

Loved by God; Loving Others. Fed by God; Feeding Others.

January
February
2026

The Shepherd's Voice

Bimonthly Newsletter of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

During the Christmas season, from Advent until the Epiphany, I participated in a virtual retreat centered on the ancient practice of "Give Me a Word," a practice associated with the Desert Mothers and Fathers from the first few centuries of Christianity. Seekers would find a hermit in the desert and ask to be given a word. They would then journey with this word, letting it teach, guide, and transform them for days, months, or years. The invitation of the retreat I completed was to find a word that I will travel with for 2026. The word I was given during days of readings, meditations, and journaling is "the Way." (I know. I know. That's two words.)

As I'm sure you are aware, what is now Christianity began as a movement in Judaism. In the first few decades after Jesus' death, his disciples and those gathering around them were not called Christians. Instead, they were often referred to as "followers of the Way." The early decades of this new Jewish sect fascinate me, and I am currently insatiably curious about "the Way." In one of the most famous scripture passages, Jesus described himself as "the Way," (John 14:6), but what does that really mean, and how does one find the Way?

While I'm hoping (ok, expecting) to grow in understanding during 2026, my starting place for the Way is along these lines: The Way is a path of interdependence between myself, others, and God. Taking out any one of those three risks reduces my journey to self-reification and invites an understanding of God, others, and myself that becomes self-serving, despite my best intentions.

As demonstrated time and again in the Gospels, the Way modeled by Jesus involves accompanying, serving, and speaking out with others simply because *all* of us are created with equal worth and dignity. No one has to earn being treated with dignity. If service is the only form of action I take along the Way, however, I risk missing the equally important process of self-transformation. The Gospels also witness that the Way Jesus travels requires ongoing self-transformation, but there's a catch: we cannot be transformed only through a relationship with God; we need others, especially the marginalized and scapegoated, in order to be transformed into someone traveling the Way.

Note my use of "to be transformed"; I cannot transform myself—at least not in the ways called for by Jesus—despite what we read and hear regularly in our society. I need both God and others in order to be transformed along the Way. Even the isolated Desert Elders had periodic seekers to talk with.

I encourage each of you to consider asking for a word for 2026. Start praying, reading, meditating, journaling, asking and/or noticing. Perhaps a word will be gifted to you.

Peace,
Linda

We are excited to welcome Linda Land-Closson to SOV. She will spend time with us while Pastor Tari is on sabbatical.



Faith Formation at SOV

We hope you'll join us as part of your faith journey. There are many opportunities to learn and connect with each other. Thank you to those willing to lead.

General Sunday Schedule at SOV

8:30 am Men's Group.

9:30 am Worship.

10:30 am Coffee fellowship.

Thank you to our Sunday morning snack crew. Please note, everyone is welcome to do dishes after coffee fellowship (thank you).

10:50 am Bell rings and faith formation classes for all ages begin. Thank you for not visiting in the narthex while classes are taking place.

Faith Formation

Sunday morning classes by age group will continue on January 11. Thank you to all our leaders:

Younger Elementary—Meagan, Michelle and Eva

5th—8th Graders—Christy and Glenn

High School Youth—Plans to be decided/announced
Adults—Linda

NZ Pilgrimage Prayers & Devotions

Please keep our crew of 31 traveling to New Zealand for the "Pilgrimage of Friendship" in your prayers. The group departs on December 31 and returns around January 13 (many people are staying to travel on their own after the pilgrimage wraps up). No doubt they will have stories to share when they get back (and will do so during worship on January 25). Thank you for your generous congregational support of these travel opportunities.

Devotions—While traveling, the crew will meet for daily prayer and devotions. You can take part in the daily devotions (written by folks traveling) through the SOV website or the SOV app.

Ash Wednesday

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18. Join us at 7 p.m. for this special worship that includes the imposition of ashes. Our friends from Resurrection Lutheran will worship with us.

Other Faith Formation Opportunities

Faith Formation doesn't just happen on Sunday morning.

Lunch with Love

Lunch with Love will resume at Noon, Tuesday, January 20. We will talk about healthy aging.

