

SHADES VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

Where Grace Thrives!



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Shades Valley Lutheran Church



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OUR CHURCH

Church Council

Council President	Stephen Schrader
Vice President	E.J. Rauworth
Secretary	Susan Harchelroad
Mutual Ministry/Planning Review Liaison	Paul Schabacker
Learning/Church Family Ministry Liaison	Shannon Curlings
Worship and Music Liaison	Elissa Capps
Serving/Social & WELCA Ministry Liaison	Kristin Bakkegard
Property Liaison	Eric Rauworth & Lane Graham
Supporting/Finance Liaison	Susan Harchelroad
Fellowship Liaison	Stuart Hall
Inviting/Evangelism Liaison	Rachel Rice
Youth Liaison	Kaitlyn Hall
Boy Scouts Liaison	Shannon Curlings
Caring Ministry Liaison	Amy McDonald

Staff

Pastor	Rev. Eric L. Murray	pastor@shadesvalleylutheran.org
Director of Music	Dr. Anthony Pattin	drappattin@bellsouth.net
Office Professional	Sarah Beth Hall	secretary@shadesvalleylutheran.org
Financial Secretary	Charlie Venable	finance@shadesvalleylutheran.org

Council President's Letter

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Change” was an appropriate theme for last year’s Annual Report, and I think we can agree that that theme is continuing still. And I hope you will agree with me that at least some change is good. Indeed, as Easter people, we have to recognize that nothing remains the same forever; something must die in order for something new to be born. That’s the cycle of nature, and it’s an essential truth of our faith.

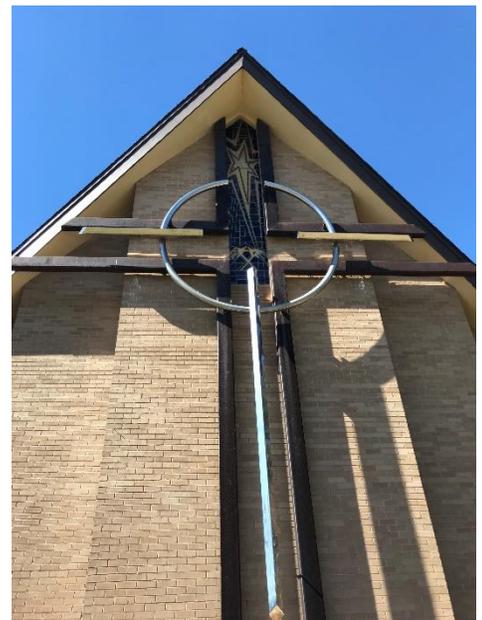
This past summer and fall saw the development of our Strategic Plan, and teams to lead each of the major goals. Perhaps the most has been accomplished by the Financial Stability team, which has been exploring the sale and redevelopment of a portion of our property. It is our hope to generate enough income from the property to support renewed ministry efforts. It was great to see through our listening sessions on the subject that our family was able to reach consensus that this was an acceptable course of action worth further exploration, and efforts are continuing.

Change continues, as Dr. Tony Pattin announced a few months ago his intention to retire and move back to his native Toledo, Ohio. The Worship and Music Committee has already received applications from several qualified candidates. Tony will be with us until later this summer.

It’s been an exciting time to serve as president of the congregation council. I sincerely appreciate each of you who has spoken a word of encouragement to me over the last year. I’m looking forward to the next ministry the Spirit calls us into together.

In gratitude,

Stephen Schrader



Shades Valley Lutheran Church
Pastor Eric L. Murray
June 2018 - May 2019

Pastor's Annual Report 2018-19



Future Directions

At the beginning of this past program year (Summer 2018) we, here at Shades Valley Lutheran Church, began a visioning process that resulted in *Future Directions: A Strategic Vision 2018-2021*. (The vision document may be found in the appendix of this annual report.) Far from being just another study that goes on the shelf never to be seen or heard from again, our vision plan has continued to inform and direct our decision-making and ministry-making throughout the year.

**“Where there is
no vision, the
people perish.”**

— Proverbs 29:18a, KJV

Present Realities

Why did we need a vision plan? Why not just keep on doing the same things we've been doing throughout the history of SVLC? Briefly, because everything has changed and is changing

Vision:

To be a community hub where GRACE thrives.

Mission:

Growing in GRACE, we welcome all, worship joyfully, and serve others.



around us. The present reality of our context is radically different from that of the 1950's when SVLC was first formed. To keep on functioning like a 1950's church in the year 2019 is neither practical nor prudent.

The fact is there are now as many Americans who claim no religion (23.1%) as there are evangelicals (22.5%) and Catholics (23%). Mainline Protestants account for only 11%. If you look further at the "no religion" group by age, nearly 40% of 18-29 year olds have no religious affiliation. To reach this group of people, those with no religious affiliation, we cannot simply open the church doors and wait for them to stream in. They are not looking for church, nor do they believe they need church. This is but one facet of the changing culture. There are other factors that also contribute to an overall decline in worship attendance and church participation, all of which suggest the necessity of doing ministry differently.

Necessary Change

To catch up to the present and prepare for the future, a few changes have been implemented throughout the year. None of these changes were implemented simply "for change sake." Every change was made as an attempt to live into our new mission. Thus, every change was for the sake of growing in grace; for the sake of welcoming all; for the sake of worshipping joyfully; and for the sake of serving others.

Here are just a few examples:

- Moving Oktoberfest to SVLC and opening the event to the public creates a non-threatening, welcoming opportunity for us to invite people onto our campus who would not normally set foot in the church.

- Removing the lectern eliminates an unnecessary redundancy, and promotes the unity of scripture and the community gathered by the Holy Spirit to listen to the Word of God read and preached.
- Removing pews in the back of the nave opens up room for people to enter, as well as to gather around the font for baptisms. Replacing two long pews on each side of the aisle with the shorter pews from the back was an economical way to create space for persons using wheelchairs or walkers to sit.
- Changing from two worship services to one creates the opportunity to unify our congregation, and to do so through worship, which has always been at the center of our life together as Lutherans. One service also increases the energy, joy, and attractiveness of our worshipping community.

**“God is making
NEW life, not a
day goes by
without his
unfolding
GRACE.”**

- 2 Cor. 4:16 MSG

I wish we had time to implement necessary change in a gradual, piecemeal fashion. Unfortunately, time is not on our side. Radical change is necessary if we are going to reverse direction and position ourselves to better minister to the changing culture around us.

Have No Fear

But, do not fear the tide of change. As God has been with SVLC in the past, so too will God be with us moving into the future. So, no matter what changes come our way, we can embrace them with faith in God’s promise that God is with us always.

I finish my report for this year with my thanks to you for your continued support and commitment to SVLC. And, I offer you this prayer by Henri Nouwen, a prayer which has been a great gift to me in times of change.

Dear Lord, today I thought of the words of Vincent van Gogh: [who said]

“It is true there is an ebb and flow, but the sea remains the sea.”

You [O Lord] are the sea. Although I experience many ups and downs in my emotions and often feel great shifts and changes in my inner life, you remain the same. Your sameness, though, is not the sameness of a rock, but the sameness of a faithful lover. Out of your love I came to life; by your love I am sustained; and to your love I am always called back. [O] there are days of sadness and days of joy; there are feelings of guilt and feelings of gratitude; there moments of failure and moments of success; but all of them are embraced by your unwavering love...O Lord, sea of love and goodness, let me not fear too much the storms and winds of my daily life, and let me know that there is ebb and flow but that the sea remains the sea.

Amen. May this be so.

Pastor Eric

REPORTS



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA: CUB SCOUT PACK 95

We had another great year at Pack 95. Fall recruiting was a success and set us up for a great year. Our feeder school is Shades Cahaba Elementary and we wouldn't be successful without the support of the Principal, the PTO and Coach Christian who lets us come to her P.E. class one day and speak to the boys for a few minutes at the end of each class.

Fall events included our new scout Hike at Red Mountain Park, Raingutter Regatta, our fall campout at Tannehill State Park in October and a visit by Troop 95 scout Gabe Kertesz and his father who introduced Fencing to the Pack.

