendor's list. Many people do not realize that we have so many more merchants available besides the ones we normally carry. And many stores are offering extra donations for Christmas'.

A partial list of those offering to up their donations are: Lowe's, Home Depot, Calif. Pizza Kitchen, Starbucks, Outback, Land's End, Dominos, L. L. Bean, and Build a Bear. I am sure there will be more before you read this.

We also carry Bass Pro, GameStop, Sports Authority, Gap, Golfsmith and so many more. If you don't see it on our list, ask us if it is available. There are several hundred stores participating in the Scrip program so it is impossible to list them all.

So take the hassle out of your gift giving. Enjoy the peace and love that the love of the Lord brings, share generously of all He has given you, and don't hesitate to wish everyone you meet a "Merry Christmas".



Y.I.M.A.H Christmas at Home-Town Buffet

All those 50 years of age and older who are "Young in Mind and Heart"

Thursday, December 17th @ 11:30 a.m.

For further information please call the church office 526-7577



From the Library

Do you know that your library is open every Sunday for your convenience? Sometimes there are people in there perhaps practicing music or holding a meeting or selling Scrip on a windy or rainy day! But it is still YOUR Library. There for you to use at any time. Browsing the shelves and choosing a book is not distracting to any one, so go ahead and find what you want.

We have just finished taking inventory, something that takes many hours to do, but now everything has a place and everything is in its place. Each shelf features a label letting you know the category there. Are you looking for help in parenting? Have you suffered a loss recently? Want to find some fun books for the children? Maybe you would like to know more about Martin Luther and our Lutheran faith. Is there a particular disciple who interests you? There are biographies, inspirational writings, ideas on handling various addictions. All from a Christian viewpoint.

The Women's board has always been most generous in funding your library, so if there are books or subjects you would like to see on our shelves, please tell us or leave a note in the check out box. The Library is meant to be used by ALL church members and visitors, so your input and suggestions are extremely welcome.

We also feature the free book exchange - paper back fiction for you to borrow without having to sign out. We also appreciate your donating paperbacks you have enjoyed so someone else can read them. It is a much appreciated service to save our members big bucks over having to buy them at a bookstore.

The book cart is usually stocked with our newer acquisitions and often features a particular topic which has been mentioned in the Harbinger. Keep reading for updates and take advantage of all we have to offer. Winter days are great for curling up with a warm lap robe and starting a new book! Start that adventure today!



PRESCHOOL HOLIDAY NEWS

November is a fun month because we get to concentrate not so much on the "I wants" but the "I haves". Some of the children in the Bunny Room wanted to share what they are thankful for-


"I give thanks for my mom-I love her" (Tyler), "I am thankful for food and time outs" (Adrianna), "I am thankful for play at Grandmas" (Laci), "I am thankful for God not waking people up" (Brennon), "I am thankful for my family" (Kaden), "I give thanks for Jesus, mommy and daddy" (Henry)




Our Thanksgiving feasts were lots of fun as children shared items such as fruit, vegetables, macaroni and cheese, chicken nuggets and pumpkin cookies.

In teaching the children about the spirit of giving, the preschool is collecting items for a program called "Bear Necessities" (sponsored by Simi Hills Christian Church). Now through December 16th, we are collecting items for the homeless children in Simi Valley. These items will be placed in bags and back packs to be distributed in time for Christmas.

Our annual Christmas program will be held on **Sunday, December 13**. There will be a special Holiday message, and the children will be singing to celebrate Christ's birth-all followed by refreshments. It is always a fun time and a good way to get into the holiday spirit.

The preschool staff wishes each of you the happiest of holidays.

INTERFACE ITEMS NEEDED...the following items are needed by the Battered Women's Shelter: STANDARD SIZES PLEASE of Shampoo & Conditioner, hairbrushes , combs, body lotion,

toothpaste, toothbrush , deodorant, tampons, disposable razors  and pocket size Kleenex . You may bring these items and place them in the narthex please identify them on the outside of the bag "INTERFACE" or you may drop items off at the church office. If you have any questions please call Jennifer Wacenske 581-2923 or the church office ☺



School News

Good Shepherd Lutheran School

A Christian community challenging minds and nurturing hearts since 1979



Volume XXXI, Issue V

www.gsls-simi.com

December 2009

May God
bless you
this Advent
season.



Shepherds, Sheep, and a Savior

SAVE THE DATE! On Friday, December 11, in Eichele Hall on the Shepherd of the Valley campus, the kindergarten through grade three students will present the wonder and awe of the Christmas message as only small children can.

The shepherds have a story to tell even if they are stuck out on hillside with their shaggy, smelly sheep. Travelers passing by snub their noses at them having no idea of the Good News they have to share with them. Come on out to this fellowship event and see how the shepherds get the news out. For unto us is born a Savior . . . Mrs. Theone Geres directs this production.