Eileen Hosey has agreed to spearhead scheduling the soup providers and activities for this weekly event, so please share program ideas with her. One presentation to look forward to in February: Chip McMillan will share about his time in Kenya with the Peace Corps. Lunch with Love meets every Tuesday.

Discipleship Class

2 p.m., Tuesday, February 17. The group will meet with Linda Land-Closson. They will read through 1 Samuel and do an introduction to contemplative practices.

Men's Group

8:30 a.m. Sundays before worship. The guys gather to catch up on life.

Friday Morning Devotions

9 a.m. Fridays. Have coffee or tea and dig into a devotion.

SOV Book Club

The next gathering is 6 p.m., Sunday, February 1 at Forbidden Peak. The book is *Project Hail Mary*, a 2021 science fiction novel by Andy Weir.

Bunco Night



Fellowship Fun!

Bunco Night

The fellowship committee is planning to hold a Bunco Night in January. Stay tuned for details about this fun fellowship event.

Ways to Serve in January and February



Seafarers International, AWARE and Glory Hall at Christmas

Thank you to everyone who donated items for the sachels, gift cards, and warm clothing for the ministries we supported this Advent & Christmas Season. Your loving generosity is much appreciated and goes a long way to provide comfort to folks who need it.

Glory Hall Meatloaf

We cook and serve our monthly meal on Wednesdays, January 21 and February 18. Watch the weekly emails for the sign-up sheet for needed contributions of time and food.

“The Caring Canteen” Food Truck

This is a great experience to invite friends to help serve. The menu is flexible; 100+ meals are cooked and served; and the budget is \$250. If interested, you can either talk to Gail Fenumiai directly, or talk to us in the church office and we will put you in touch with her. SOV’s next turn with The Caring Canteen is Tuesday, January 27. Cooks and servers needed.

Food Pantry

The pantry is open from Noon– 1 p.m. Wednesdays (hot soup lunch served) and 9-10 a.m. Saturdays; and on the last Saturday of the month we serve a hot breakfast. Deliveries to folks who are homebound are available on Saturdays too. Call the pantry line at (907) 500-3588 for info.

Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship

Savory or sweet—snacks and treats are always appreciated on Sunday mornings. Did you celebrate a birthday or other special event during the week and have delicious leftover cake? Or did you make/buy too many cookies? Too many apples? Bring your “leftovers” to share during Sunday morning fellowship.

Giving Updates—Ways to Give

1. Place checks or cash in the offering plate.
2. Sign up for regular giving through Tithely at www.sovlutheran.org/give
3. Sign up through Vanco using the QR code.



Sunday Morning Loose Offering

Thank you for your generous giving of loose offering on Sunday mornings. Here are the non-profits we are supporting in the coming months:

January - REACH

February - Head Start

March - Trail Mix

Newsletter Sponsors

If you are interested in sponsoring an issue of the newsletter in honor or celebration of something or someone, let us know. The suggested donation is \$100. Call or email the church to let us know which issue you would like to sponsor and any special wording you want included.



The Souper Bowl of Caring

On Sunday, February 8 (which is the day of that other Super Bowl), the SOV youth will challenge us to bring non-perishable food items to church for the Souper Bowl of Caring. BUT WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE? Stay tuned to the weekly church email for details. All donations will go toward the SOV community food pantry; look for the designated Souper Bowl table at church.

Let Us Pray

Prayer is many things, but part of it is grounding ourselves and our world in God's love. It is surrounding with love that which we hold dear. There are many ways to do that at Shepherd of the Valley.



Email Prayer Chain—The prayer chain is managed by Gail Fenumiai. When there is a concern, please email your prayer request to Gail at agfenumiai@gmail.com, and she will send it out to those who have volunteered to pray for others. Talk with Gail if you would like to be part of the chain.

Prayer Shawls—The prayer shawls are on the shelf at the back of the sanctuary. The shawls are a physical comfort for those going through a time when they need to feel a little extra love. Feel free to gift one if you know someone who could use a prayer shawl. They are free, but we do ask that you sign them out in the book provided. There are also prayer cards from which to choose to give with the shawl. Prayer shawls are also an opportunity for those who knit or crochet to lift up those around them. Donations of shawls to this ministry are always appreciated.

