



# December 2024 The Oakleaves

**SHERMAN OAKS LUTHERAN CHURCH** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
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## Our Annual SOLC Living Nativity

**Saturday, December 21st**  
**5:30 - 7:30 pm**

Thank you to all who have already committed to serve for this outreach event.

There is room for everyone to do something!

♥ Are you someone who can sing the Good News to our visitors as an angel or rush about as a shepherd announcing the birth of the Savior?

♥ Possibly you enjoy serving others with cookie and cocoa while you talk about the true meaning of Christmas.

♥ Maybe you are more a behind-the-scenes person and you could volunteer to help with set up or tear down.

Be inspired by years past by watching with the links here: [tinyurl.com/ladailynews-nativity](https://tinyurl.com/ladailynews-nativity)  
[tinyurl.com/SOLCLivingNativity2022](https://tinyurl.com/SOLCLivingNativity2022)

Don't miss out on creating cherished memories for others with the bonus of being deeply blessed yourself by your YES! A link to Sign Up Genius will be out soon or you can reach out directly to any of the leads in these areas to offer your help:



**"Actors" leading dialog:** Pastor & Jeff Zimmer

**Coordinating applications for Thrivent funds:** Chris Gordon

**Advertising/Promotions & Sign Up Genius:** Rhonda Renneker

**Volunteer Communications/Coordination:** Chris Gordon

**Set Up/Safety/Hay:** Jim Windsor

**Costuming:** Cindy Hanna

**Hospitality:** Laurel Seaver

**Props & Set Decor:** Jeff Gordon

### LEADERSHIP OPENINGS:

Decor/Props, Outreach Table & Church Info, Food Pantry Collection, Lighting Expert, Angel Choir Lead

**SAVE the date and make sure your friends, coworkers, and neighbors do, too!**



Photos by Andy Holzman, Los Angeles Daily News Photographer



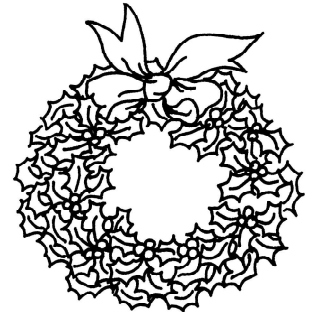
# Holiday Heralders

Celebrate the birth of our savior by joining in with the voices of our young ones leading us in song during our Sunday morning service on December 15!

## *Advent Midweek Theme:* **Don't Miss Christ this Christmas**

No matter who you are or what you believe, you can't live in America and not notice Christmas. The decorations, music, parties, and much more make it simply inevitable. You can't miss Christmas. But ironically, it's not hard to miss Christ. For all the friends, family, food, fun, and festivities, we can easily miss the one who Christmas is all about.

Yet it's always been like this. The first Christmas featured angels singing the birth of the Savior, Magi riding into town and causing quite a stir, and plenty of talk. Yet we find at least three key characters—the inn keeper, the Scribes, and King Herod—who all knew about Christmas, but they missed Christ! In this Wednesday evening Advent series, (inspired by a sermon series done by the great contemporary preacher Tony Evans,) we'll see what we can learn from them (and also from their more faithful counterparts) so that we don't miss Christ this Christmas.



**Advent Midweek Services: December 4, December 11, & December 18 at 7 pm**

## **FEET — Families Encouraging + Equipping Together**

The theme for December's FEET event is *Serving Our Community*.

**December 8th - 12 - 2 pm**

Join us for a light lunch followed by cookie baking and decorating to bless our shut-in members this Christmas as we celebrate the Savior's birth with crafts and fun!

**Please RSVP by December 4th for cookie baking.**

*Optional: Cookie deliveries and caroling to shut ins on December 15th after service.  
ALL are welcome!*





Photos courtesy of Andrew Pohod

## PUMPKIN CARVING FESTIVAL

Some things just NEVER get old—like our free Annual Pumpkin Carving event for our preschool families, church, and community!

