



A Time for Improvement

Please allow me to speak from my heart to your heart. I am deeply concerned about the health of our congregation. Fourteen months without a permanent "installed" pastor has taken its toll, as have aging of hard working members and losses of people moving away.

Beginning with myself I am asking each of you to choose at least one way that you can do something that will improve the health of your congregation. If you need help in what you want to do please ask for it.

Think about it! Can you increase in your prayers for your congregation and your community? Can you be more regular in worship and giving? Are there friends or neighbors that you can invite and bring? How about Bible study? Do you know someone who is struggling that you can help?

A healthy congregation shines the love of God into its community. Pray, think, and take appropriate actions.

In His Name, Pastor Ron



Dear Members of Shepherd,

THANK YOU FROM US

Pastor Ron and Ruby wish to thank everyone for the many cards, gifts, and words of appreciation which we have received. We feel blessed to be a part of such a loving congregation. May our Lord grant all of us a healthy and peaceful new year.

Pastor Allen and I want to express our heartfelt thanks for your Christmas greetings, cards, and gifts. We are humbled by your generosity. Thank you also to the choir for their gifts. I am blessed to be a part of such a dedicated group of people! Wishing you all God's blessings for a happy and healthy 2016.

Love in Christ, Pastor Allen and Chris



PASTOR RON: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 9am to 12:30pm
and Saturdays by appointment.

PASTOR ALLEN: Monday & Friday -
9 am to 12:30

OUR CURSILLO FAMILY IS GROWING! WON'T YOU JOIN US? YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!



NEXT LUTHERAN CURSILLO WEEKENDS
February 18-21, 2016 for Men and February 25-28, 2016 for Women

Cursillo is an organization serving the Lutheran churches of Southern California to develop leaders in the Lutheran church through training and spiritual renewal. There is no cost to you to attend a weekend but you must be a baptized member in good standing at a Lutheran church. You will be paired with a sponsor who has been through a Cursillo weekend and have your pastor endorse your reservation request. We recommend praying about it first, then talk to your pastor or others who have attended Cursillo (Pr. Deinert, Larry & Marlene Alexander, Bob & Carole Johansen, Helen Bedford, Marge Clark, Steve & Marcia Jackson, Eunice Kang, Vicky McKay-Cannon, Janet Riccardi and Laurie White) about what you may be able to gain from attending a Cursillo weekend before applying. Check their website for more information: www.lcsocal.org.



Why I Would Never Force My Kids to Go to Church

Posted on March 24, 2014 by Ruth Meyer • Posted in Current Events, Encouragement, Family life, Society, Witness • Tagged Children, Church, Excuses

My parents forced me to eat three times a day growing up. No joke. Three times. Every. Single. Day. And it wasn't always stuff I liked, either. Matter of fact, I complained a lot about what my mom made. "Ewww, gross! Sautéed zucchini? Seriously? Mom, you know we hate this stuff!" So as I approached adulthood I made an important decision. Since my parents forced me to eat while I was growing up, I decided I was done with meals. Oh, here and there I'll eat out of obligation. I mean, family traditions like Thanksgiving and Christmas, yeah, I'm there. But daily eating? No way. I'm done.

Set in any other context, excuses people make for not going to church sound completely ridiculous. But set in the context of Christianity, people say these things in all seriousness while others nod sagely in somber agreement.

My son told me a few weeks into school that he didn't like the teacher. He wasn't getting excited enough about learning, and he didn't really feel connected to the other kids in his class, so I told him he never had to go back to school again. Who wants to waste their time going somewhere where they aren't being fulfilled?

We've never forced our daughter to stay off the road when playing. We don't want to restrict her imagination. We allow her the freedom to make her own choices in life.

Okay, Ruth. Come on. That one was just ridiculous. No loving parent would ever say that. That's a safety issue - a matter of life and death. Exactly. And that's just my point.

Church isn't a place you go to get pumped up about life. It isn't entertainment like a movie or concert. It is literally a life and death matter. Eternal life. Just as a loving parent wouldn't allow their child to wander in the road or to quit school, a loving Christian parent also does not give the option to their children about going to church, learning Bible stories at home, and praying together. Do your kids always jump for joy when they hear you say, "Time to get up! Let's get ready for church!" No. They won't. Do they get excited for school every morning? Hardly. But you still make them go. Why? Because you are the parent and you know what's best. Even when they complain, you serve them healthful meals and limit their junk food intake. You set boundaries for their own safety when playing outside. You insist they go to school because you're looking at the long term picture. And you are right to do those things. How much more so are you responsible for doing all you can to secure their eternal well being?