Morning Prayer Before Worship—"Morning Prayer Before Worship" is the prayer list printed in the Sunday bulletin. This helps us remember people as a whole community when we pray. Put your requests for this prayer list in the offering plate, on Becky's desk in the church office, or send us an email.

Council Meeting and Retreat

We welcome Doug Larsen, Eileen Hosey and Glenn Mitchell as new council members. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

There is a council meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, January 22 at SOV.

The annual council retreat is at Jubilee cabin at the Shrine, Friday-Saturday, February 20-21. Whoever on council is available a little early on February 20 will meet at 3 p.m. for some learning time with Linda. The planning/evaluating part of the retreat will start around 5 p.m., followed by dinner. Council members are welcome to stay overnight. The cabin is reserved until 11 a.m. Saturday.



Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Please join us after worship (about 10:15 a.m.) on Sunday, January 25 for a chance to know and be a part of living out our faith at Shepherd of the Valley. This year's meeting will have a Zoom option. The meeting will be followed by brunch.

There are some changes to the Model constitution for congregations of the ELCA that need to be approved. An update will be provided on building projects and we will check in on ministry.

Feel free to share thoughts or concerns to be brought up at the meeting via email prior to the meeting at sovjuneau@gmail.com

The first draft of the annual report will be available on Sunday, January 11. Please look through the report before the meeting.



The Season of Lent Begins February 18

Lent is preparation for Easter. It is 40 days (not including Sundays) of fasting, prayer, and confession. Purple is the color for Lent as a sign of penance, as we enter into the darkness of our sin; and it is a sign of royalty, recognizing Christ's lordship even over death and sin.

Our annual event **Fat Follies** happens after worship on February 15. This is our pre-Lent pancake feast and time for silliness! It is also our time to recognize the tradition of clearing out fatty foods before the religious obligations and fasting associated with Lent.

Ash Wednesday is February 18. Join us for worship at 7 p.m. Our friends from Resurrection Lutheran will worship with us.

Lenten Devotions

Linda Land-Closson will write reflections for Lent on the seven pillars of Benedictine hospitality. They will be available on the SOV website and app.

Special Offering for Lent

Our special Lenten Offerings this year will go to seniors at one of our local care facilities or teens at the youth shelter. Bring the following items on the designated day and put them on the altar:

February 22 Socks (with grippers if for seniors)

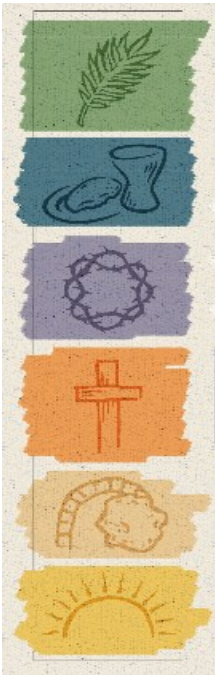
March 1 Instant tea or coffee packets

March 8 Little packets of cookies or oatmeal

March 15 Travel shampoo and conditioner

March 22 Travel body wash and toothpaste

March 29 Puzzles, deck of cards or dice



Lenten Season Community Soup and Worship

We will again gather with congregations around Juneau to worship and enjoy soup together. Each gathering begins at 5:30 p.m. with a brief worship followed by a time of fellowship.

This is the schedule as of newsletter-printing time. Keep an eye out mid-February for the event flyer (the schedule will be firmed up by then).

February 25—Kuneix Hidi Northern Light United Church (downtown)

March 4—St. Paul's or Church of the Nazarene

March 11— Holy Trinity

March 18—Douglas Island Bible

March 25— Hosted by both SOV and Resurrection Lutheran (location tbd)



Season of Epiphany Begin January 6

The word *epiphany* means manifestation or dawning light. It is the season of the church year that begins with the coming of the magi, heads to Jesus' baptism, continues with Jesus' first miracle (turning water into wine), and ends with the Transfiguration. Through these events the true nature of Jesus is revealed. **Epiphany** is a celebration of this dawning light. Throughout the season, listen for themes of light in our hymns and readings.