Come and get into the true spirit of Christmas through the voices and acting of our younger students. Stay after the show and enjoy dessert and meet the actors.

THE POWER OF A LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Lutheran schools do make a difference. Statistical research shows that those who attended Lutheran schools:

- Exhibit a more consistent belief in the divinity of Jesus
- Profess a greater clarity on the way of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone
- Do more witnessing to others about Christ
- Give a higher value to relation-

ships with God and other persons.

Lutheran schools equip God's people for ministry, the ministry of spreading the word about God's gift of grace through faith.

A Christmas appeal should be arriving in your mailboxes shortly. Please support the important mission of Good Shepherd Lutheran School this Christmas season.



While Halloween is long over and visions of sugarplums dance in our heads, these pictures are to show you a great community outreach, Trunk or Treating. This was the first year for this event. Next year, the goal is to have trunks on both campuses and bring the community to both churches. Plan on being there next year. It was a great time.

News and Notes

FIELD TRIP

On December 10, the first grade class will travel to see the Bob Baker Marionettes version of *The Nutcracker Suite*.

BAND AND CHOIR CONCERT

The Good Shepherd choir and band will present a concert on Tuesday, December 15, 7:00 p.m., Trinity church sanctuary. All are welcome.

DINNER FUNDRAISER

This month's dinner fundraiser will be at El Torito on Monday, December 14. Support your outreach ministry by dining out. A percentage of your bill will be given to Good Shepherd.

FOOD COLLECTIONS

A food collection for the needy was held the week before Thanksgiving, with food items turned over to

Shepherd of the Valley for distribution to the needy. Another food collection will be held in December.

CHRISTMAS VACATION

School will be closed from December 21—January 1. School-age care will be available on selected days for pre-registered students only.



DECEMBER Care and Share

The "Giving Tree" for gifts for families of the community will be up in the Narthex Sunday, December 6th please be sure and have your gifts back to the church no later than Thursday, December 17th. For further information please call the church office at 526-7577

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church Sunday School News...

BELL CHOIR FOR GRADES 3 AND UP:

Anyone from Grades 3 and up is invited to be in our bell choir. We will be performing at all 3 services on December 20th. We will be practicing on Sundays December 6 and 13 at 11 am, and Saturday December 19 at 10 am. Since we only have 3 practices, you have to be able to attend all 3 practices. Please call or email me if you have any questions, or just come to our first practice on December 6th. No experience is necessary!

ACOLYTE TRAINING DECEMBER 6 FOR GRADES 3 AND UP:

Lisa Gearhart will be holding acolyte training on Sunday, December 6th for anyone grade 3 or older who is interested in acolyting. The training will be in the sanctuary after the 11 o'clock service. Acolytes light and extinguish the candles and help with communion during the 8:30 and 11 o'clock services. It's a great way for kids to serve at church!

In His Service, Lisa Lewis - 527-6379 olseysue@sbcglobal.net

Lesson Schedule:

Dec 6: Christmas (K-2 "Freeze Frame Skits", 3-5 "Mary's Treasure Box" ornaments)

Dec 13: Christmas (K-2 "Mary's Treasure Box" ornaments, 3-5 "Freeze Frame Skits")

Dec 20: Christmas Party for grades K-8, Kids Sing in Church at ~10:30, Bell Choir at all 3 services

Dec 27, Jan 3: No Sunday School

Jan 10, 17, 24: "The Call of Moses"

Jan 31: No Sunday School (SVLC Annual Meeting, only one service at 9:45 am)

ACTION

Christmas Shoppe 2009

at StoneBridge Community Church (formerly Simi Prez)

Saturday, December 12

What is ACTION?

- Area Christians Taking Initiative On Needs is a Ventura County non-profit organization.
 - **Vision**
Engaging Christians in service to transform their communities.
 - **Mission**
Partnering Christian volunteers with local agencies to meet community needs and bring about positive community transformation. Primary focuses are seniors, disabled residents, under-resourced families, the homeless population and at-risk youth.

What is the Christmas Shoppe?

- An event that brings churches and communities together to serve local low income families by providing toys for Christmas.

How is the Christmas Shoppe facilitated?

- Toys and gift items are collected through out the community.
- Invitations are sent to invitees. We will send approximately 300 invitations.
- StoneBridge Community Church will be set-up like a department store.
- On the day of the event, shoppers come choose new toys, sporting goods, etc.
- Also on the shopping day we provide: child care while they shop, photos with Santa, live music, snacks, and gift wrapping.

Christmas Shoppe Opportunities:

- Lead Team:
 - Joining the team organizing the event.
- Toy Drive:
 - Hosting a collection box at church, work, school, or neighborhood.
 - Solicit from businesses.

(Items needed for all ages: toys, games, puzzles, sporting goods, arts and crafts, clothing, electronics, etc. All items must be new.)
- Volunteer on the day of the event:
 - Especially needed are Spanish speaking individuals.
- Food donations:
 - For the volunteers on the day of the event.

To participate, please contact Jill Upson at 805-581-4086.

For more information:

- Go to the web site: <http://www.actionvc.org/1ministries/cshoppe.php>
- Read the following media release:

CONTACT:

Rob Orth

ACTION Foundation

Ventura County, California, September 3, 2009



December 2009

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
		1 10:00-SVLC @ Luther's Attic 3:00-GSA#340-Hall 5:30-GSA#6065-PR 5:30-SWC Task 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-BSA#622-Hall 7:00-Preschool Bd.	2 9:00-GSLS Chapel 3:00-GSLS Bake 7:00-Youth Group 7:00-Confirmation	3 9:00-SVLP Chapel 10:00-SVLC @ Luther's Attic 3:00-Still Waters 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-AI-anon-CR	4 6:30-Pack #3643-PR 7:30-Sat. PADS <i>Pastor Gary Off</i>	5 10:00-AA-CR 10:00-SVLC @Attic 5:30-Simi Valley Christian Church
6 8:30-Worship 9:45-Rejoice 9:45-Sunday School K-8th 11:00-Worship 12:00-Acolyte Train. 1:00-NA 7:00-AI-anon-CR	7 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:00-Ministry Support 7:00-BSA #698-Hall 7:00-AI-anon-CR 7:30-AI-ateen-SAC	8 10:00 SVLC @Attic 3:00-GSA #34-Hall 5:30-GSA#665-PR 6:00-Stretch N Tone 7:00-BSA#622-Hall 7:00-SVLC Council	9 9:00-GSLS Chapel 7:00-Youth Group 7:00-Confirmation	10 9:00-SVLPChapel 9:30-Naomi Circle 3:00-Still Waters 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-AI-anon-CR	11 7:00-GSLS Xmas Musical 7:00- Sat. - PADS <i>PASTOR OFF</i>	12 10:00-AA-CR 5:30-Simi Valley Christian Church
13 8:30-Worship 9:45-Rejoice 9:45-Sunday School K-8th 11:00-Worship 11:00-Women's Bd. 3:00-SVLP Xmas Program-Sanctuary 1:00-NA 7:00-AI-anon-CR	14 6:00-Stretch N Tone 7:00-BSA #698-Hall 7:00-AI-anon-CR 7:30-AI-ateen-SAC	15 7:30-GSLS Coffee hour 10:00-SVLC@ Luther's Attic 3:00-GSA#340-Hall 6:00-Stretch N Tone 7:00-BSA#622-Hall 7:00-Happy Sq.- CR 7:00-Hannah Circle 7:00-Men's Group- IHOP	16 9:00-GSLS Chapel 7:00-Youth Group NO CONFIRMATION	17 9:00-SVLP Chapel 10:00-SVLC @ Luther's Attic 11:30-Y.I.M.A.H. 3:00-Still Waters 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-AI-anon-CR	18 7:30-Sat.- PADS <i>PASTOR OFF</i>	19 10:00-AA-CR 5:30-Simi Valley Christian Church
20 8:30-Worship 9:45-Rejoice 9:45-Sunday School K-8th 11:00-Worship 1:00-NA 7:00-AI-anon-CR	21 GSLS CLOSED WINTER BREAK 6:00-Stretch N Tone 7:00-BSA #698-Hall 7:00-AI-anon-CR 7:30-AI-ateen-SAC	22 10:00-SVLC@ Luther's Attic 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-BSA #622-Hall 7:00-Property Mtg.	23 7:00-Youth Group NO CONFIRMATION	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> Office closed 3:00-Still Waters 5:30-Family Service 7:30-Candlelight 9:30-Candlelight 11:00-Candlelight	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> Office closed 7:30-Sat. - PADS <i>PASTOR OFF</i>	26 10:00-AA-CR 10:00-SVLC @Attic 5:30-Simi Valley Christian Church
27 8:30-Worship 9:45-Rejoice <i>No Sunday School</i> 11:00-Worship 1:00-NA 7:00-AI-anon-CR	28 6:00-Stretch N Tone 7:00-BSA #698-Hall 7:00-AI-anon-CR 7:30-AI-ateen-SAC	29 10:00-SVLC@Attic 3:00-GSA#340-Hall 6:00-Stretch N Tone 6:30-BSA #622-Hall	30 7:00-Youth Group NO CONFIRMATION	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i> Office Closed		



2010