The new year brought us the Pinewood Derby, Blue and Gold Banquet and our Bridging Ceremony where our Arrow of Lights moved on to Boy Scout Troops. We will end the year with a campout and moving up ceremony at Rickwood Caverns in May. All of our dens have been working hard to finish their rank advancement by the campout.

Pack 95 will have a summertime activity agenda which will involve one low-key event each month of the summer. Cubs who attend an event each month will earn a special pin. Activities this summer may include hikes, a trip to Sloss Furnace and recruiting events in August to start our 2019-2020 cub year.

Shawn Wright
Cubmaster



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA: TROOP 95

The past year has been an adventure with the Scouts of Troop 95! We are growing, having gained five new Scouts in the past three months; advancing with one earning his Eagle Scout rank last year and three Scouts moving toward Eagle now; and experiencing new and exciting high-adventure treks - many of our Scouts and leaders spent a week last summer in Louisiana's Atchafalaya Swamp at Swamp Base, and 15 of our Troop are going to Florida Swamp Base at Summerland Key in a few weeks. We journeyed to Camp Buck Toms, Tennessee, for summer camp last year, and will go to Camp Comer in DeKalb County this year.

Not only has this year been exciting and productive for our Scouts, we have been able to turn our service to the community and our Church. We have engaged in several conservation-related service projects over the year, including Turkey Creek Nature Preserve and Red Mountain Park. We worked on restoration of the benches in the courtyard for the Church, and have endeavored to be good stewards of the natural resources we are privileged to enjoy. We are always looking for opportunities to serve.

Our Troop is especially grateful to the Church as a whole and its leadership for supporting our program, and enabling our efforts to bring the Boy Scout experience to as many youth as we can. Without you, our undertaking would not be possible. Thank you!

-- Michael Allsup
Scoutmaster, Troop 95



CHURCH FAMILY MINISTRY

Education Ministries

SVLC education ministry consisted of adult, children, and family ministry. Highlights for the past year included:

- Weekly Adult Sunday school led by Pastor Eric.
- Weekly Children's Sunday school using the Whirl: All Kids curriculum from Sparkhouse.
- 2018 Children's Christmas Musical: "Share the Good News" with our Sunday School children, directed by Debbie Reid. The Sunday School children also sang at our Easter service.
- Wine/Beer Baskets Fundraiser for Lutheranch Camp lead by Sarah Beth Hall and Sarah Trombley. We raised over \$1,000.00 on the baskets.
- Hero Central Vacation Bible School for grades 1-5, Maria Hopkins was lead coordinator.

Confirmation Class/Junior High Youth

Met every Wednesday for instruction. During this time, Blaine Minton met with our confirmation class for an hour utilizing materials provided by Pastor Eric. The Jr. High also participated in:

- Assisting at Sunday worship.
- Weekly Sunday School.
- Participated in MLK Day of Service.
- Made casseroles for the homeless and served there.
- Confirmation Camp at Lutheranch with Shepherd of the Hills (SOTH).

I would also like to thank the parents for supporting their children's faith instruction and chaperoning when needed.



Senior High Youth

We have a small but active bunch of youth participating in various youth events. We continue to participate regularly with the Sr. High youth from SOTH. This has proved to be very successful and quite fun. Highlights for this year included:

- SH youth assisted with worship as communion assistants, lectors, acolytes and crucifers, and assisting ministers.
- Sponsoring of the Hat & Mitten Tree to help families in Mexico Beach after Hurricane Michael.
- With assistance from the JH, sponsored the Easter Egg Hunt for the young children and helped with the Easter Breakfast for the congregation.
- Participated with MLK Day of Service.
- Participated in a weekly Wednesday night Bible with SOTH - SVLC Youth.
- The annual garage sale in June proved to be the big event with over \$8000 raised to offset the cost of the Mission Trip and other youth activities. Thanks to the congregation for all the great donations. Special thanks to the many volunteers who picked up donations and those who set up and helped during the sale.
- Senior Recognition Day.
- Kaitlyn Hall attended the SESLYO convention at Lutheranch in Tallapoosa, GA as a SVLC representative. She was elected the Diaspora – Conference 7 representative for 2019.
- Mission Trip to New Orleans where we worked at Concordia Lutheran School and helped cleaned a stable in New Orleans, LA. 14 youth and adults from SVLC and SOTH attended. Thanks to Blaine Minton from SVLC and Chris Combs from SOTH for chaperoning.
- Attended the 2018 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston, TX.
- Had lock-ins in the fall, winter and spring.
- Several of the youth attended All Tennessee in November 2018.
- I would also like to thank the parents, Greg Vitalis, Lane Graham, Sarah Beth Hall and the many other SVLC members who helped make the program a success through volunteering, chaperoning, prayers, and financial contributions. Without your support, the programs would not be able to happen.

I would like to thank all of the teachers and those who assisted with the many tasks it requires to support all the Christian Education ministries at Shades Valley. God calls each of us to be in a daily faith journey. We are very fortunate to have so many people who are willing to share their faith with others and especially with our children and youth.

In Christ's Service,
Johanna Graham



EVANGELISM

Evangelism is a Greek word meaning good news. The word has the same root as angels-messengers who announce good news. To be about the task of evangelism is to announce the Good News of Jesus through word and deed.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you loved one another.”

- John 13:35

In 2018, and currently, our focus has been on reaching out to visitors to show our love. This goes beyond an introduction, smile, or welcome. For example, Amy McDonald has been writing personal notes to all of these individuals. In addition to this, Sarah Beth Hall is diligently working to reach out to the community with posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts about upcoming events, special services, and other unique opportunities. In addition, Pastor Eric Murray has been updating and keeping current the website to also help support this reach out.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Social Media- take pictures of SVLC activities and send to secretary@shadesvalleylutheran.org to post on social media
- Invite a friend to the following events:
 - ✓ Worship any Sunday or a special service
 - ✓ Oktoberfest
 - ✓ Rally Day
- Welcome Newcomers:
 - ✓ Follow up visit or letter
 - ✓ Mentoring to get the new members actively involved
 - ✓ Host a new member event in your home
- Attend Evangelism Events and share with the congregation
- Write an article for the newsletter, Birmingham News, or post on social media



Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father as sent me, I am sending you.” - John 20:21

- If you have new ideas about Evangelism, please share them.

Join the Evangelism team by sharing the Good News and our love for others!

FELLOWSHIP

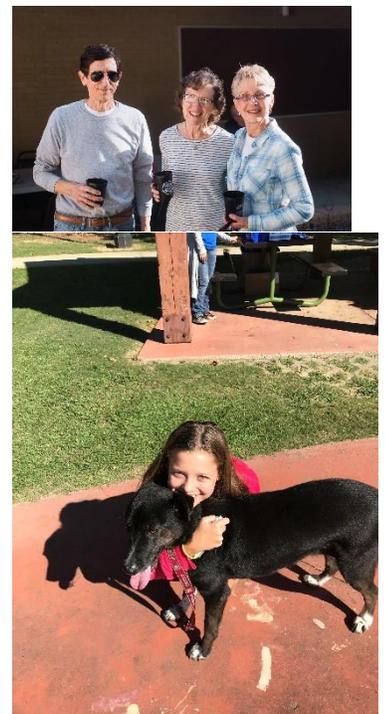
Since becoming the liaison for Fellowship Committee in June 2018, we have serviced:

- Rally Day August 2018 - provided brunch
- God's Work, Our Hands September 2018 - provided lunch and snacks for service work
- Oktoberfest October 2018 - We brought it to SVLC, provide live music, our church provided brats and beer
- Wednesday Night Dinners - Pastors Eric & Pauline took over cooking dinners until Lent.
- Soup & Bread Dinners - During Lent, church members signed up to provide crockpots of favorite soups, bread and desserts.
- Reception for Bishop Julian Gordy's visit.
- Reception for Confirmands.