Glacier Bible Camp 2026

It's never too early to start thinking about summer camp, especially because camp is EARLIER this year. We will be at Boy Scout Camp JUNE 15-20. Information about camp and the registration form are available on the SOV website: <https://sovlutheran.org/ministries/camp-2026>

Youth going into 5th-12th grade are welcome to join us. Cost is \$100 for those living in Juneau and \$50 for those outside Juneau. We will need counselors and other staff; mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Our Playground Has a Name! "Shepherd Park"

Last summer the Summer Lunch youth came up with seven fabulous potential names for the new SOV playground. The congregation recently voted and Shepherd Park got the most votes.

The playground is currently covered in snow, but soon enough it'll be open and ready again for play. We will also order the pickets and signage this spring.



Who is Sharing the Message?

As you likely have heard, Pastor Tari is on sabbatical January-April 2026. Life at SOV will continue pretty much like always while she is away, except with special guests and folks from SOV filling in to share faith stories and/or the sermon on Sundays. Here is the schedule for January and February:

January 4—Worship with Lessons and Carols

January 11—Glenn Mitchell

January 18—Maddox Rasmussen's Faith Story

January 25—New Zealand Travelers Share Stories

February 1—Glenn Mitchell

February 8—Alaska ELCA Bishop Oslovich

February 15—Linda Land-Closson

February 22—Linda Land-Closson

Thank you to everyone who is taking part in sharing a message and leading worship. This is a sacred time of spiritual learning and growth for all of us.

A Moment for Prayer

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lutheran Book of Worship published by Augsburg Publishing House, 1978

Let us pray for Pastor Tari as she ventures into new experiences and unknowns on her sabbatical. God's peace and guidance and love surround her during this sacred time.

Let us pray for Alaska Synod Bishop Timothy Oslovich and ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry.

Let us pray for our Alaska Synod Prayer Partners. Our partner for January is Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wasilla and February is Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Anchorage.

Let the Blessings Overflow

Good news and celebrations in January and February



January Birthdays

1	Nyah Martin
1	Dean Rasmussen
3	Autumn Kiessling
4	Judy Marshall
5	Andrea Kunze
6	Luke Dihle
9	Teresa Kissel
10	Julie Orsborn
12	Beth Weldon
13	Roger Birk
14	Roger Drapeaux
16	Jen Pegues
19	Debbi Howard
21	Jon Weaver
29	Peter Christensen
31	Elaine Duvall
31	Aaron Landvik



Baptismal Birthdays

1	Peg Corazza
1	Helen Mehrkens
1	Marianne Jacobs
9	Teresa Kissel
10	Jacob Carls
10	Norman Carls
12	Dan Corson
12	Brittany Fenumiai
19	Mac Oliver
20	Braden Jenkins

February Birthdays

5	Julie Jenkins
5	Calvin Landvik
7	Michelle Weaver
8	Kiah Dihle
8	Liam Kiessling
9	Rylan Pegues
10	Sally Thompson
10	Greg Weldon
13	Nancy Davis
13	Tari Stage-Harvey
15	Patrick Tassell
17	Camdyn Landvik
17	Carolyn Rasmussen
19	Janalynn Doten-Ferguson
19	Meilani Doten-Ferguson
22	Rachel Sielbach
23	Travis Ross
27	Helen Mehrkens
28	Sharon Fishel
29	Aaron Doten-Ferguson

Baptismal Birthdays

1	Judy Marshall
13	Keith Andrews
15	Mindy Birk
22	Erik Thompson
24	Logan Balstad



I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love.

*-Martin Luther King Jr.
(1929-1968)*



The ability to understand without condemnation, accept our friends and enemies in the light of their weaknesses, is something we must acquire early in life in order to find happiness in this world.

-Elizabeth Peratrovich (1911-1958)



Art mural by Alaskan artist Crystal Kaakeeyáa Rose Demientieff Worl.
The 60x25 foot mural is located on an outside wall of downtown Juneau's public library.

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

www.a-printable-calendar.com



See page 6 for the list of who is sharing the sermon and/or faith story on Sunday.