Enjoy the photos of all your classic favorites from painting and carving pumpkins, the return of seed spitting contest, the beloved donut eating contest, jumping endlessly in the bounce house or the wildly fun pumpkin slingshot (right into Pastor's baseball glove)!

While that is all such amazing fun; the true treasure is fellowshiping with everyone as we shared, contemplated, and overflowed with joy because of God's BIG love for each of His children through His son, Jesus, and His sacrifice to bring us back to Him. Families heard the Good News through Pastor's pumpkin gospel lesson, read scripture about Jesus as the Light of the World at the Tree of Life (lollipop tree) and just had conversations about how having community in Christ is such a gift! It was truly a blessing to all serving and attending.

Thank you SOLC for your hard work and generosity!



## Zoo News from the Children's Center by Interim Director, Arusyak Dzheyryanyan



**WOW!!** What an exciting and fantastic November we had at the Children's Center! We kicked off the month with a spectacular Harvest Festival, where the children looked amazing. Our Parent-Teacher Conferences were also a success, with parents being very understanding and delighted to hear about their children's progress.

Our Thanksgiving feast was a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn about sharing food, love, and happiness together, just as God shares His love with us.

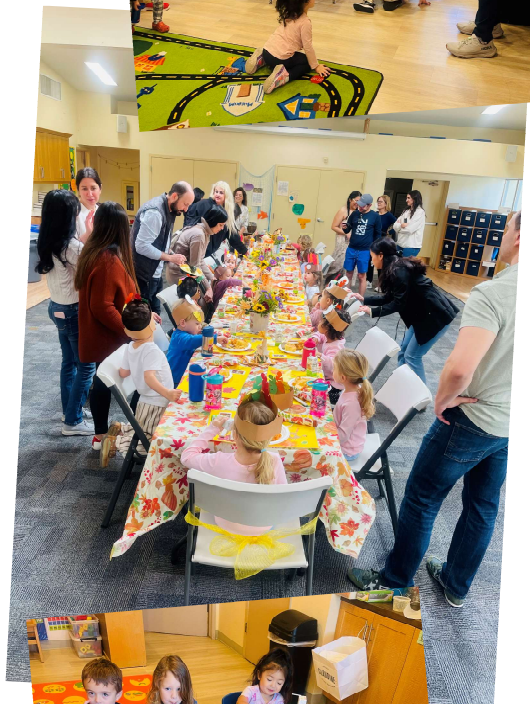
As we head into December, we're just as busy and excited! The children are learning about Jesus' birth and the incredible love and gift God has for us all. They're busy practicing their Christmas songs for the upcoming Christmas program, generously filmed by Mike for parents, families, and friends to enjoy from anywhere. The children will also be making cards and gifts, learning the value of giving from the heart.

### Important Reminders

- The Children's Center will be closed for two weeks during Christmas.
- Please pray that this time will allow our families to focus on the true importance of Christmas, and provide much-needed rest and renewal for our staff.

**We wish you all a Merry Christmas. May the peace and assurance Christ gives us be with us all. Thank you for your prayers.**

**Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!**



# December 2024 Events

*All dates and times are subject to change*

Sun, Dec. 1	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am
Tues, Dec. 3	High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 pm	
Wed, Dec. 4	Advent Soup Supper, 6:00 pm	Advent Midweek Service, 7:00 pm
Sat, Dec. 7	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 pm
Sun, Dec. 8	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am FEET, 12:00 pm
Tues, Dec. 10	Elders Meeting 7:00 pm	
Wed, Dec. 11	Advent Soup Supper, 6:00 pm	Advent Midweek Service, 7:00 pm
Sat, Dec. 14	LWML 9:00 am Bible Study, 6:30 pm	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm
Sun, Dec. 15	Bible Study, 9:00 am Healthy Life, 12:00 pm	Worship, 10:00 am FEET 11:45 am
Mon, Dec. 16	Christmas Concert, 7 pm	
Tues, Dec. 17	<b>January Oakleaves Contributions Due</b>	
Wed, Dec. 18	Advent Soup Supper, 6:00 pm	Advent Midweek Service, 7:00 pm
Sat, Dec. 21	Contemp. Worship, 5:00 pm	Bible Study, 6:30 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 pm	
Sun, Dec. 25	<b>Merry Christmas!</b>	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	