PROJECTED PROJECTS

- Vacation Bible School (2019) - Fellowship Committee will be providing dinner Friday Night and lunch & snacks on Saturday for VBS.
- 4th Sunday Brunch during the summer.
- Reception for Father's Day
- Reception for Veterans' Day

Fellowship Committee, as I understood and led, provides a party!! We are a group that loves to eat, loves to plan, and loves to minister thru celebration!



FINANCE

The finance committee consists of the Treasurer (Caleb Hopkins), SVLC Financial Secretary (Charlie Venable), Council Liaison Stephen Schrader and several other congregational members with financial expertise and interest. This Committee meets monthly to review budget reports and make recommendations for the monthly council meeting. In this fiduciary capacity the committee considers both the short and long term financial and benevolence goals of the congregation. Each fall, the finance team prepares the annual church budget for consideration by council and approval by the congregation at the November congregational meeting.

We began 2018 with great news from a financial standpoint when we paid off the mortgage on the church. Unfortunately, the rest of the financial news for 2018 was not as encouraging. Our Actual Income for full year 2018 was approximately - \$89,000 below our Budgeted Income for the full year. However, we were fortunate that lower costs in salary and benefits coupled with cost containment efforts resulted in our Actual Income only falling below Actual Expenses by approximately -\$25,000. A surplus that we carried over from 2017 allowed us to absorb this deficit. The SVLC Budget for 2019 was presented and approved at our November 2018 Congregational Meeting. The 2019 budget for Income and Expense is \$372,322, which is a decrease of approximately -\$67,000 when compared to our 2018 budget. This decrease continues to recognize the declines in income that we have experienced during recent years.

The first four months of 2019 have continued to fall slightly short of expectations from an income standpoint. Our April YTD Actual Income is approximately -\$15,000 below our Budgeted Income for the same period. The better news is that our April YTD Actual Income was only -\$4,307 less than our Actual Expenses for the first four months of 2019. We are hopeful that we will see income improvement during the remainder of 2019 and we will continue our cost containment efforts throughout the year.



PROPERTY

The goal of the Property Committee is to serve the short and long term property improvement and maintenance requirements at SVLC. This responsibility presents countless unexpected and middle of the week challenges that range from broken air - conditioners and leaky roofs, to the beautification and upkeep of our church facilities and grounds.

During 2018/2019, the property committee worked on and completed many projects including:

- Building maintenance, including light bulbs, doors, ceilings, and anything that needed to be repaired.
- All systems in the church were checked to be sure they work properly.
- Exterior wood rot repair and painting of facility.
- Pressure washing of all sidewalks, curbing, and building.

The property committee works continuously to keep the church a safe and comfortable place to worship. Whenever something needs to be done, someone on the committee takes responsibility to get it done.

Overall, the property committee felt that 2018/2019 was very successful with the improvements made during the year. Thanks to a generous donation made to the dedicated property fund, we were able to move on the many improvements that needed to be made. As always, we continue to appreciate the many members who support property committee projects by volunteering time, expertise, and monetary gifts.



SOCIAL MINISTRY AND WELCA

Social ministries are those efforts by our congregation that serve God by revealing His grace to the local community. Under the broad umbrella of social ministries, SVLC members look outward, contributing time, talent and financial support to those in need beyond our church buildings. Social ministries is how we share God's love with the world.

Our *Happy Quilters* were hard at work this year, completing 248 quilts! Shades Valley also donated 432 lbs. of soap, assembled 401 school kits, 30 baby care kits, 15 fabric kits, 100 personal care kits and 1 fleece tied blanket for a grand total of 2,514 lbs. in support of Lutheran World Relief and Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA.

The first Sunday of September is designated by the ELCA as "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday. On 8 Sept 2018, we packed into the Greater Birmingham Humane Society - over 40 people, young and old alike. We even needed the church bus to get everyone there. Dog walking and socialization, trail clearing, cat petting and socialization, and paper shredding were just a few of the activities. Special thanks to the Fellowship Committee for providing lunch prior to the event.

Another important ministry is *AIM (Aid to Inmate Mothers)*. The second Saturday of every month, a volunteer from the congregation drives our church bus and transports children to Tutwiler prison so they can visit their mother. This ministry is vital in strengthening that critical bond between mothers and their children. During their 3 hour visit, children can hug and kiss their mother as much as they want or if they wish, move to a quiet place and spend quality time together.

We continue to support *Oak Mountain Missions (OMM)* Ministry, located in Pelham, through monthly donations of food items for their pantry. OMM supports 5,000 families with food aid worth around \$150/month. Our Oktoberfest celebration includes a canned food drive for *OMM*, and we fill the back of a pickup truck! The youth prepared homeless kits that anyone can keep in their car to hand out.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Bakkegard



WORSHIP AND MUSIC

It was an exciting year for Worship and Music. Our new pastor, Eric Murray, brought variety to our worship services. For example, Pr. Eric planned a very meaningful Maundy Thursday service. It included various stations such as foot washing, preparing homeless kits, prayer, and more, to help us focus on the meaning of the gospels. On Good Friday, we decorated the cross with flowers instead of driving in nails.

None of this is to say that in previous years our worship services were in error. Rather, Pr. Eric is trying to introduce us to the tradition of the Church (universal), albeit with a creative twist. Many found the new (to us) ways of looking at things enriched our faith lives.

On the committee front, after the June 2018 meeting, Roberta Stamp “retired” as chairperson. Many thanks to her for her ten years of service! She continues to be an active member of the committee and a valuable asset to me, the new chair (Dot Underwood).

We struggled to improve the sound system for the nave and the chapel. It has been quite a learning process. We seem to be close to a resolution. Thanks to Rick Mittermaier. He and Pr. Eric have spent many hours with the vendor, James Thorn.

Pr. Eric distributed a very interesting handout that explains the use of Bread and Wine for Holy Communion. Members began baking bread for some Sundays. Thanks to those who experimented until the recipe was perfected.

The bulletin format was revised for two reasons: 1) to save paper so as to be good stewards of money and the environment; and 2) to free time for the church office professional to perform other necessary tasks. After a couple of comments were made that it was difficult to find the hymns, we began using the hymn boards again. Thanks to Debbie Reid for taking care of this week after week.

Per our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnals, we used different versions of the Lord’s Prayer throughout the year. One is the modern day version, which has been in use by the Church (universal) for over 40 years. Another is a sung version of the modern language prayer. Still another uses the language of the 1928 Anglican Book of Common Prayer. This is the version, which many of us learned in childhood. Meaning may be found in each version, but the modern language version is more accessible to those with no church background.



A member generously volunteered to purchase new robes for the worship assistants. We intend to return to this project in the future.

Veteran's Day fell on a Sunday in 2018. A breakfast was given in honor of veterans. They were also honored during the prayers during the worship services.

In December, we discussed how the changes in our services our being viewed. We agreed on the following:

- Many of the changes will be in effect for a season.
- Asking children and youth to participate increases the likelihood that they will stay in the church.
- People are more accepting of change when the reasons are explained. Service notes have been added to the worship bulletins.

There are many Sundays when less than two flower arrangements are paid by donors. On such Sundays, we will only have one arrangement.

Lenten services introduced Holden Prayer Around the Cross. The Holden Evening Prayer is better suited for Advent than for Lent.

The committee asked council to make the nave more accessible to differently abled persons. Rows with spaces for wheelchairs should be throughout rather than confined to one section. The council agreed. Prior to Easter, two long pews on each side were removed and replaced by two shorter pews on each of the back of the church. This was a very economical solution to create hospitable space.

The lectern was removed from the nave during Advent & Christmas to provide a clearer view of the Chrismon tree. In addition, Pr. Eric explained, according to the ELCA's Principles for Worship, "the distinction between the place of reading (lectern) and place of preaching (pulpit) may suggest an artificial hierarchy of ministries and of scripture readings....the proclamation [both reading and preaching] of the word of God is honored by the creation of a single focal point".



Much to our despair, Dr. Tony Pattin will be leaving us in October. He plans to return to Ohio where he has family. A search committee for a new Director of Music has been formed. We hate to lose Tony. He has been a breath of fresh air and a joy; however, we understand and wish him Godspeed.

Lent 2019 included an Easter Vigil like none you have ever attended! Emphasis was on the Great Three Days. Rather than thinking of three individual services, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil are to be experienced as one.

Bishop Gordy preached on March 17, 2019. His service as bishop will end in September. We offer thanks and prayers for him and for his family.

We have been having soup dinners on Wednesday. Preparation and clean-up have fallen on the same people week after week. We would like to have a solution by fall.

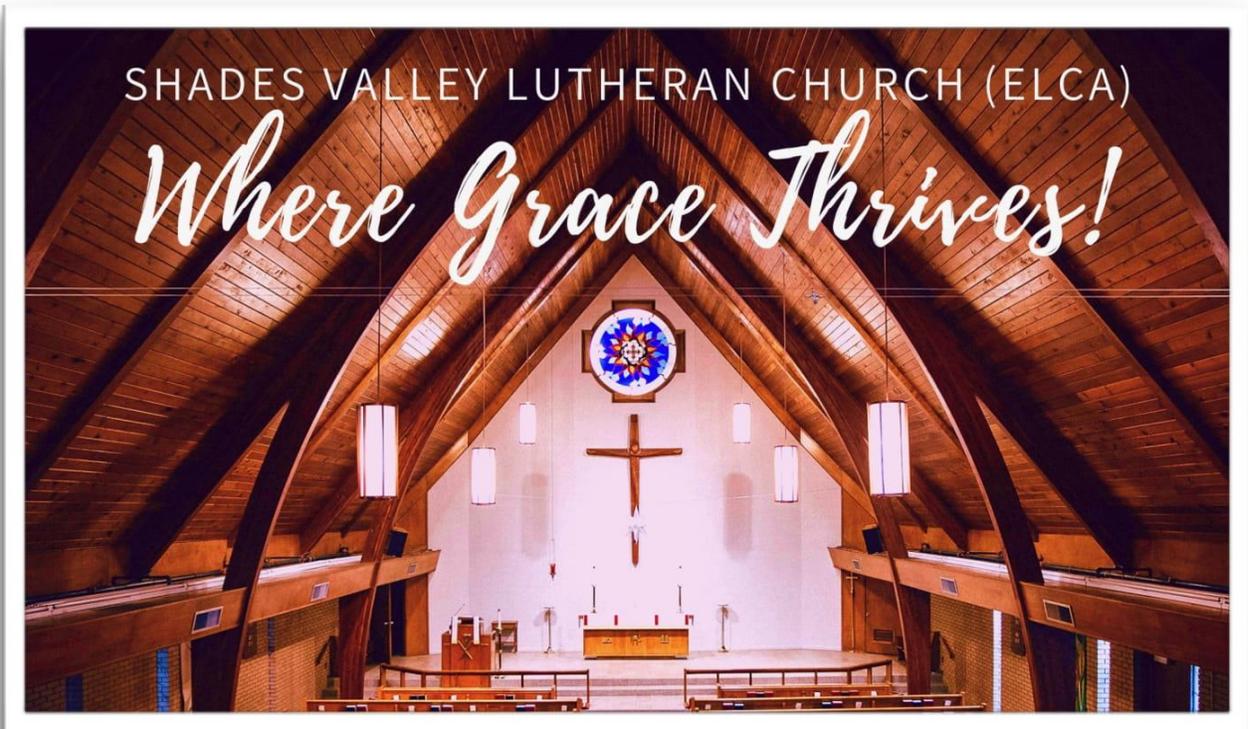
It is the goal of Worship and Music to facilitate a meaningful worship experience. We welcome your input.

Peace,
Dot Underwood



APPENDIX





FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

A STRATEGIC VISION

2018-2021

SHADES VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

720 Shades Creek Parkway

Birmingham, Alabama 35209

DOC. VER. 4.1

FEBRUARY 4, 2019

Future Directions: A Strategic Vision

In the summer of 2018, your congregational leaders set in motion a strategic visioning process to help discern the identity and mission to which God is calling Shades Valley Lutheran Church (SVLC) and the “future directions” we would need to take in order to act on our mission. In consultation with Keith Johnson, recently retired Executive Director of NovusWay Ministries, we spent the summer gathering and telling our congregational history, studying our cultural context, and analyzing our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for thriving in ministry. Ongoing prayer and study throughout the summer culminated in a visioning retreat for congregational leaders at Lutheranch, August 24-25. Following the retreat, SVLC members were given additional opportunities to contribute to the development of our strategic vision. (See timeline at right for details)

Thanks to your prayerful discernment and responses to the SWOT surveys, along with the work of the history and context teams, and the worshipful work of twenty-four congregational leaders, we now have a clearer picture of our future direction as a congregation.

Grace at the center

The vision of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is: *A world experiencing the difference God’s **GRACE** and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.*

As Christians of the ELCA-Lutheran variety, we believe everything starts with, and is centered in, God’s grace. This grace forgives, heals, and frees us to live the abundant life now. It’s not a matter of earning our freedom or “living right” in order to merit it. What heals and frees us is the gift of forgiveness given through Christ for all

people. Trusting this grace frees us to join God in what God is up to in the world

Strategic Vision Process Timeline

- Pentecost Sunday sermon encouraging SVLC to listen to the call of the Wild Goose (or Holy Spirit)
 - Call to Prayer throughout the 90 days of Summer 2018
 - Keith Johnson is engaged as consultant to facilitate strategic visioning process.
 - Context team assembles study of the religious, political and cultural context.
 - History team assembles updated congregational history.
 - Context & History mailed to congregation along with SWOT survey.
 - SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) completed by congregation.
 - Visioning retreat at Lutheranch, Aug. 24-25, attended by 23 participants, plus consultant, Keith Johnson.
 - Draft overview of vision, mission and goals shared with congregation.
 - September team training: Goals fine-tuned, Champions for each goal named, and objectives for each goal determined.
 - Financial Stability Team begins meeting monthly.
 - Late October, retreat participants huddle to tweak the vision & mission language.
- November Annual Congregational Meeting, initial overview of strategic vision presented to congregation

From the very start of the leadership visioning retreat it was apparent that the key to SVLC's identity and mission is **grace**. It is God's grace that is the pathway which gets us to everywhere else; to non-violence, inclusion, reconciliation, peace, restorative justice, service to each other and our neighbor, faithful stewardship, hope, joy...and new life. Thus, with grace in mind, we offer this guiding scripture text for SVLC's strategic vision:

GUIDING TEXT:

God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding GRACE. - 2 Cor. 4:16

So, imagine that God is making something new out of SVLC, breathing new life into our congregation. Imagine that God desires for SVLC to be a place of grace, a place where the congregation along with community groups, artists, musicians, non-profits and others, can meet, not just on Sundays, but every day and experience the difference God's grace & love makes in their life. Imagine that all those activities and groups share our common vision — seeing GRACE thrive. We believe God is calling Shades Valley to be this place.

VISION:

To be a community hub where GRACE thrives.

The vision, as SVLC member Blaine Minton put it, is the hill we are trying to take or climb. The mission then is the marching orders that move us forward and up the hill. Our new mission statement is clear about the actions we are to focus on as a congregation (HINT: Focus on the verbs)

MISSION:

Growing in GRACE, we welcome all, worship joyfully, and serve others.

This new mission statement will be the reminder of who we are and what we are about as we work towards fulfilling the calling God has for us.

In support of the mission and vision, four broad goals have been set, each with a "champion" and a team to lead further planning and implementation. These goals also arose from common themes distilled from the SWOT Analysis.

Strategic Goals

- I. Build the beloved community, intentionally nurturing the congregation so there is spiritual renewal, healing and stronger community spirit by year-end 2020.**
Champion - TBD
Team Members - Rachel, Lois, Sharon, Gail, Kaitlyn and Beth
- II. Intentional outreach to families with youth and children with a recommendation on a staff position in partnership with other area congregations by year-end 2019.**
Champion - Blaine
Team Members - Amy, Johanna
- III. Increase the visibility and accessibility of the church campus by fall 2019.**
Champion - Stephen
Team Members - Gary, Regina, Sam, Elissa
- IV. Stabilize financial performance by attaining a break-even budget by year-end 2021.**
Champion - Paul
Team Members - EJ, Caleb, Greg

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

I. Build the beloved community, intentionally nurturing the congregation so there is spiritual renewal, healing and stronger community spirit by year-end 2020

1. Intentional outreach to current membership in the form of:
 - A. Regular (2x/year) phone calls.
 - B. Create a system to prevent members from “slipping through the cracks”.
 - C. Consider the formation of “Shepherd Groups”.
 - D. Begin training and implementing Eucharistic Visitors who will carry Holy Communion to homebound members 1x/month.
2. Curate a more joyful and faith forming worship experience.
 - A. Improve the experience and formative aspects of existing services
 - B. Curate additional opportunities to gather in worship.
 - C. For the sake of healing, unifying and strengthening community, and to be good stewards of staff & members time & talent, study the possibility of moving to one Sunday morning worship service.
 - D. For the sake of uniting and strengthening community, explore the possibility of a more compact, table & community-centered seating configuration for the nave.
3. Cultivate an informed and vibrant prayer life through instruction, emphasis, and additional opportunities for individual & corporate prayer.
4. Additional opportunities for bible study and intentional faith formation activities.
5. Work through the “Building an Inclusive Church” process and seek to become a “Reconciling in Christ” congregation by year-end 2020.
6. Form a Serve Team to lead the congregation in an annual social justice emphasis with curated opportunities for learning, advocacy, and service throughout the year.
7. For the sake of mission and to create a renewed & transformed identity for the congregation, discuss renaming SVLC with a name that directs the congregation toward its vision and mission, and denotes a new start, e.g. Grace Lutheran Church.

II. Intentional outreach to families with youth and children with a recommendation on a staff position in partnership with other area congregations by year-end 2019.

1. Develop an interim structure to support and maintain youth ministry for youth from preschool through senior high by September 30, 2018. (Johanna)
 - A. Set plan for nursery leadership and Sunday school leadership by Sept. 30, 2018.
 - B. Develop roster of youth by age/grade, parents and contact information, with a decision on youth groupings according to age by October 2018.
 - C. Contract with Johanna to continue her work through spring 2019.
 - D. Affirm Blaine’s work with confirmation youth through spring 2019.
 - E. Invite SOTH and Faith youth to participate in youth ministry and to share in financial support of the program by October 2018.
 - F. Affirm youth ministry components including worship, service, outreach, discipleship and social activities.
2. Convene parents to determine their expectations for ongoing youth ministry at SVLC in January 2019. (Blaine)
 - A. What are their feelings about SVLC youth going to another congregation?
 - B. Do they support an expanded partnership with ecumenical partner congregations?
 - C. Seek volunteers to serve on Youth Committee

3. Present a written plan for youth ministry structure, program development and sustainability by December 2019, to be implemented in 2020. (Amy)
 - A. Engage other congregations for ideas, resources and to explore potential partnership in spring 2019.
 - B. Develop committee to write and implement the plan in spring 2019, with the plan completed by December 2019 and implemented in 2020.

III. Increase the visibility and accessibility of the church campus by fall 2019.

1. Develop internal hospitality/welcome ministry plan by Christmas 2018. (Elissa)
 - A. Written plan compiled by Christmas 2018.
 - B. Recruit and train Welcome Team by February 2019.
 - C. Install new internal signage by November 2018.
2. Develop external signage plan by Christmas 2018. (Gary)
 - A. Install ELCA directional signs at key locations by Christmas 2018.
 - B. Remove shrubbery to enhance sight lines and enable a “next right turn” sign by Christmas 2018.
 - C. Install sign at the Lucky Building entrance (with the new logo to be developed) by Easter 2019.
3. Improve digital presence on website and social media by Palm Sunday 2019. (Sam)
 - A. Develop new logo/graphic image that depicts the new vision in the context of the “building look” by October 2018. (Stephen)
 - B. Access current social media presence and website and develop a written plan for improvements by November 2018.
 1. New website and social media roll-out by Palm Sunday 2019.
2. Enhance curb appeal of the campus and visibility of the church for those who travel on Shades Creek Parkway by year-end 2021. (Regina).
 - A. Add a “distinguishable” sign feature along the parkway by year-end 2010.
 - B. Install a Gazebo like structure (to be determined), perhaps with a water feature) by year-end 2021.
 - C. Add banners. Visible from the Parkway, according to the liturgical calendar, with the first banner installed for Christmas 2018.

IV. Stabilize financial performance by attaining a break-even budget by year-end 2021.

1. Grow in understanding of faithful stewardship and increased financial commitment by Easter 2019. (EJ and Stan.)
 - A. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) - 20% growth/\$5600 month
 - B. Investigate “Stewardship for All Seasons” program by November 2018.
 - C. Investigate ELCA stewardship program by November 2018.
 - D. Revitalize the existing Stewardship Committee by January 2019.
 - E. Establish and promote online giving opportunities by Christmas 2018.
2. Establish a perpetual endowment for the perpetual care and ministry of SVLC by year-end 2019. (Caleb).
 - A. KPI - Five gift expectancies totaling \$1 million by year-end 2020.
 - B. Set up the endowment including investment and spending policies.
 - C. Develop a promotional plan to be implemented in 2020.

3. Generate non-traditional revenue through term office space rental and other rental uses by groups whose mission is not incompatible with SVLC by year-end 2019. (Greg)
 - A. KPI - Signed leases for \$4000 month by year-end 2019.
 - B. Update policy on facility use by groups not affiliated with SVLC by year-end 2018.
 - C. Evaluate facility space availability and suitability by March 31, 2019.
 - D. Implement needed changes and facility modifications needed by year-end 2019.
 - E. Determine tax liability for UBIT by year-end 2019.
 4. Investigate ways to share resources and staffing with other area ELCA congregations or ecumenical partners. (Paul.)
 - A. Contact the Bishop's office to determine if there are other viable models of sharing resources and staffing and to get his perspective on the Birmingham situation. (Pr. Eric, October 2018).
 - B. Approach other ELCA congregations in greater Birmingham to test their readiness for potential partnerships by year-end 2018.
 - C. KPI - Complete the research and report to SVLC Council and congregation by May 2019.
-

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

follow on pages XX-XX

SVLC Ministry Context

Beyond understanding our congregation more fully, we must come to understand the people and communities of our region, if we are going to effectively minister with them. Our region is the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area (BHMSA), 7 counties centered on Birmingham: Jefferson, Bibb, Blount, Chilton, St Clair, Shelby and Walker with a total population (2016) of 1,147,417 people. This is a summary of Demographic, Economic & Financial, Religious and Cultural aspects of this area to identify local needs and the resources SVLC can offer.

Demographics

The median age in the BHMSA is 38.8 years and the population is 48% male and 52% female. Major ethnic groups are White at 63.8%, Black at 28.2% and Hispanic at 4.3%. Households are 59.2% Married Couples, 19.5% Female no spouse, 15.6% Non-family and 5.7% Male no spouse. English is the language spoken at home for over 90% of the people with Spanish next at about 5%.

SVLC's official active membership is 243 people. Members live in over 30 Alabama zip codes, but 79% of them live in 12 zip codes ranging from Homewood south to Chelsea and Montevallo. 8% of the members reside in the same zip code as SVLC. The median age for SVLC members is 48 years, 17% are under 18, 25% are over 65, 47% are male and 53% female. SVLC data is not complete enough to give accurate statistics in other categories.

Economic & Financial

BHMSA per capita income (2016) is \$29,265 and median household income (2016) is \$52,226. 13.9% of the persons are below the poverty threshold. For children under 18, the rate is 20% and for seniors, 65 and older, the rate is 9%. Median value of owner-occupied units is \$154,000 and 13.9% of the population has moved since the previous year with 2.9% coming from a different state or country. The education level of 87.7% of the people is High School Graduate or higher and 29.9% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The largest employer is the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the five largest areas of payroll jobs are Wholesale & Retail Trade, Government, Education & Health Services, Professional & Business Services and Leisure & Hospitality.

SVLC facilities could house a larger congregation. A member's gift enabled critical maintenance over the past year, including repainting, trim & gutter repairs and power washing. Facility operating costs have been stable from 2014-2017, but facilities still need additional maintenance and updating. SVLC has no long-term debt; but declining income is a significant concern; Offerings decreased 15% (\$63,429) between 2014 and 2017 although the number of giving units (individuals or families with envelopes) is about the same. Loss of key members in recent years through death and transfer is a major challenge. Expenses have been lower than budgeted, but a primary reason for lower expenses is that SVLC is not fully staffed; the Director of Youth and Family Ministry and Chef positions are vacant.

Religious

There are 2071 congregations with 800,800 members in the BHMSA (2010). 327,247 people either claim no denomination or are not surveyed. There are 4 ELCA Churches in the BHMSA with 895 members (2010), SVLC in Homewood, SOTH in Inverness, Faith in Clay and Grace in Bessemer. Other area Denominations have numerous ministries such as campus ministries and outreach to ethnic, LGBTQ, addiction/recovery, homeless, hungry, poor and senior groups.

The number of “unchurched” but still religious people in the US has increased from about 2 in 10 in the early 1990’s to over 4 in 10 today and is estimated at more than 150 million people. Many identify as Christian, but distance themselves from being Protestant or Catholic, often avoiding church because of negative past experiences.

The BHMSA has 13 megachurches, protestant congregations with a sustained weekly attendance of 2000 persons or more. They often have dramatic, rapid growth. Their members cite clear mission & purpose, a wide array of programs and inspirational worship services as attractions. They face challenges sustaining worship attendance, attracting young adults and maintaining spiritual vitality.

SVLC has supported a diverse set of ministries throughout its history and currently supports causes such as Aid to Inmate Mothers, Angel Tree and Lutheran World Relief. SVLC has benefited from partnership activities with other ELCA churches for Youth activities and disaster response. Membership and worship attendance has declined around 20% in the past decade.

Cultural

This list provides an overview of issues and needs in the Birmingham Metro area and is intended to stimulate thought and discussion. It is not a list of issues that Shades Valley Lutheran should minister to. It is a snapshot of the societal environment of our location and times.

Racism - Racism remains an issue in the BHMSA with court actions over school systems and many segregated neighborhoods. While national polls show that most US adults believe there is much ethnic/racial hostility in the US, they also believe that Christian churches play an important part in reconciliation.

Immigration - With a fast growing Hispanic population, more than 70 foreign-based companies operating in the BHMSA and UAB recruiting staff and students worldwide, immigration is an important issue.

LGBTQ - Same-sex marriage was declared legal in Alabama in January 2015 with national legalization in June 2015. The LGBTQ community actively promotes policy protection and cultural acceptance locally and statewide. While there are no state laws giving protection to groups based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Birmingham passed a comprehensive anti-discrimination ordinance in 2017 and is dealing with calls for its repeal based on concerns that it infringes upon religious freedom.

Hunger & Homelessness - Access to healthy and affordable food is a concern, both in urban and rural areas. On any given night in central Alabama, an estimated 1092 people are homeless, including families with children, veterans, and people with mental illness or substance abuse problems.

Human Trafficking - Birmingham is a hub in the Southeast for human trafficking, a \$150 billion industry. Trafficking is happening in communities throughout the BHMSA.

Spirituality - People identifying as Christian or spiritual are pursuing personal health and growth through "self care." The most popular practices, overall, are spending time in nature for reflection, reading books on spiritual topics and meditation.

Fighting Poverty - Conservatives and Liberals hold different beliefs on poverty, but signs point to common ground among those with a practicing faith. Both tend to be concerned about local poverty. Practicing faith has a strong positive influence on people's engagement with the poor, regardless of political ideology. Both groups agree that it's not primarily an individual's job to fight global poverty; the issue is too vast. There may be an opportunity for the church to take the lead in this effort.

This is just a general summary of issues that affect how we serve our community. There is more detail available on these topics. Please contact the church office if you want additional information.

HISTORY

TIMELINE

December 1951 – Shades Valley Lutheran Church (SVLC) came into existence as a congregation of the Georgia-Alabama Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America

Formed by 25 families and Pastor David Conrad of Christ Lutheran Church of Birmingham. (*Charter members pictured at right*)

March 1952 – SVLC called Reverend Dexter Moser from China Grove, NC

November 1952 — Choir was formed under the leadership of Clare Etheridge and Bill Johnston

1955 — Pastor Moser resigned to take new call.

March 1956 – SVLC called Donald Pool of Our Savior in Albany, GA

June 1960 – Pastor Pool accepted a call to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC



SVLC, Birmingham, AL

HISTORY



The Beginning

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Christ English Lutheran Church in north Birmingham, AL was the sole United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) congregation in Birmingham and served the entire area. As Birmingham grew and families lived in outlying areas, a group of twenty-five families living in the Shades Valley area invited Pastor David Conrad, the called pastor of Christ Church, to form a mission congregation in the Shades Valley area. Beginning in the fall of 1951 Pastor Conrad conducted services at Christ Church and at the emerging congregation in Shades Valley. This mission congregation soon purchased the little white church on Hollywood Boulevard (*pictured at left*) being vacated by Canterbury Methodist Church for \$45,000. It was known that this church property would probably be purchased by the highway department at some time in the future. On December 23, 1951, Shades Valley Evangelical Lutheran Church (SVLC) officially organized with a membership of 58 confirmed members and 82 baptized members. The name, Shades Valley Evangelical Lutheran Church was chosen by vote of the

March 1961 – SVLC called Pastor Robert Carswell

State Highway Department, in order to complete a new highway, made offer on existing property and SVLC purchased the current property on Shades Creek Parkway

October 1963 – New church building at Shades Creek Parkway was completed

September 1966 — Pastor Carswell resigned to accept a call to Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, SC

March 1967 – SVLC called Pastor James Connelly from Redeemer in Macon, GA

1969 — Choir came into maturity under the direction of Leon & Kathryn Waters.

1969 — New educational building was completed

1971 – SVLC hosted the Convention of the Southeastern Synod

1973 – SVLC began internship program through the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary; George Sims of Columbia, SC, was the first intern.

1975 – Completed expansion of the Nave.

December 31, 1976 — Pastor James Connelly resigned to accept a position with the Division of Parish Services.

July 1977 – SVLC called Pastor Leland Caulder of Grace Lutheran Church in Houston, TX

1977 — Pipe Organ installed

1984 – Pastor Caulder resigned to accept a call to Ascension Lutheran Church in Jackson, MS

congregation from a list of names which included SVELC, St. Mathew's, Reformation, Grace, Our Savior's, Good Shepherd, and The Church of the Open Bible.

The Rev. Dexter Moser arrived at Shades Valley in March of 1952 to serve as the first called pastor. A women's and a men's group were soon organized, and the new congregation assumed responsibility for Boy Scout Troop 95, originally organized by Canterbury Methodist Church. Mr. Al Doerfler served as the church representative to the troop for many years. The church continues to sponsor this troop. By the end of the first year of ministry, the new congregation had grown to 134 members, and by 1954 it had expanded to 174 members.

By October, 1961, the highway department notified the church that it was ready to make an offer for the church's property. In the meantime, a relocation site had been selected, and on October 29 the congregation voted to purchase a five-acre tract of land at 720 Shades Creek Parkway for \$22,500. After the final sale of the church property on Hollywood Boulevard and the completion of a detailed building needs plan under the direction of the ULCA Department of Church Architecture, the church held groundbreaking ceremonies on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1962, and signed a contract with the Richardson Construction Company on April 22. On October 6, 1963, the final service was held in the little white church and the cornerstone for the new church was laid. On December 15, 1963, the new church building on Shades Creek Parkway was dedicated. In the new facilities, the congregation continued to prosper as it began to focus on specific areas of ministry such as social ministries and a ministry to a growing youth segment. The church continued its steady growth, and in 1975 membership had increased to over 600 members.

From the beginning of the congregation, worship was regarded as vital to the life of the faith community. In November, 1952, a choir was organized, and to this day, music has always been a meaningful and vital part of worship. The music program began under Clare Etheridge and developed under Bill Johnston. The choir and music program matured under the leadership of Leon and Kathryn Waters. In 1984 a new pipe organ was built and installed by Reuter Organ Company. Dwight DuBois, a member of the congregation and

Late 1984 – SVLC called Pastor James Bauman.

Hired Crystal Mittermaier as Director of Music

1986 – Called Rev. Carl Yost as Associate Pastor

1987 – Pastor Bauman accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church in Wilmette, IL

Associate Pastor Yost also resigned pending a call to a senior Pastor position

SVLC called Pastor Yost as an interim Pastor

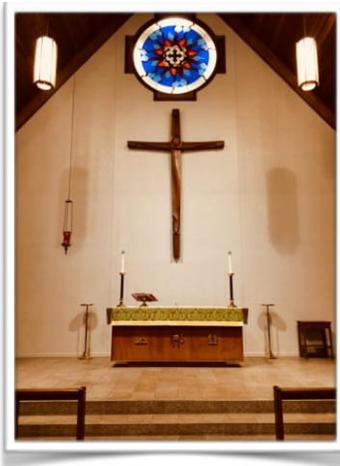
1988 — SVLC called Pastor Lori Schifano from Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Marietta, GA as an associate pastor

Pastor Schifano served as pastor for almost a year while Pastor Yost served in active duty in the Persian Gulf War

November 1991 – Pastor Schifano was called to Nativity Lutheran Church in Brandon, MS

Spring 1992 – Pastor Yost was called to serve at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC

Lutheran Ministries of Alabama was formed.



representative of the Reuter company, was instrumental in the design and plan for this organ. We are thankful and extremely proud of this important addition to the worship life and music program of our church.

The music program continued to flourish in 1985 with Crystal Mittermaier as director and organist. After Ms. Mittermaier retired, Ms. Idabelle Gay was hired as organist and director. In 2017 we were blessed to have Dr. Anthony Pattin become organist and music director.

As Shades Valley continued in its dedicated ministry, it also worked to support the beginning of two new Lutheran congregations. During the late 1970's, Shades Valley participated in the initial growth of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Riverchase. During the 1980's and 1990's Shades Valley also helped Shepherd of the Hills in its beginning. Shades Valley donated an altar for their worship space.

Shades Valley continues to find ways to serve God in social ministry and outreach programs in the community, the country, and the world as we are ever mindful of "God's Work, Our Hands."

SVLC PASTORS

David Conrad	1951 – 1952
Dexter Moser	1952 – 1955
Donald Poole	1956 – 1960
Robert Carswell	1961 – 1966
James Connelly, Jr.	1967 – 1976
Leland Caulder	1977 – 1984
James G. Bauman	1984 – 1987
Carl R. Yost	1986 – 1992
Lori A. Schifano	1988 – 1991
Mark A. Scott	1993 – 2003
Jonathan Edwards	2004 – 2005
Daniel Dahl	2007 – 2016
Eric L. Murray	2018 - pres.

SVLC INTERNS

George Sims	1974
Ken Frank	1975
George Rhyne	1976
Palmer Clemmer	1977
Gary Christensen	1978
William Haskell	1979*
Marti Reynolds	1980
Mike Jenkins	1981
Bob Warren	1982



Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry has always been an important focus for our congregation. In 1999 Marcia Giordano became Director of Youth and Christian Education. She began her position with energy and enthusiasm. During her years working with the youth, they enjoyed outings and retreats together, took mission trips to various cities around the country, and attended national youth gatherings. Our youth joined with Shepherd of the Hills in service projects, Bible studies, and mission trips. To insure that no youth would miss out on the annual mission trip, SVLC holds an annual garage sale which has become widely known in the community. The youth have stated that the mission trips have made a meaningful impact in their spiritual journey. Many thanks to Marcia for her tireless work and positive influence on our youth. On November 1, 2017, Marcia concluded her service at SVLC.

Struggle and Healing

Shades Valley has always been a congregation of loving and caring people who welcome all to come and become family with us, and this is still true. However, just as the Christian church has at times sailed on stormy seas, families and church families also experience times of conflict and struggle. Shades Valley has also experienced such times. During the years of 2004-2005 in a time of the arrival of a new pastor, a division among the members occurred. There were those who felt a lack of support for the pastor, and other members felt a sense of selective

ministry resulting in feelings of anger, disappointment, and disillusionment. Reconciliation among members would have been beneficial to all. Regrettably, these issues were not resolved among the members because when the pastor transferred to another congregation, a number of members as a group also transferred to other congregations. Those members are and will always be missed. The remaining members harbored no ill feelings toward those who left and hope that they feel the same. When Pastor Daniel Dahl arrived as the new pastor, Shades Valley began its healing. Pastor Dahl will always be remembered as a pastor who brought peace, comfort, and healing to the congregation.

Sadly, another time of tension occurred in the years of 2014-2015 when some members experienced feelings of inappropriate conduct by a member of the congregation who was also a rostered clergyman with the ELCA. The opportunity to resolve this issue ended when the person resigned from the ELCA clergy roster and also transferred his membership to another congregation.

Now and into God's Future

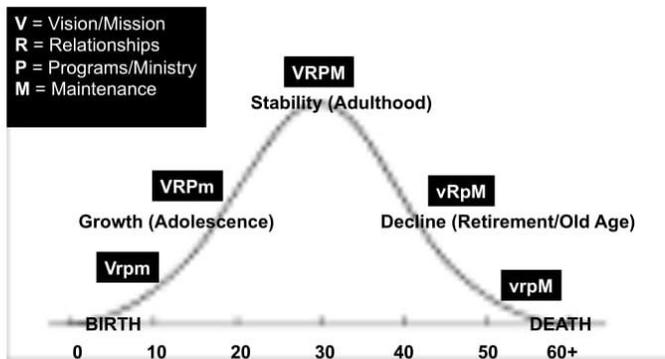
From the healing and peace felt by the congregation, a desire for renewal grew among the members. After the retirement of Pastor Dahl, the church began its search for a new pastor. On Ash Wednesday in February of 2018, Shades Valley welcomed, with joy and excitement, Pastor Eric Murray, along with his spouse Pastor Pauline Farrington. Pastor Eric's ministry began with poignant and deeply meaningful services during Lent. He immediately began opportunities for discussion and Bible study. Worship services have been enhanced, and organizational ideas have been put into place. Though our numbers remain small, there is a spirit of strength, excitement, and purpose to grow and fulfill our commitment to do God's work. To help us discern to what ministry God is calling us now and into the future, Shades Valley has begun an intentional strategic planning process. Throughout this process we have been seeking to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit for guidance as we work together to be a blessing to our community near and far.

God has promised to be "Emmanuel", God with us. Throughout Shades Valley's history, God has been faithful to God's promises. So, we trust that God will continue to be faithful and continue to be with Shades Valley into the future. And so, we pray: *"O God,.....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."*

Change for the Sake of the Gospel (and Growth)

Every healthy Christian congregation goes through a natural life cycle, experiencing a period of growth, followed by a period of decline which leads, eventually, to death.

Natural Life Cycle of Ministry



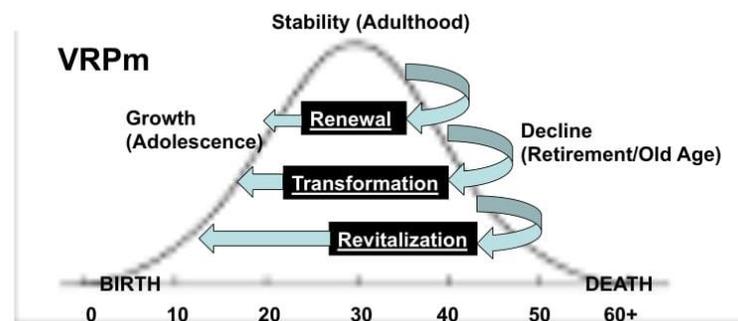
Typically, the life cycle plays out like this:

- At the start of the church, there is nothing more than a vision.
- That vision begins to attract others until the church becomes a vibrant place of great relationships both inside and outside the church. The vision has attracted like-minded people who genuinely enjoy being together.
- As the church matures, new ministries that multiply are put into place to build disciples and to reach the local community.
- And then finally, the growth becomes too much to manage so structures are put in place to manage the church. Boards, committees, and systems are formalized. This structure ensures that ministries function consistent with the vision and healthy relationships. These structures ensure ministries are healthy and multiplication can continue.

This all happens on the front side of the curve. On the backside of the curve is where we find our declining churches:

- Vision is the first to go as the church continues to do what it has always done.
- The past ways of doing things work less, and then the relationships begin to suffer. By pulling in, the people in the church often don't build relationships with people outside the congregation. This "pulling in" exacerbates the decline, and people begin to leave as the tension grows. At this point, often a new vision is quickly squashed as the church continues to "hold on to what we know."
- As the church continues to contract, it's left with fewer people and multiple ministries that they try desperately to maintain. Eventually, the ministries can no longer continue. Visitors quickly pick up that a church is in contraction.
- Typically, when the death of a congregation is near, there is little ministry; few healthy relationships with people outside the congregation or within the body; and ultimately, no vision.*

We realize some people are averse to change. Yet, changing, to adapt to the new realities facing congregations today, is absolutely necessary. If a congregation on the back side of the curve, i.e., in decline, introduces a vision of change for the sake of the Gospel mission, then it can restart its lifecycle, begin to thrive and continue to faithfully serve the kingdom of God.



* Portions of this article's content comes from A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING - LIFE CYCLE OF A CHURCH by Greg Wiens, May 10, 2018 at <https://healthygrowingchurches.com>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

CONGREGATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2018

FORM **A**

This report can be filed online. Connect to the website (www.ELCA.org/congregationreport) and enter your congregation's **ID and password** (printed below). If you are unable to file electronically, complete this paper form and return it to your synod office by **February 15, 2019**.

Latest report on file: 2017

1. Baptized Membership at end of 2017	227
2. Baptized Members received during 2018	
a. By Baptism: children (15 yrs. and younger)	0
b. By Baptism: adults (16 yrs. and older)	0
c. By affirmation of faith	2
d. By transfer	0
e. From other sources and statistical adjustment	0
f. Total members received this year	+ 2
3. Baptized Members removed during 2018	
a. By death	4
b. By transfer	3
c. For other reasons and statistical adjustment	4
d. Total members removed this year	- 11
4. Baptized Membership, end of 2018	218
5. Total Confirmed Membership, end of 2018	170
6. Number of baptized youth who were confirmed in 2018	2
7. Average weekly worship attendance in 2018	105
8. Total number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation in 2018	274

Congregation ID#: 05794 Online Password (2018 only): 8740305
Synod: Southeastern Synod, ELCA
Conference: 9D07-Diaspora

14. Location address describes where the church or place of worship is physically located. This may differ from the mailing address, but must identify a street name. Corrections should be made below:

Shades Valley Lutheran Church
720 Shades Creek Pkwy

Birmingham, Alabama 35209-4458

Verify the following congregation information; correct as necessary.

15. Phone: (205) 871-3512
16. Fax: (205) 871-3522
17. Email: secretary@shadesvalleylutheran.org

18. Website: Corrections can be made online (www.ELCA.org/tools/updateCongregation)

<http://www.shadesvalleylutheran.org>

9. Race / ethnic origin of ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

Must equal active participants on line 8:

African American/ Black	African National/ Caribbean	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Arab/ Middle Eastern	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Latino/ Hispanic	Multi-racial	White/ Caucasian	Other	TOTAL
2	0	0	0	5	0	0	239	28	274

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP
(Please round all figures to nearest dollar. Omit cents.)

10. Receipts during 2018	
a. Regular giving	\$ 349,675
b. Designated giving	\$ 93,837
c. Earned income (any source)	\$ 1,896
d. Grants (any source)	\$ 0
e. All other receipts	\$ 0
f. TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 445,408
11. Total indebtedness as of Dec. 31, 2018	\$ 0
12. Budgeted/Projected 2019 Mission Support	\$ 31,617
13. Disbursements during 2018	
a. Current operating expenses	\$ 352,841
b. Capital improvements	\$ 32,868
c. Payments on debts	\$ 20,707
d. Mission Support (regular synod benevolence)	\$ 18,877
e. Other benevolence sent directly to the synod (for any synod OR churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.)	\$ 3,221
f. Other benevolence sent directly to the churchwide office (for any churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.)	\$ 1,067
g. Benevolence sent directly to any of the following	
1. an activity in another country including a missionary, a congregation, a companion synod, a hunger program, disaster response, etc.	\$ 0
2. camps	\$ 3,000
3. colleges	\$ 0
4. seminaries	\$ 0
5. social service group, agency or institution	\$ 0
6. campus ministry	\$ 0
h. All other benevolence sent directly to the recipient	\$ 5,631
i. Other expenses and realized losses	\$ 15,621
j. TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 453,833

19. Please tell us how each phrase describes this congregation:

	Hardly at all	Some-what	Very well
a. Worship nurtures people's faith.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
b. There is a clear sense of mission here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. There is excitement about the future here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
d. This congregation is a positive force in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. This congregation is always ready to try something new.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. This congregation works for social justice/advocacy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. This congregation helps people deepen their relationship with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

20. Please tell us how this congregation is at the following:

	Poor	Moderately good	Great
a. Building strong, healthy relationships among members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
b. Incorporating newcomers into the congregation's life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
c. Seeking out and using the gifts of members of all ages.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
d. Equipping members to share their faith with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Addressing social concerns (helping those in need).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
f. Managing disagreements in a healthy, respectful manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Interacting with the local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Helping members live out their faith in their daily lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR ENDING 2018

Congregation ID Number: 05794
Online Password: 8740305
Synod: 9D

FORM C

30. Educational ministry provided by this congregation:
Did this congregation have Christian education
(Sunday school, Bible studies, confirmation) in 2018? Yes No How many students? 35
Did this congregation have vacation Bible school in 2018? Yes No How many students? 13
31. Languages in which this congregation regularly conducts liturgies (make 1 the most used language, 2 the next most used language, etc.).
Do not include languages used for special services or by others using the building.
- 1) English 3) _____
2) _____ 4) _____
32. What assistance does this congregation provide to people with disabilities? (*check all that apply*)
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair access throughout the building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language interpreters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Braille worship materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health ministries |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large print worship materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry with people with developmental disabilities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assistive devices for the hard of hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
33. Does this congregation interact with Lutheran social ministry organizations (e.g., Lutheran social service agencies, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, etc.)? Yes No
34. Did this congregation participate in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, the day of service? Yes No
35. Does this congregation have an endowment fund? Yes No
If yes, how is it managed? (*check all that apply*)
 Self-managed Managed by outside professional advisers Managed through the ELCA Foundation Fund A
36. Does this congregation offer organized women's activities or ministries? Yes No
37. Does this congregation operate a weekday early childhood education center, kindergarten, and/or school? Yes No
38. How often is Holy Communion celebrated in this congregation? (*select one*)
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Two or three times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | |
39. In the past year, did the pastor, deacon, or a member of the Congregation Council encourage members/friends of this congregation to consider rostered ministry in the ELCA? Yes No
40. Is this congregation familiar with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program? Yes No
41. Is this congregation considering embarking on a building project within the next two years? Yes No
42. Is this congregation considering conducting a capital campaign within the next two years? Yes No

Congregation's mailing address
(corrections can be made below or emailed to conginfo@elca.org)

Shades Vallev Lutheran Church
720 Shades Creek Pkwy
Birmingham AL 35209-4458

If you do not file electronically, return Forms A and C
to the synod office at:

Southeastern Synod, ELCA
PO Box 400
Decatur GA 30031-0400