



From the Pastor

"REMAINING LEVEL HEADED IN SPITE OF THE 'LEAVEN'"



"Who stopped you from being influenced by the truth? The arguments of the person who is influencing you do not come from the one who is calling you. A little yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough. The Lord gives me confidence that you will not disagree with this. However the one who is confusing you will suffer God's judgment regardless of who he is." Galatians 5:7-10 God's Word

In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul was addressing attacks on his authority as an Apostle of Jesus and attacks on the truth of the Gospel proclaiming that one is saved by faith alone. In Chapter 5, verses 7 through 10, he notes the metaphor of yeast and dough, and applies it to the pervasive effect of the Judaizers' persuasive distortion of the truth of the Gospel. They were leading the Christians in the Galatian church from the freedom of grace in the Gospel to judgement under the Law. For example, they were insisting that circumcision was still obligatory and necessary for salvation. Paul, in an earthy and sarcastic tone suggests that the agitators who promoted such an offense would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! (5:12). The danger, as highlighted in the above verses, is that the false and evil "leaven" can permeate and work through the whole batch of dough. The false teaching and distortions of the truth of only a few, can hurt the whole church! A few verses later Paul adds, *"If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."* (5:15).

While the anonymous letter that went out to the members of the congregation on June 20th was not an attack on the Gospel, nor on the authority of the Office of the Public Ministry, it was an attack on me that was misleading, inaccurate and extremely distorted. As one of the many members who have contacted me to express their support in light of this malicious attack called it, 'Hogwash!' I am very thankful to all for their support and encouragement. But, I am equally concerned for the welfare of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. We cannot let the "leaven" (yeast) of a few, hurt the congregation as a whole or distract us from our work together as God's church. As another member of Shepherd shared with me, we need to keep our focus on Jesus. When we are distracted, as was Peter by the "wind and the waves," we will sink! We cannot let this happen.

Brothers and Sisters, I am far from perfect. I am not the most capable and talented pastor ever to serve in God's church. Contrary to what some think, I do care about each and every member of Shepherd of the Valley. I forgive those who have attacked me and seek my removal. I don't agree with most of their allegations against me, but I share their frustration and concern regarding our church and ministry. No one is more troubled than I about the decline in Sunday attendance and the number of youth in our congregation. I pray about it daily. I am deeply hurt when I hear of the gossip about me and my family going around the church. I was truly injured when this anonymous letter came out, and the other one that was sent to the St. Louis church headquarters. But I'm healing, thanks to the many supporters in our church and the Spirit of God. And I pray for the health and well being of our church. My prayer and dream is that one day we might actually hit 300 per Sunday!

On another note, thank you ever so much for all your prayers and support, cards and flowers, food and gift cards over the past two weeks while Ruth Ann has been in the hospital. She may be coming home very soon (6/25...) to continue to heal and get stronger. Then we start the treatment plan for her cancer and pray for its effectiveness and her toleration of it. Again, thank you ever so much! God bless all of you!

Pastor Dennis Krueger

July Power Point Schedule

August 3rd:
August 10th:
August 17th:
August 24th:
August 31st:

First Service:
Joshua Stange
Luke Hamann
Gerry Klepps
Bud Kenefick
Luke Hamann

Second Service:
Bob Maurer
Amanda Johansen
Marvin Niles
Abby Covert
Drew Covert

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 lcmsdrew@roadrunner.com. Thank you all for your service to our Church and our Lord!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Val Burrowes

Shepherd's Staff - Vol. 21, No. 7 Published Monthly
by Shepherd of the Valley;
11650 Perris Blvd.; Moreno Valley, CA 92557-6563

I recently placed in the bulletin a 'Thank You' for the many prayers that were offered up during my recent illness which required a few weeks of hospitalization and almost three (3) weeks of rehabilitation.

Family and patient may NOT wish to have visitors during trying times of hospitalization - however, when one reaches a stage where one is feeling up to company, visitors are usually welcomed warmly.