When you visit the church, please make sure the front door is securely closed. It doesn't latch automatically, especially in cold weather.

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Food Pantry Hours

Noon-1 p.m. Wednesdays (in person/soup lunch served)

9-10 am Saturdays (in person)

Deliveries available Saturday morning to homebound folks in Lemon Creek and the Valley. Call the food pantry direct line for information or fill out the form on the home page of our website: sovlutheran.org

Food Pantry Direct Line: 907-500-3588

Food Pantry Hours Noon-1 p.m. Wednesdays (in person/soup lunch served) 9-10 am Saturdays (in person) Deliveries available Saturday morning to homebound folks in Lemon Creek and the Valley. Call the food pantry direct line for information or fill out the form on the home page of our website: sovlutheran.org Food Pantry Direct Line: 907-500-3588				1	2 9 am Devos	3 9-10 am Pantry
4 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship (Lessons & Carols) 1030 am Coffee	5	6 Epiphany!	7 Noon-1 pm Pantry	8	9 9 am Devos	10 9-10 am Pantry
11 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Coffee 1050 am Faith Formation	12	13	14 Noon-1 pm Pantry	15	16 9 am Devos	17 9-10 am Pantry
18 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Coffee 1050 am Faith Formation and Mentoring	19 <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>	20 Noon Lunch with Love	21 Noon-1 pm Pantry SOV at Glory Hall	22 7 pm Council	23 9 am Devos	24 9-10 am Pantry
25 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Annual Meeting and Brunch	26	27 Noon Lunch with Love SOV Hosts Caring Canteen	28 Noon-1 pm Pantry	29	30 9 am Devos	31 9-10 am Pantry with Hot Breakfast

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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1 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Coffee 1050 am Faith For- mation 6 pm Book Club at Forbidden Peak	2	3 Noon Lunch with Love	4 Noon-1 pm Pantry	5	6 9 am Devos	7 9-10 am Pantry
8 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship w/ Bishop Oslovich Council Installation 1030 am Coffee 1050 am Faith For- mation	9	10 Noon Lunch with Love	11 Noon-1 pm Pantry	12	13 9 am Devos	14 9-10 am Pantry
15 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Fat Follies	16 <i>Elizabeth Peratrovich Day</i>	17 Noon Lunch with Love 2 pm Discipleship	18 Noon-1 pm Pantry SOV at Glory Hall Ash Wednesday 7 pm Worship	19	20 9 am Devos 3 pm Council Retreat at Shrine (overnight)	21 9-10 am Pantry
22 830 am Men's Grp 930 am Worship 1030 am Faith For- mation	23	24 Noon Lunch with Love	25 Noon-1 pm Pantry 530 pm Communi- ty Soup & Worship (hosted this week by Kuneix Hidi Northern Light). See page 5.	26	27 9 am Devos	28 9-10 am Pantry with Hot Break- fast

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

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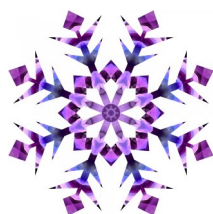
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**Save this newsletter! It is the
January/February 2026 issue.**

Your church family is here for prayers, visits, and encouragement. Please call if you would like a visit from a church member or anytime you can use a kind word.

We are excited for Pastor Tari as she ventures out on sabbatical these next months (from mid-January to mid-April). She will be away from SOV during this intentional time of education, rejuvenation, and growth. We look forward to stories of her adventures.

We would love to hear from you with comments about or submissions to *The Shepherd's Voice*. If your address has changed, or if you no longer wish to be on our mailing list, we want to know that too.



Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey, Pastor

Please see inside for information about Pastor Tari's sabbatical.

Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m. (via Zoom and in-person)

Faith Formation for All Ages: See inside for details.

In-Person Food Pantry: Noon– 1 p.m. Wednesdays & 9-10 am Saturdays

Deliveries available Saturday mornings to homebound folks. Call the pantry direct line for information.

Food Pantry Direct Line: 907-500-3588

The Shepherd's Voice: Editor, Becky Corson and Production/Distribution, Lewis Gates