Yes, kids can be brought up in a loving Christian home and still turn away later. That's on them. But you, parents, have a task of the utmost importance. God has placed these precious children into your homes for such a brief while. You have them with you for perhaps 1/5 of their lives. Set a strong foundation while they are under your roof. Take them to church. Make sure they understand that they are sinners and that Jesus is their Savior. They are never too young to learn this. My one-and-a-half year old sees a cross and excitedly shouts, "Jesus!" Don't use the excuse that "they wouldn't understand this." Try them. I don't understand it all myself, but I still believe. And you'd better believe that the Holy Spirit works in their hearts effectively. My children sometime amaze me with the insights they pick up during devotions or Bible readings. The strength of their faith often humbles me. Once when I was having a terrible day, my oldest asked, "Can I pray with you?" He was nine at the time. He knows there is power in prayer. He perceives that sometimes there's nothing he can say that will make it better, so he'll just go straight to the One who does have that power.

Do my own kids complain about church? Yes. Do they tell me it's boring? Sometimes, yes. They say the same things about school. But church and school are different environments for a reason. School is centered around learning and thus has its own schedule and structure. Church is a hospital for sinners. That would be all of us, mind you. You, me, the drug dealer a few streets away - all of us are sinners in need of a Savior. So what do we do at church? We confess our sins. Why do we do this at the start? To "wipe our feet" before entering God's house, so to speak. Then we are assured of forgiveness. We hear God's Word. We sing hymns proclaiming what Christ has done for us. We hear sermons where our pastors preach Christ. We don't go to church to hear what we have to do to gain heaven. No, Christ did it all. 100%. We can't do one thing to merit salvation for ourselves. That's why we hear sermons about Jesus and not about us. We take the body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion for the strength of our souls. And we depart refreshed to serve God by serving our families, friends, and neighbors in Christian love.

So parents, don't give in to outside pressures telling you not to force your kids to go to church. Don't give in to them, either, when they complain about it. Because at some point an amazing thing happens - that kid who complains about church grows up and takes his or her own kids to church every Sunday. Going back to my opening analogy, believe it or not, there came a point in my own life where I realized I actually liked sautéed zucchini (although I never would have admitted that to my mother). Keep at it, parents. Just as we need three meals a day for physical strength and nourishment, so do we need regular worship to refresh and strengthen our souls. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go make breakfast.



Lovefest will take place on February 13th at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Arcadia. Registration for the conference is \$5 for Students. Please have your registration form and money turned in to Drew no later than January 17th. For more details on the conference, please contact Drew Covert at 951-525-8111.

Unapologetic Column 31

"Woman of the Year"

Hello, and welcome to 2016! I hope you and your families all had a good Christmas and New Year! One of the things that's always interesting is the lists that come out this time of year. Which celebrities passed away during 2015? What were the most popular movies, books or T.V. shows? Who will win Time Magazine's "Person of the Year"?

You may have heard by now that the winner of Vanity Fair's "Woman of the Year" was Caitlyn Jenner (Formerly known as Bruce Jenner, the 1976 decathlon gold medalist). While this has sparked some humorous internet jokes, the shift in culture on the issue of transgenderism is no joke. Any time there is a moral shift of this magnitude, we should stand up and take notice.

As with any discussion along these lines, defining terms is important. Transgender is defined as "denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity does not correspond with the gender assigned to them at birth." (Oxford Dictionary). In other words, people who identify as transgender truly believe they are a different sex than that of their body. To be honest, I can't imagine the pain and suffering an individual must go through struggling with gender identity. Imagine having a view of your body that is at odds with what everyone else sees. There is a serious and real struggle going on, and we should be aware and sympathetic to the battles that are being fought here.

I think, again, there is a contradiction here that everyone involved would admit to. Transgendered individuals admit there is a conflict between what their bodies are anatomically, and what they believe their gender to be. It's a body/mind conflict. The question we need to ask is, is the body or the mind the thing that is most likely causing the conflict? Let me illustrate the problem using a different example.