Scan for  
full calendar



## Men's Group

Our Men's Group has had a wonderful year of fellowship and meaningful discussion. We extend a special thanks to Pastor Utecht for his guidance and help. Also, an immense thanks and gratitude to Dick Robertson for hosting our gatherings in his wonderful home.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for our gatherings in 2025:

**January 11, March 8, May 10, July 12, September 13, November 8**

Wishing everyone a blessed and happy new year!



# Lutheran Women in Mission

We are continuing our Bible Study on Our Hope and Future based on Jeremiah 29:11-12. We are also having a Christmas Brunch on December 14. All women are welcome. Please bring something to share. We will provide coffee, tea and juice.

Best Wishes to Diane Nixon and Larry Nixon on their move to Tennessee! We will continue to pray for Larry's health issues.

Inga Windsor was voted as our new treasurer!

## Stewardship Committee

### A Stewardship Confession:

I don't tithe. I want and aspire to do so, but I don't. I'm impressed by the discipline and dedication of those who do tithe, although I have no idea who those people are. I suspect I'm not alone in not tithing, although I don't know this for a fact either. It's conceivable that I'm the only one in the congregation who doesn't tithe, which would make this article pure self-reflection and an apology would be necessary for making all of you read this.

I haven't been consistent in writing to the congregation on behalf of the Stewardship committee either. It's hard to write these articles exhorting all of us to be "better stewards" of the resources God has given us individually. I'm not privy to your individual situations, nor should I be. It strikes me though that I can do more and perhaps, after reading this, you will decide to join me.

Over the length of my affiliation and membership with SOLC (approaching 25 years!), I have increased my giving and I'm proud of this. But the fact of the matter is that God is the one who endowed me with my particular skill set that enables me to do what I do. This is a true statement for all of us and it's also part of God's amazing provision for us. The world would be pretty miserable if 100% of the population were attorneys...(no offense to the other attorneys in the congregation. Imagine an "I heart attorneys" emoji here).

So, I did the math this morning. I now know exactly what percentage of my income I give to the church. In 2025, I am going to increase that percentage by 1%. I invite you to hold me accountable to this. I encourage you to do "your math" on this and make a 1% increase as well. If you decide to increase your giving and would like to share your decision, please feel free to email me at limasquared@hotmail.com. Recalling that the Good Shepherd leaves the 99 to pursue the 1, let's honor Him by giving back 1% more in 2025.

Respectfully,  
Laura Murcott



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



### Birthdays:

Katy Leigh Villari	12/3	Tahirih Petryha	12/15
Rianne Utecht	12/6	Madde Carpiac	12/19
Luca Baughan	12/7	Chansom Zayabouth	12/25
Wendy Hudson	12/11	Chris Gordon	12/26
Rob Engle	12/14	Michael Reiser	12/28
Anfisa Faus	12/14		

### Anniversaries:

(Congratulations on number of years!)

David & Laurel Seaver 12/28  
(42yrs)

## Thank you, Ushers

December 2024-January 2025

- 12/1 Eric Anderson, Chuck Spitler
- 12/8 Christian Hinrichs, Robert True
- 12/15 Charlene Irwin, Inga Windsor
- 12/16 Dennis Werner, Chansom Zayabouth
- 12/22 Heather Wolter, Jamie Cleary
- 12/24 Dennis Werner, Lorraine Salcedo
- 12/25 Laura Murcott, Christian Hinrichs
- 12/29 Chuck Spitler, Chansom Zayabouth
- 12/31 Dick Robertson, Lorraine Salcedo
- 1/5 Jamie Cleary, Laura Murcott
- 1/12 Dennis Werner, Chansom Zayabouth
- 1/19 Inga Windsor, Eric Anderson
- 1/26 Heather Wolter, Chuck Spitler