For those church members who are retired, have some extra time on your hands, consider taking the list of those hospitalized, in a rehab facility or even home-bound; I can't stress enough how slow the hours drag by when you are in a facility or at home. Television doesn't really offer that much in the way of entertainment; and for many, they are no longer able to read for a period of time. Think of the enjoyment you could provide someone by a personal visit.

Trust me, the visits I received during my rehabilitation were enjoyable and provided me with laughter, sociable interaction with church friends and others. Hopefully when I'm on my feet once again, I hope to be one of those that can provide this service.

Won't you give it some thought - just try it - you might enjoy it!



WOMEN'S RETREAT, August 1 - 3rd, Nagels Nite Away, Big Bear Lake

Registration: \$50.00. Checks made payable to Shepherd of the Valley

Theme: "Created and Called: Christ Has No Body but Yours."

1 Cor. 12:4-7 and 1 Cor. 12:14-20

It's time to register for our annual Women's Retreat in Big Bear. I hope you are as eager as I am to sitting on the patio at the cabin, enjoying the quiet time or sharing moments with your sisters in Christ. I know it has always been a blessing to me. Those of you who have been on our retreats before who know our daughter, Marilyn, know what a great job she does in leading our Bible study. (Yes, I'm bragging!) We also have a very unique "icebreaker" planned for Friday night. We will have singing, lots of sharing, some time for our own reflections, crafts led by Marge and Laurie, free time Saturday afternoon, a lot of laughter and maybe some tears. We will be joining our sisters and brothers in Christ at Shepherd of the Pines in Big Bear for worship on Sunday morning. Registration begins on July 1, and forms are available in the church lobby or office. Please complete the form, include your check in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to Shepherd of the Valley, and put it in the offering plate. Space is limited to 20 ladies so please register as soon as possible, and no later than July 20, so that our committee can arrange meals and transportation. Laurie White will be contacting you to arrange meals. We always love to see new faces. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 684-3549.

Ruby Kraft

God Bless America

The school year ended with a wonderful graduation program which included songs, poetry, and Bible verses from all our children. The families and friends were wowed by our Kindergarten class who recited 26 Bible verses in a row, one for every letter of the alphabet! It was quite impressive. All of our students did such a fabulous performance and I am so proud of every one of them.

Our summer program is in full swing and we are having a splashing good time. Every Friday is "water play day" and the children are loving it. We have divided our summer into three themes. The first three weeks have been all about dinosaurs. The next three weeks cover "America the Beautiful." Finishing off with the last three weeks having a "Science" theme. The staff have many great plans for making this an educational, fun-filled summer for all our students.

The 2014-15 school year begins August 13th and our classes are filling quickly. If you know anyone looking for a high quality Preschool or Kindergarten please refer them to your school at SVLS. Members get a 10% discount on tuition!

We do have some changes coming up in the future and ask that you continue to keep the church and school's growth in your prayers.

In His Service,
Linda Williamson, Director

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY PRESCHOOL is looking for substitute teachers. If you have the 4 Core ECS classes (12 units) and are interested in applying, please contact the school office at 951-924-3422.

FOR THE RECORD . . .

Regrettably a member(s) took it upon themselves to mail out an anonymous letter to the congregation that attacked Pastor Krueger and inform the membership that they would be offering a motion in the August Annual Meeting for his removal from office. The letter presented many false allegations and inaccurate information that needs to be corrected “for the record.”

1. When Pastor Krueger arrived nine years ago, Sunday attendance was 216 per Sunday, not 300. Shepherd has never had an average attendance of 300 per Sunday. Currently the average weekly attendance is 140, not 100. This general decline in attendance goes back roughly to 1996. From 1996 to 2006 average attendance declined 78 members per Sunday. From 2006 to 2014 average attendance has declined 74 members per Sunday. This is alarming and has been a high priority of the leadership of the congregation and obviously is not all Pastor Krueger’s fault! For example, the sending out of this anonymous letter may well have cost Shepherd a few members already! [The average weekly attendance figures were taken from the Transforming Churches Network (TCN) report of May 2009.]
2. Pastor Krueger has delegated some of the calling on members primarily to Pastor Kraft. This is his primary responsibility as a part time Pastor Emeritus. He does not select a certain few to call on. And, many have remarked how well he knows the names of the membership, but it’s possible that he has forgotten a name or two from time to time.
3. As was stated in church on June 22nd, Pastor Krueger has talked about members with others in the church, but no one has accused him of slander! Certain situations require the leaders of the church to discuss other members and actions.
4. Regarding the congregational meetings and Big Springs:
 - a. True, Pastor Krueger, and many others felt the January meeting was one sided and presented facts that later turned out to be inaccurate.
 - b. Yes, Pastor Krueger invited members of the School Board and the M&M Board to discuss the meeting and consider whether a follow up meeting should be called to present both sides. The group was split 50-50. Some were in favor of another meeting. Some were opposed to it.
 - c. The Board of Lay Ministry sent out a letter to the membership asking if there was an interest in calling another meeting. There was, and another meeting was called. Actually, by this time, Pastor Krueger preferred to just let it go and not meet again for fear of doing harm to the congregation. The Lay Ministers disagreed. The meeting was held and the January decision was revised to lease out two class rooms to Big Springs by over a two-thirds majority.
 - d. The votes were counted by four Lay Ministers, as recorded by the surveillance camera in the kitchen. Anybody who questions the counting of the votes by these members is, in essence, maligning them and the other members of the congregation.
 - e. The nonsense about a “loophole” to offer Big Springs office space is ridiculous! Pastor was not even at the M&M meeting where this decision was discussed and made! He was at the hospital with his wife who was having cancer surgery at that very time! There was never any remote desire to hurt the Youth program by the Board or Pastor.
5. The letter concludes with encouraging people to stand up and get involved in the work of the church, with our Youth program and the many boards and action teams of our church. The leadership of the congregation certainly agrees with this! Shepherd of the Valley is God’s church and we are called to work together in it, in harmony with one another.
6. The leadership of the church had nothing to do with this letter and are appalled at this libelous and hateful attack on Pastor Krueger at a very difficult time in his life and for his family.. Let us pray for the person(s) responsible for writing and mailing out this horrible letter. Let us also pray for Shepherd of the Valley, and Pastor Krueger and Ruth Ann.

The Mission and Ministry Board of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church.

Peter Boghossian, the Church Whisperer Part 2

Last month I introduced you to Dr. Peter Boghossian, “The Church Whisperer”. Dr. Boghossian has written a book titled “A Manual for Creating Atheists”, and will soon have a T.V. show titled “The Church Whisperer”. In his T.V. show, he will tape himself going into Churches to talk people out of their faith in Christ. This month I would like to take a look at the strategy he uses, and offer a defense against it should you be challenged in a similar manor.

I recently listened to a debate between Dr. Boghossian and Tim McGrew on “Unbelievable”, an English podcast that features dialogues between believers and non-believers. I was hoping for a rigorous exchange on some of the professor's ideas, but to be honest, the debate never really got going. Things bogged down from the get go over the definition of the word “faith”. At first I was irritated by what seemed to be tedious attention to a simple word. But as I began to think about the ramifications of accepting Dr. Boghossian definition, I realized how important it is to get our ideas properly understood from the outset.

In his book, the good doctor describes faith as “pretending to know things you don't know” or “belief without evidence”. And this, he claims, is the *only* definition of the word. He claims that faith is never the right word to use outside of a religious context. You don't have “faith” that your spouse loves you. That is a properly grounded belief according to him. He also has a rather condescending view of people that use the word “faith” when discussing their religious convictions. “When I speak to somebody of faith, I view them as a person who really is mentally ill”, he boasts.

You can see how quickly the deck can be stacked against you if let something as simple as the wrong definition of a word creep into your conversation. This is why it is important to actually listen to the person you are having a conversation with. Many times when we are discussing our convictions with others, it can be tempting to be planning our next line or “gotcha” moment while the other person is talking. We don't really listen to what our conversation partner is saying, and this can lead to difficulties when you are both using the same word, but each have a different definition of what is being discussed. It's always good to say something like, “I think I understand what you are saying”, then repeat back to the person what you understand their position to be. If they correct you, be polite and thank them. You now have their view from their own mouth and can proceed with a correct understanding of the issue at hand.

In the case of Dr. Boghossian's view that faith is “pretending to know things you don't know” or “belief without evidence”, I would follow the lead of Dr. McGrew and not accept this characterization. For instance, I would press him on how he knows things in the first place. Does he believe that the moon is made of rock rather than green cheese? If so, why? Has he been on the moon himself to confirm his belief, or is he taking the word of people who he has good reason to believe were there and accurately reported what they saw? If this is the case, how is that different from a person that trusts that the New Testament writers were accurately reporting what they saw?

As to the claim that faith is “belief without evidence”, I don't know anyone that believes in God for no reason whatsoever. Even if that reason is “I've always just known” or “I just have a feeling about it”. These might not be what some would consider a good reason, but they are reasons none the less. Is the fact that the universe sprung into existence from nothing (as current scientific theory supports) a good reason to think an all-powerful creative being exists outside of our universe? What about the fact that we all have certain moral concepts that seem to transcend cultures? We understand that even though in Nazi Germany the culture said it was ok to kill people of Jewish decent, there is a “law above the law” that allows us to hold people accountable actions. These seem to me to be good reasons to think that God exists and evidence of the fact that He does.

One final warning about the use of the word “evidence”. Many times a non-believer will state that “extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence”. This is another claim that should not be accepted. What invariably happens in this circumstance is that no matter what evidence you give, your friend will simply say “not good enough”. You need to ask the question “what will you accept as evidence?”. If the bar is set at an unreasonable level (such as “I would have to see Jesus appear before me, have a scientist and psychologist on hand to be sure I was in my right mind and wasn't dreaming”) you might not want to proceed. Remember, only God can open someone's heart to the gospel. We are expected to be faithful in our presentation of the truth, the rest is in the hands of the Holy Spirit. You may simply be planting a seed that will be harvested in the future when the time is right.

I hope this was of help to you. We live in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to the Christian world view. How we present ourselves and the case for our convictions will be even more crucial in the years to come. I pray we are able to continue to present the good news to a world that desperately needs it with clarity and compassion.

Your Servant,

Drew Covert

Youth Group Water Park Trip



On July 20th the youth group will be attending 1st service and then leaving for the Wet and Wild Water Park in Palm Springs. We will stay at the park until it closes at 6pm, and then return to the church. If you would like to attend, or could help drive, please contact Drew Covert at 951-525-8111 or lcmsdrew@outlook.com. We look forward to seeing you there!



Members and friends graduating from all levels of school, mark your attendance card with this information or contact the church office so that we can include it in our next newsletter and upcoming announcements. Please let us know of any special awards or recognitions and we'll include that information also.

THE NEXT LUTHERAN CURSILLO WEEKENDS

Are July 10-13 for Men and July 17-20 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 or Pr. Krueger, Larry & Marlene Alexander, Bob & Carole Johansen, Jerry & Sue Anna Schatz, Helen Bedford, Marge Clark, and Laurie White) about what you may be able to gain from attending a Cursillo weekend before applying.