There is a condition known to psychologists as body identity integrity disorder. People who have this condition believe that they should have been born amputees (I'm not making this up, you can look it up). These individuals seek out doctors to remove limbs so that their body can match what their mind is telling them. So the question becomes, should a doctor perform surgery to remove a perfectly functioning limb so that a person can have a body that matches their perception of themselves? I think most people would say no. We would feel compassion for the person who thinks this, and the compassionate thing to do would be to try and find them help to bring their perception in line with reality.

You can see the parallel that exists between those with body identity integrity disorder and a transgender individual. But due to the new sexual revolution, we are no longer allowed to "make judgements" about anyone where sexual identity is involved. Society is now more accepting of cutting off perfectly functioning body parts than admitting that a person may have a psychological issue that needs dealing with. I find this sad on many levels. I know several transgender individuals, and while I don't know all of their struggles, I know they have had some very painful experiences and suffered abuse in their youth. They have never dealt with these issues, and I don't think it's unreasonable to assume that these experiences have had an effect on their sexual identity. I'm not saying every transgender individual has suffered abuse, but I would say it is more common than is admitted to by the transgender community.

Dr. Paul R. McHugh, the former psychiatrist-in-chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital and its current Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry, has an interesting take on the subject. Johns Hopkins was the first hospital in the nation to do gender reassignment surgeries. In a recent CNSNews interview, Dr. McHugh stated the following:

"The pro-transgender advocates do not want to know, said McHugh, that studies show between 70% and 80% of children who express transgender feelings "spontaneously lose those feelings" over time. Also, for those who had sexual reassignment surgery, most said they were "satisfied" with the operation "but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn't have the surgery. And so at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a 'satisfied' but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs," said Dr. McHugh.

As you can see, there is much here to process. We should love and care for those struggling with gender identity confusion, but we must not sacrifice truth for the sake of compassion. Our churches need to be a safe place for those who are struggling. They need to be allowed their struggle, as we allow others who are caught in sinful lifestyles to struggle while we support and encourage them to live the life God has planned for them. They need to feel loved, and the Church should be leading the efforts in this respect. If we expect people to be sin-free before coming to church, I would be out of luck. The culture is telling us we can't be compassionate unless we completely accept same sex attraction and gender confusion. I think they are wrong, and I call on my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to help destroy this myth once and for all.

Yours in Christ,
Drew Covert

Secret Pal Revealing Party



Greetings to all of you Secret Prayer Pals! I hope you have enjoyed your cards and notes and gifts this year! The revealing party will be on Friday, January 15, 2016 at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. This way you can all enjoy Christmas with your current pal. Mark your calendars and be sure to attend. Please bring a snack or appetizer to share and be sure to also bring a thank you gift for your (the one who has been praying for and giving to you) Secret Prayer Pal. The new forms for next years will be available in the church lobby soon.

It has been a blessing and a joy to lead this group but I would like all of you to think about and pray about taking over as the leader next year as I will be stepping down. If you have any questions please call Laurie White at (951)247-0156.



Saving Your Senses

This month I will discuss our hearing and sense of smell. Of course, the most important things you can do is to keep your blood sugar and blood pressure under good control. Talk with your health care team about how often you should get your hearing checked. Stick with a healthy diet. Aerobic exercise helps preserve your hearing by improving blood flow to the brain. Be sure if you are using loud tools wear ear plugs. Some of you will be happy to know the resveratrol in red wine can help protect against noise - inducing hearing loss.

As far as smell is concerned head injuries and sinus infections are the leading causes of smell decline. Avoid strong smells such as harsh cleaning products and toxic chemicals. Stay away from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd hand smoke! Always wear your seat belt. Use a saline nasal rinse regularly to prevent mucus build-up and reduce the risk of fungal and bacterial infections. Take care and God bless you all.

Suzy Langhorne, Parish Health Minister



The community needs your help!

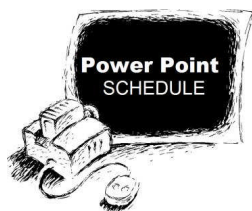
500 Volunteers are needed on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, between 5:30am – 9:30am to help conduct the 2016 Homeless Point-in-Time Count for Riverside County.

The 2016 Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Survey is a one-day count and survey conducted throughout Riverside County. Information collected is required to receive federal funding for homeless programs, to develop strategies to end homelessness, and to help those who are homeless and in need.

Volunteers must attend a training session where they will receive instructions on conducting the count on and important safety guidelines.

Complete Volunteer Registration On-Line: www.RiversideHomelessCounts.com

For Questions, contact Donyielle Holley, Riverside Point-in-Time Coordinator at RivCoPIT@RiversideDPSS.org (or 951-358-3844).



If you need to change your schedule, or have any questions on how to run the system, please contact Drew Covert at 951-525-8111 or lcms-drew@roadrunner.com. Thank you all for your service to our Church and our Lord!

	<u>First Service:</u>	<u>Second Service:</u>
Jan. 3	Gerry Klepps	Jim Wilson
Jan. 10	Josh Hamann	Abby Covert
Jan. 17	Mike Olson	Marvin Niles
Jan. 24	Bud Kenefick	Drew Covert
Jan. 31	Gerry Klepps	Drew Covert
Feb. 7	Gerry Klepps	Jim Wilson
Feb. 14	Josh Hamann	Abby Covert
Feb. 21	Mike Olson	Marvin Niles
Feb. 28	Bud Kenefick	Drew Covert



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All are welcome to join us!

2016 FLOWER CHART

If you'd like to donate flowers for the altar, sign up on the board hanging in the church lobby. Indicate what the flowers are for - anniversary, birthday, in honor of or in memory. Take a slip with ordering instructions. Flowers are ordered by you from Bradley's Florist (242-1519) and they deliver them to church. Each large bouquet is \$26. Small bouquets for the altar are \$19 each. Questions? Call the office.



Joseph Project - Community (Citywide) Food Bank

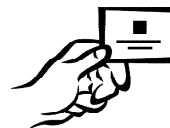
Shepherd is working with other churches in Moreno Valley with this community food bank that provides food for the needy every Thursday from a distribution center at the Koinonia Evangelistic Center, 21866 Brill Rd., Moreno Valley (951-867-3050). Volunteers are needed to help out with distribution, sorting, clean up, etc. at the center. Contributions to the Joseph Project will be gratefully accepted through Shepherd. Please pray for this ministry and volunteer your time and talents! Contact Larry Alexander for more information.



DON'T FORGET YOUR FOOD DONATIONS FOR CAP - Moreno Valley's Community Assistance Program EACH SUNDAY! Thank You!

JOIN IN THE CHALLENGE

Join us in choosing a time (maybe even 10 or 15 minutes) of any day of the week that is best for you individually and lift your silent (or loud) voices to the Lord. Ask for His touch on Shepherd, our Pastors, the members of our congregation, our school, and our community. His promise is clear - if His people gather together in prayer, He will hear our prayers. Let's do it!



INVITE OTHERS TO OUR CHURCH AND SCHOOL!

Business cards are available in packets of 10 in a basket in the church lobby. Take a pack and pass them out to friends and neighbors who need a church home or a preschool for their children.

NEEDED FOR NURSING HOMES:
Magazines and greeting card fronts.
Bring to the church or office.

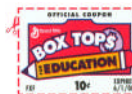
SPECIAL NOTICE

Your pastors, your lay ministers and the church office want to know when someone is hospitalized or home bound. There have been instances of not finding out for several days. We would rather hear from several sources than none at all so, PLEASE - PLEASE pick up the phone or e-mail us whenever there is an opportunity for ministry to members or to family or friends.



Thursdays at 9:30 AM
In the Fellowship Hall
Presented by Suzy Langhorne
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FREE! Please join us.

SAVE BOX TOPS FOR OUR SCHOOL!



Specially marked box tops are worth \$.10 each when redeemed from Box Tops for Education. Encourage friends & family, near & far to help, too. Thanks for taking the time to help our school.

The sponsors appearing on the back cover of the newsletter help defray the cost of printing the Shepherd's Staff, please give them your consideration when possible.