## Called to *Serve* Thank You!

by Breilyn Brantley

*"I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High."*

*Psalm 7:17*

Here are some thanks to a few people that helped at the church in the months of **October and November**:

- ☺ Thanks to all who helped with the street fair.
- ☺ Thanks to all who volunteered time or donated pumpkins for pumpkin carving.
- ☺ Thanks to those who donated to the mercy packs (and remember you still can through Amazon).
- ☺ Thanks to all Altar Guild, Greeters and Ushers.
- ☺ Thanks to all the great Sunday School teachers.
- ☺ Thanks to 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 [brei04@hotmail.com](mailto:brei04@hotmail.com).*

## 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.)*

Hailey	Marks	Dec. 2
Joan	Mann	Dec. 3
Andrew	Pohlod	Dec. 12
Theodore	Nicholas	Dec. 19
Emmy	Crowley	Dec. 24
Paris	Bayat	Dec. 25
Rianne	Utecht	Dec. 27
Madeline	Peterson	Dec. 27
Alexandra	Peterson	Dec. 27
Althea	Hudson	Dec. 30
Axl	Pan	Dec. 30
Ava	Pan	Dec. 30

## A Message from the Pastor...

by Pastor Titus A. Utecht

# Thankfulness and Happiness

A few years ago in preparation for Thanksgiving, I came across an old sermon preached by my Grandpa. In it, he made this point which has long stuck with me: "It's not the happy people who are thankful, but the thankful people who are happy." Thankfulness is not a result of being happy, but rather happiness is a result of being thankful.

is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." This Scripture tells us to be intentional about what we think about, and that we should think about the good things of God.

I have a lot that I could complain about if I wanted to. Honestly, life has been pretty good in a lot of ways so maybe I have less now than at other times or less than other people, but no matter what, I can always come up with things to complain about. I know you can too. That's why the devil has a song he likes us to sing that goes like this: "Count your problems—name them one by one. Count your problems—see how life's gone wrong." It's easy to spend a lot of time thinking on the things gone wrong and mope about in a frustrated and despairing lot of ungratefulness.

Thanksgiving is a great time of year where we remind ourselves of these things. In spite of all the stress and problems of getting the house cleaned, turkey in the oven, food

served, and so forth, many people still get in a solid 2 minutes of time to practice this intentional thinking and thankfulness like the Bible teaches. It is a glorious 2 minutes!

***"It's not the happy people who are thankful, but the thankful people who are happy."***

I hope you read this before Thanksgiving. Start practicing this intentional gratefulness

and thinking on good things right now. Let's get practical: Set a 3 minute timer and just start writing out blessings and good things to think on. It doesn't take long, and if you're like me, by the time the timer goes off you'll be like, "I had like 10 more things I wanted to write but didn't have time!" That's ok, do this again tomorrow and write them down then! Do it today, tomorrow, and multiple days in a row. Hopefully it goes from being a practice to a habit, from a habit to an attitude, and from an attitude to a lifestyle. Then we shall be the grateful and joyful people God has made us to be!

On the flip side, I have sooooo much to be thankful for. God is good! He has blessed me in so many ways. The same is true for you. However, for whatever reason it's a lot harder to dwell on the good things. Problems demand attention. Blessings are much easier to ignore. So intentionally choose to spend time thinking on the good. (Don't ignore problems, just don't let them override the blessings!) That's why the Christian hymn (which the devil hates) says, "Count your blessings—name them one by one. Count your blessings—see what God has done."

After all, it's not the happy people who are thankful. It's the thankful people who are happy. :)

God's Word tells us as much in Philippians 4:8. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever