

Winter 2025

VOL. #17 ISSUE #4



SHEPHERD'S STAFF

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

Join us for the Seasons of

*Advent, Christmas, and
Epiphany*



Christmas Eve Service
(Wednesday) 5:00 pm

Christmas Day Service
(Thursday) 10:00 am

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*Shepherd of the Valley
Mission Statement: Grounded in the word
of God and centered in Christ, SVLC is an
accepting and caring community sharing
God's love, grace and forgiveness with all.*

Shepherd's Staff is usually published four times each year (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn). It is the voice of the congregation; your articles, letters, and comments are welcome at any time. Submissions to the newsletter must be signed when received, although names may be withheld from the newsletter upon request.

Submissions are subject to editing for space and clarity.

Please submit articles by email or directly to the office.

Submissions for the Spring 2026 issue are due Sunday, February 15th, 2026

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New Church Year

Submitted by Ellen van Eijnsbergen & Cheryl Conant

We begin a new church year with Advent's spiritual preparation for the birth of Jesus. The Christmas season brings a time to enjoy lovely decorations and colourful lights, family traditions, and special times with others. It is also a time when we feel the loss of loved ones very keenly, and when warmth and compassion towards others and understanding kindness for ourselves is especially helpful.

SVLC church council continues to be so grateful for the efforts and contributions of everyone who helps our community flourish without a regular pastor. This includes our permanent staff Eleanor and Gail, our interim Pastor Peter and supply pastors Tim, Marlys, and Michael, and our many volunteers on divisions, council, and people attending to our sign-up sheets! Whenever you are at SVLC, you will also see the results of the work of our contracted support staff inside our building (Chona and Scot of CS Services) and the area outside (Sean of AVA Grounds Maintenance). We continue to pray for Pastor Peter as he recovers from surgery on a broken leg, and for Pastor Kristen's continued healing and restoration to health.

Church council has two major tasks each fall: to plan for the upcoming year and to prepare the budget. In October, representatives for our divisions (Stewardship and Parish Life, Properties, Worship and Music, Education, and Outreach) met with the council co-chairs to plan activities through 2026. Eleanor then added these to the church calendar so all information is in one place and can be coordinated with any new events.

In November, members of council met with Eleanor to review the current budget and expenditures/revenues so that a 2026 interim budget could be reviewed and approved at the December council meeting. Thanks to Eleanor for the big and important task of budget preparations every year. The interim budget will be in place until reviewed and approved by the congregation at the AGM on March 8th after the worship service (soup lunch included). Looking forward to seeing you there!

Outreach activities this fall included our Neighbourhood Kindness Evening which fell on a very stormy Halloween night. It was much appreciated by chilly children and parents! Thanks to our volunteers Tanya, Kevin, Jenna, Ingrid, and our contractors Chona and husband Scot (who set up the outdoor canopy, furniture, and portable heater). The community meals in Langley (coordinated by Edna) and Seniors' Christmas Lunch (coordinated by Ellen) - with their healthy, delicious, and community-building outcomes - are welcomed by all recipients. The Little Free Pantry & Library is also an Outreach project and contribution to the neighbourhood. Please note that SVLC's Outreach Division currently needs to fill the Chair position. If this is something that interests you, please speak to Cheryl or Ellen for more information.

Yours in fellowship,
Cheryl Conant and Ellen van Eijnsbergen
Church Council Co-Chairs

Music Director's Report

Gail Suderman



The Langley Christmas Choir: A Growing Tradition

As this newsletter is being written, we are only a few weeks away from the highly anticipated Langley Christmas Choir concert. While many are familiar with the Langley Christmas Choir, some may not know about this special choir project, which is now celebrating its third year.

Origins and Purpose

In 2023, when I began my role as music director at Shepherd of the Valley, one of my primary goals was to create a meaningful opportunity for outreach to the wider community through music. I sensed that there were individuals who wanted to sing but could not commit to a year-round choir. The idea was to offer a six- to seven-week rehearsal period, making it possible for more people to participate and enjoy the experience of preparing for a concert. Christmas music, with its universal appeal and joy, was the perfect choice for this initiative.

The Birth and Growth of the Choir

That first year, I reached out to singers I had worked with in various settings: my gospel choir, former students, community members from the Kwantlen University Chorus, and others who had expressed interest in joining a choir over the years. To my delight, nearly 50 people responded, and the Langley Christmas Choir was formed. The rehearsals were lively, and the concert was a tremendous success. The enthusiasm among choir members led to the hope that this would become an annual tradition.

The tradition continued in 2024, with 45 to 50 singers returning to rehearsal and performing another sold-out Christmas concert. Now, in 2025, once again, 45-50 singers are gathering each week, working together to present a Christmas concert scheduled for December 7th. Perhaps by the time this newsletter reaches you, the concert will be a cherished memory, and anticipation for the Christmas Choir's return in Fall 2026 will have begun.

The Impact on Community and Church

What makes this choral project so remarkable? How does this opportunity for outreach make a difference for our church and those who participate—both in the church choir and the larger congregation?

For members of the church choir and myself, there is great joy in welcoming back returning singers each October, as well as greeting new participants. With each passing year, the sense of community within the choir deepens, and friendships continue to form. Wednesday evenings at the church are filled with a sense of belonging and joy as we come together to rehearse. The process of making music, singing, and preparing for the concert creates excitement leading into the Christmas season. The congregation also shares this excitement, looking forward to purchasing tickets and being part of this annual tradition.

Personal Reflections and the Spirit of the Season

This project reminds me of my own youth, when the church choir I belonged to would prepare a special Christmas concert each year. The church would be filled to capacity, the music was always wonderful, and the celebration of Christmas began with the beauty of favorite songs and carols, carrying us forward into a month of festive joy.

The Message of Love and Peace

Most importantly, through the rehearsing and singing this music, the 45-50 singers in the Christmas Choir have an opportunity to live out the message of the popular Christmas song, "Oh Holy Night." In the third verse the lyricist writes: *"Truly He taught us to love one another. His law is love and His gospel is peace... Sweet hymns of joy, in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy name."*

The sharing of love, peace, and acceptance within the choir, and expressing our gratitude through song, is a special opportunity given each Fall for the singers, and for those attending the concert. And as we journey through Christmas and into the new year, it is a fitting reminder of what is important both in our own church community and the community at large – as the melody reminds us: "Truly He taught us to love one another."

Be Kind – Spread Positivity

Submitted by Edna Schuerhaus

At the time of writing this, last Thursday, November 13th, 2025 was World Kindness Day. Did you know that this is an international observance? Really? Who could have thought that celebrating 'kindness' is an initiative that must be scheduled? In fact, this event has been taking place since 1997 and was introduced by the World Kindness Movement, a coalition of humanitarian groups around the world who came together to celebrate kindness in society.

World Kindness Day, celebrated globally each year on November 13th, highlights the power of kindness – to others, to ourselves, and to the world. In many communities, this celebration takes place over an entire week to shine the spotlight on good things that happen every day and to inspire people to spread kindness through their own actions and connect with others.

Reflecting on World Kindness Day has, once again, reminded me of the importance of our work, as a church, to continue to look beyond our building and work hard to support our community by spreading kindness and positivity. God has told us that we must help those who cannot help themselves. We must love them, care for them, and give them hope. Treat **everyone** with compassion and take that love we receive from God and find ways to bring love and goodwill into our community . . . to spread kindness and positivity. As Christians, I know this is something we practice on a regular basis.

Our church's Community Meals Outreach began four years ago with the goal to assist Langley's housing-challenged citizens. This Outreach team works diligently on Saturday mornings to prepare warm, nutritious meals for some of our community's most vulnerable citizens. By doing God's work, through our hands, we feed - up to eight times annually - approximately 80-100 of our community's unhoused individuals. Another opportunity for us to spread kindness and positivity.