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January 2016

Sunday Worship: 8 AM and 10:45 AM - Communion: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3</i> 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class (O-H-PS) 12:30 PM Grace Korean (S-H) 5:00 PM Confirmation (O) 6:30 PM Jr/Sr Hi Youth (Y)	<i>4</i> 10:00 AM First Place TLC (H)	<i>5</i> 5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S) 6:00 PM School Board (O)	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> 8:00 AM BrailleMail(H) 9:30 AM Tai Chi(H) 11:00 AM Grace Korean Bible Study (O) 7:00 PM Life of Christ Bible Study (H)	<i>8</i> 10:00 AM School Chapel (S)	<i>9</i> 9:00 AM Knights of the Holy Spirit Bible Study (H) 12:30 PM Call Committee (O) 1:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal (S) 6:00 PM CSHS Banquet (H)
<i>10</i> 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class (O-H-PS) 12:30 PM Grace Korean (S-H) 3:30 PM Wedding (S) 5:00 PM Confirmation (O) 6:30 PM Jr/Sr Hi Youth (Y) BP Screening between Services	<i>11</i> 9:00 AM Women's Koffee Klatch @ Brandon's 6:00 PM School Staff (O)	<i>12</i> 5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S) 7:00 PM Lay Ministers (H)	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i> 8:00 AM BrailleMail(H) 9:30 AM Tai Chi (H) 11:00 AM Grace Korean Bible Study (O) 7:00 PM Call Committee (O)	<i>15</i> 10:00 AM School Chapel (S) 6:30 PM Secret Prayer Pal Revealing (H)	<i>16</i>
<i>17</i> 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class (O-H-PS) 12:30 PM Grace Korean (S-H) 5:00 PM Confirmation (O) 6:30 PM Jr/Sr Hi Youth (Y)	<i>18</i> 10:00 AM First Place TLC (H) 7:00 PM MV Chorale (S)	<i>19</i> 5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S) 7:00 PM M & M Board (O)	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i> 8:00 AM BrailleMail(H) 9:30 AM Tai Chi(H) 11:00 AM Grace Korean Bible Study (O) 7:00 PM Life of Christ Bible Study (H)	<i>22</i> 10:00 AM School Chapel (S)	<i>23</i> 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast at Brandon's 9:00 AM Quilting for LWR (H)
<i>24</i> 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class (O-H-PS) 12:30 PM Grace Korean (S-H) 5:00 PM Confirmation (O) 6:30 PM Jr/Sr Hi Youth (Y) BP Screening between Services	<i>25</i> 7:00 PM Diamond Girls (H)	<i>26</i> 5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S) 6:00 PM Diamond Girls (H)	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i> 8:00 AM BrailleMail(H) 9:30 AM Tai Chi (H) 11:00 AM Grace Korean Bible Study (O)	<i>29</i> 10:00 AM School Chapel (S)	<i>30</i> 8:00 AM Diamond Girls (H)
<i>31</i> 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class (O-H-PS) 12:15 PM Anniversary Pot Luck & Meeting (H) 12:30 PM Grace Korean (S) 5:00 PM Confirmation (O) 6:30 PM Jr/Sr Hi Youth (Y)						



The Shepherd's Staff

WORSHIP SERVICE TIMES: Sunday: 8:00 & 10:45 AM

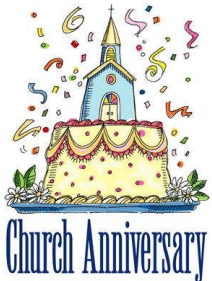
"Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." — Francis of Assisi

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**RON KRAFT & ALLEN DEINERT, INTERIM PASTORS
LINDA WILLIAMSON, SCHOOL DIRECTOR**



January 2016

We'll celebrate Shepherd's 36th anniversary this year with a pot luck which will be followed by the semi-annual Congregation meeting. The pot luck will start after the 10:45 service. Sign up on the clip board in the church lobby to indicate if you will be able to join us and what dish you will bring to share.



Living Lent offers a different experience as we retrace Christ's steps to the cross during this holy season, fully aware that Easter has already come to pass. Each service in this series focuses on a word to consider while living Lent as Easter people. Orders of service highlight the ways in which the passion narratives of Christ take on more significant meaning for us when we see them through the lens of the empty tomb. Each service helps us see that we are always alive in Christ, who died and was raised.

Plan to join us at Ash Wednesday service on February 10th at 7 pm and for the following Wednesday midweek services with Soup Suppers served at 5 pm between the 4 pm and 7 pm services. Easter Sunday is on March 27th this year.



Start saving books, puzzles, games, DVD's, CD's, etc. for the annual Valentine Book Sale and Bake Sale, Saturday, February 13 from 8 am to 2 pm. We will have baked goods for sale so we need all you bakers to help! This is a special event to raise money for our Assistance fund. This year we have room to store your books early. A sign-up sheet will be in the church lobby for volunteers to help with the sale and for baked good donations. If you have any questions, please call Terry Mack @ 951-924-8210 or the church office for questions and information. It will be here before you know it!