You can also check out their website for more information at www.lcsocal.org



A Biblical Tour of Israel & Jordan: (November 18-28, 2014) An Experience of a Lifetime! A complete tour of Israel & Jordan plus many extras such as visiting Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, a cruise on the Sea of Galilee, going up to Mt Nebo where Moses died, Petra and much more! Arrangements can be made for departure from any airport. Rev Darold Reiner (LCMS) (Former LWML International Counselor) is leading this tour from Kalispell, MT. Contact him at 406-890-1149 or reiner@centurytel.net for a brochure.

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



JOIN IN THE CHALLENGE



This is a plea that you help build the Prayer Army we need so badly. 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 Pastor, 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!



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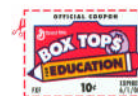
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The Most Common Factor in Declining Churches

“Stated simply, the most common factor in declining churches is an Inward Focus.”

By Thom Rainer

“The ministries are only for the members. The budgetary funds are used almost exclusively to meet the needs of the members. The times of worship and worship styles are geared primarily for the members. Conflict takes place when members don’t get things their way. People talk about our church serving our members.

Warning Symptoms . . . “After studying and consulting with thousands of churches, I began to see clearly this pattern. Even more, I began to recognize symptoms of an inward focus. See if you recognize a few of these.”

- There are very few attempts to minister to those in the community.
- Church business meetings become arguments over preferences and desires.
- Numbers of members in the congregation are openly critical of the pastor, other church staff, and lay leaders in the church. “If we get new leadership everything will turn around.”
- Any change necessary to become a Great Commission church is met with anger and resistance.
- The past becomes the hero. The way we've always done it is how we should be doing it now!
- Culture is seen as the enemy instead of an opportunity for believers to become salt and light.
- Pastors and other leaders in the church become discouraged. They withdraw from enthusiastic and effective leadership.
- If the churches are a part of a denomination or similar affiliation, meetings of those denominations mirror the churches in lost focus and divisiveness.

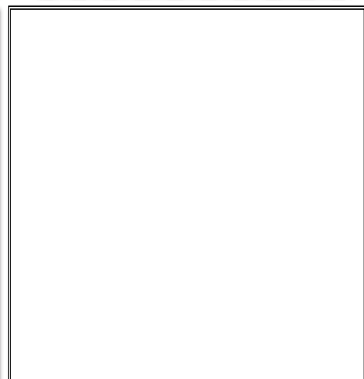
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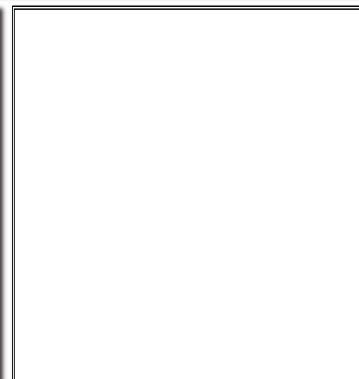
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The Shepherd's Staff

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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July 2014



Arrow Island: Choosing God's Way!

Vacation Bible School

**July 7-11, 2014 from 3 to 6 pm
for children age three and up**

Today's world is full of choices! Too often Biblical principles are separated from the choices we make. This VBS will help equip kids to choose God's way in every detail of their lives—all while exploring an island full of exciting tropical habitats. Young explorers will enjoy the sites, sounds, and food of a verdant tropical island where they learn the importance of choosing obedience, godly friends, kindness, courage and an active faith.

Bible Theme Verse: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Daily Theme Points:

- Love God Most of All (Adam & Eve)
- Choose Good Friends (Jonathan & David)
- Be Kind and Forgiving (David Spares King Saul)
- Stand for God (Elijah & Mr. Carmel)
- Take Action (Nehemiah).

Registration and volunteer forms are available in the church lobby or office or you may register your kids to attend or volunteer to help online at shepherdofthevalley.net. More help is needed so be sure to sign up. Watch for lists of material and supplies that can be donated.

A free-will offering will be taken that week to help defray the cost of VBS. Contact Carol Maurer or the church office at 951-924-4688 for more information.