We are so grateful to all our volunteers who continue to make themselves available for every meal we prepare. Thank you so much for your generous donation of time. You are truly remarkable individuals who, through this important work, spread kindness and positivity. We appreciate you so much!

We are also so thankful for our generous donors, who continue to support this ever important community outreach – without you, our work would be much more difficult. Thank you!

From time to time in church we sing the hymn, "*Do Something Beautiful*" in which there is a line that goes something like this: "Go do something Jesus would, do something beautiful, in the name of Jesus..." Aren't we lucky to have this chance to *do something Jesus would*?

If you feel called to be part of SVLC's community outreach and do this wonderful work, please approach Darlene Gamble or Edna Schuerhaus.

We are always looking for new volunteers and would love to have you with us!

Kindness matters!

In Peace
Edna Schuerhaus

Education Division

Submitted by Cheryl Conant

Sunday School is underway! Children meet during service on the third Sunday of each month after Children's Time until Holy Communion. It is wonderful to see the children aged four to twelve getting to know each other and engaging in Bible lessons. There is always something to take home to share with parents.



We are looking forward to special Christmas activities on December 21st. Many thanks to our teachers Ray Bakke, Cheryl Conant, Judy Darey, and Joyce Fletcher.

In other Education news, thanks to Pastor Michael Nel who continues to host the monthly Men's Bibles and Breakfast in the fellowship hall. Education Division planning includes a 2026 Lenten Bible Study, and an exploration of options for hosting a summer Bible camp for children. If you have any questions about volunteering for the SVLC Education Division, please speak to Cheryl Conant, Chair of Education Division.

Ways to Serve at SVLC

Weekly Sunday Coffee Hosts



Funds are available for coffee hosts to purchase coffee cream and baked food items. Please see Ellen to ask about how to use these funds. Sign-up sheets are posted in the hall on the cork board that is near the entrance to the kitchen.

A friendly note from Church Council:

We kindly request that people do not bring in random donations to the church from home. Like many homes, the church has more than enough objects. This includes materials for the kitchen, for Sunday School, or for the quilters. If you have something really special, please discuss first with a Church Council co-chair, or the relevant Division Chair, before bringing your item to the church. Thank you!

Ways to Serve on Sunday mornings

Volunteers from the congregation are needed as greeters and ushers, providing flowers for the chancel for worship, and preparing coffee for fellowship time following the service. There are sign-up sheets on the board in the narthex. Please consider one or more of these opportunities. Here are the job descriptions:

Greeter: arrive about 20 minutes before the service. Greet parishioners as they arrive and invite visitors to sign the guest book.

Usher: arrive 20 minutes before the service. Offer bulletins to worshippers as they enter the sanctuary. Before the service begins, light the candles in the chancel (at the altar) with the long candlelighter. Bring the prayer sheet up to the pastor during the service. Usher people during communion and provide any assistance to worshippers as needed during the service (giving directions to washrooms, for instance).

Coffee Host: before the service – set out cups, spoons and sugar. Plug in coffee maker ahead of time (instructions are posted in kitchen). After the service – make tea and fill creamers. Treats or other food can be brought to share if desired. After coffee hour – clean up dishes and tables.

Sunday School Gathering from November 16th

Photos provided by Ray Bakke



Thanks to volunteer teacher Ray for planning and organizing the lesson for the November 16th Sunday School class. Thanks to Joyce and Cheryl for their hands-on assistance.



Sunday School
class includes:
Colby, Keaton,
Jesse, Joshua,
Johan, Jeslyna,
Levi, Lukas, and
Avery.



Sunday School classes are held on the third
Sunday each month (Dec 21, Jan 18, Feb 15)

Thanks to all of
our volunteer
Sunday School
teachers!

Cheryl
Judy
Joyce
Ray



SVLC Quilters Group

Submitted by Darlene Gamble

Our quilts comfort the smallest of babies whose life may have started out difficult. But God only knows what that little life will grow up to be. We make quilts in all sizes and for a wide range of people - from birth to death and everyone in between. Our goal is to give comfort and joy. Whether it's to welcome a new life, for a child to snuggle with, for someone in need of comfort, or for a mother lying in a hospice bed who knows she is dying but receives peace from the quilt that is so bright and cheerful. We were blessed to give John's mom, who struggled with dementia/Alzheimer's, one of those quilts prior to her passing.

Our quilting group is proud of the work we do to bring comfort, pleasure, and peace to so many. God only knows when a quilt is started where it will end up. Just like God has a plan for our lives, he has a plan for our quilts. That's our purpose for going forward.



Stewardship Division

SVLC Financial Commitment Methods

We have several options available to you for your financial commitment to the church. We offer the PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) Program, e-Transfers, regular envelope donations, and giving online through the CanadaHelps.org website. See below for more details about each method.

Pre-Authorized Remittance Program (PAR)

Our church has a Pre-Authorized Remittance Program (PAR). A monthly offering amount can be withdrawn from your bank account on the last day of each month. If you would like to participate, please find the "PAR - New Application" envelopes on the table in the narthex and fill in the "Congregational Member Application" form. Once it's complete, submit it to the church office for processing.

You have the opportunity to determine how your contribution will be distributed. We have set up the following specified congregational accounts:

- Fund 1: Ministry Offering (Regular Offering)
- Fund 2: Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)
- Fund 3: Surrey Urban Mission (SUMS)
- Fund 4: BC Synod

To ensure your contribution is withdrawn from the correct bank account, please attach a void cheque to your application. Should you need to make changes at a later date to your PAR, please pick up the envelope package labeled "PAR Changes - Existing Users" on the table in the narthex. SVLC will issue an income tax receipt in February of the following year.

SVLC Financial Commitment Methods

e-Transfers

If you would like to give your offering by e-Transfer, SVLC offers this method as well. Contributions can be made monthly, weekly, or whenever you feel like making a contribution. If you are interested, ask the church secretary for the security question and answer before sending your e-Transfer to svlc@shaw.ca.

Regular Envelope Donations

In addition to the usual method of leaving your weekly offering in the offering basket following the Sunday services, numbered envelope donations can also be drop off at the church or sent by mail.

Online Donations

Clicking the "Donate Now" button on the SVLC website allows you to donate securely through CanadaHelps.org by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) or debit card. The link allows you to fill in details for the designation of your donation to SVLC. Your tax receipt will come from CanadaHelps.org as they are facilitating your donation, and will reference SVLC as the charity you've selected. You can setup your donation to SVLC as a one-time occurrence, or you can choose to have your offering done on a monthly basis. A Canada Helps pay link for SVLC has been setup through bit.ly/donatesvlc

If you have any questions about giving or benevolence, please contact one of the members of the Stewardship Division, or speak with the church secretary.

**QUICK REFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS
IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES**

- 1) Fire Safety Plan located in white metal lockbox
located near telephone in narthex.
Ask the office for the combination code.
Use as required for detailed instructions, but only if safe to do so.**

- 2) If you discover a fire or hear the fire alarm:**
 - a) activate fire alarm pull station (located near exits)**
 - b) **evacuate via nearest safe exit****
 - c) dial 9-1-1 to report fire at 20097-72 Ave.**
 - d) assist people who require assistance**
 - e) assemble at a muster station - one near the cross,
the other at the north fence.**

- 3) If alarm or fire occurs during a service:**
 - a) **worship assistant or lay leader** will give directions to evacuate
sanctuary (use microphone)**
 - b) **usher** to ensure no one is left behind in other areas,
if safe to do so.**
 - c) **usher** to call 9-1-1 when outside building.**

- 4) Site maps with locations of exits, fire pulls, and
emergency equipment can be found in the:**
 - Sanctuary, on wall beside light switches/knobs**
 - Fellowship hall, near kitchen**
 - Hallway from fellowship hall to washrooms**
 - Preschool area (one at each exit. Preschool site maps are
of the upstairs area only)**

Winter Season Activities at SVLC

Seniors' Christmas Lunch

Wednesday, December 10th

12:00 pm (in the hall)

Complete turkey dinner
plus dessert, coffee
or tea.



Gingerbread Houses!

Come prepared for
some sweet fun
after the service on
December 21st.

House decorating will be in the hall.



Nativity Set Display

Nativity scenes will be set up on tables in
the hall for everyone in the congregation to
admire and enjoy after the service on

December 14th. You are invited to bring your favourite Nativity Scene for
display in the hall (you can bring it home again on the same day). You
are welcome to write a description of your Nativity set and add your
name if you wish.



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

Dec 24th

5:00 pm



Christmas Day

Thursday,

December 25th

10:00 am Communion



Epiphany Star Words

There has been a recent tradition at SVLC
of "Epiphany Star Words." They were created by
Pastor Kristen for the beginning of each year and
she invited the congregation to participate by
choosing a star for the year. On the back of each
star was a word that she called a "star gift"; it
would serve as an opportunity for reflection on
the gift that the word might bring throughout the
year.

Epiphany is the celebration of God's presence
breaking through to shine as a light in the
darkness. Each year our congregation rejoices in
the reminder of our generous, giving God - one Star
Gift at a time . . . In this moment, you are not asked
to give; you are instead invited to receive. It
reminds us that this is always the order of things in
God's realm—God always gives first, and then we
are invited to respond with our gifts and ourselves.

- Pastor Kristen, 2019 Newsletter

Congregational Birthday Celebrations and Cakes

Sunday January 13th

In the hall after the service.



Plan Your Calendar for the Winter Months



Langley Christmas Choir

In Concert

December 7th at 3:00 PM

Seniors' Christmas Lunch

Wednesday, December 10th
in the fellowship hall.



Nativity Scenes Display

Sunday, Dec 14th

In the hall during coffee time.



Memorial Service for Annie Segelken
Saturday, December 20th

Christmas Eve

Dec 24th

5:00 pm



Christmas
Day

Dec 25th
10:00 am



Office Closed

December 24th, 25th & 26th
Thursday, January 1st 2026



DIVISION REPORTS Due

on Sunday, Feb 15th for Annual Congregational
Meeting (which will be on Sunday, March 8th)

Please email to: eleanor.svlc@shaw.ca

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
February 17th in the hall



Church Council Meetings

Tuesdays at 7:30 pm

December 9th (via Zoom)

January 13th (via Zoom)

February 10th (via Zoom)

Men's Bibles & Breakfast

Saturdays on Dec 20th (at Nel's)

January 17th and February 21st

8:00 am in the fellowship hall.



Sunday School Classes

Dec 21st, Jan 18th, Feb 15th
for children of all ages.

In the hall after Children's Time.

Lessons & Carols Service

Sunday, December 28th 10:00 am



Congregational Birthday Party

Sunday January 18th

In the hall after the service.



Spring 2026 Newsletter Articles

Submissions due by Sunday, Feb 15th

Send photos and articles to: eleanor.svlc@shaw.ca



Ash Wednesday Service

February 18th at 7:00 pm

Lent



Lent Soup Suppers and Lenten Services begin on Wednesday, February 25th

Suppers at 5:45 pm and service at 6:30 pm (choir practice at 7 pm)

Church Information

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
20097-72 Avenue, Langley, BC V2Y 4J8

Phone: 604-530-1311
E-mail: svlc@shaw.ca
Website: www.svlc.ca

Regular Office Hours:
Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

If you need access to the church when the office is closed, please first contact a Division Chair or one of the Council Co-Chairs.

Pastoral Care Pastor Michael Nel
604-530-1311

Music Director: Gail Suderman
gail.svlc@shaw.ca

Office Secretary: Eleanor Lawson
eleanor.svlc@shaw.ca

Council Chair: chair.svlc@shaw.ca

