



Messiah Messenger

February 2025

Messiah's Mission: *To know Christ and to make Christ known through the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all through a Word and Sacrament ministry of worship, Christian Education, fellowship, outreach and service.*

Rev. Eric Black, *Pastor*

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FROM PASTOR ERIC

It feels strange to look at the calendar and see that a year has already come and gone since we joined Messiah. Time has certainly flown on by but I thought it perhaps worth stopping and taking a moment to reflect on the past year. A year that brought many changes for Allison and I, the kids, as well as changes to Messiah.

First off, Allison and I want to say how grateful we are for the warm welcome and reception here at Messiah. From the pantry shower right away last year, through all the support throughout the year, and certainly all the Christmas gifts, we are so very thankful for all the many blessings that y'all have poured out upon us. It has been a busy year, with the move, Allison helping to organize a home-school co-op, all the work and time that gets poured into that, in addition to getting settled in down here, but a year full of countless blessings.

Second, Messiah continues to see many things that were derailed during covid get back up to full speed, from Advent and Lenten meals to various outreach events, it has been exciting to see things get back into full swing after that massive disruption. Along with all that was interrupted and is now moving again, I am excited to see that Messiah is eager to continue to explore new ways to reach out to our preschool families, our surrounding community, and the greater Grand Rapids area. I look forward to what God has in store for Messiah throughout 2025, both in the blessings we receive, and the blessings we get to give.

Finally, if these last few years have taught us anything, it is that this world is full of uncertainties and that change is constant. We will of course continue to pray for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the church has always done in every age and in every place. We will continue to 'do our best' as it were, to further the mission of the church here and in every place, to stay faithful to our Savior, to share the gospel, and to love our neighbors. But amongst all the changes and challenges we face, it is good, right, and salutary, to remember that which never changes, God's love for us. Throughout all the ups and downs of this life, through all that which passes away that we miss terribly, through all that happens that we cannot understand, the truth that Christ died and rose for us is constant. To this foundation, this cornerstone, this rock, we cling. Whatever we endeavor to do, however we seek to serve, whenever we face the uncertainties of this life, we must always do so standing on this firm foundation. Secure in this mighty

fortress, we are emboldened to do the work that God has placed into our hands. We may stumble at times, actually that's all but guaranteed, but we will not fall. We belong to Christ, we have been made part of the body of Christ, we are coheirs of Christ's kingdom, and Christ, Christ is victorious, now and always.

And so, I am thankful, to God, and to all of you. I am hopeful, knowing that in all things God works for our good. I am excited, to see what blessings God will pour out on us, and through us in the coming months. We are all of us blessed because we are loved by God, now and always, amen.

In Christ Jesus,
Pastor Eric

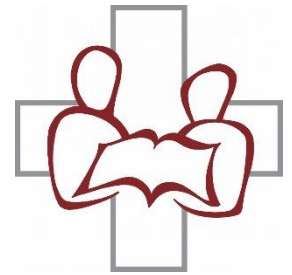
Messiah Updates for February

SUNDAY WORSHIP AND BIBLE CLASS SCHEDULE: We continue with one **Divine Service at 10:00 am on Sundays**, with Sunday School and **Bible Class at 9:00 am**. The Sunday morning service will also be livestreamed at

- www.youtube.com/@MessiahGR/streams
- Our Facebook page www.facebook.com/messiahgr
- The most recent service is viewable at our webpage, www.messiahgr.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Every week, Messiah's Sunday School begins with a joint opening with Bible Class in the fellowship hall at **9:00 am**. After the opening, children spend time immersed in the rich gifts of God's Word. They *hear, respond* and *learn by heart*, making connections with our Lord through His gifts of prayer, songs & music, story & poetry, images & art, nature & ideas.

This month, Sunday School continues to look at how God has called and gathered his people throughout the centuries. If you're interested in helping with Messiah's Sunday School, please contact Allison Black, Rick Krueger or any member of our Board of Education!



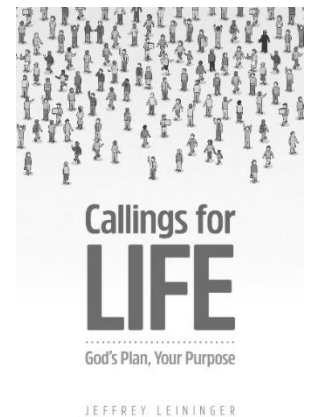
SPIRITUAL GROWTH SEMINAR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH

Messiah's annual *Spiritual Growth Seminar* is coming soon - on **Saturday, February 8th from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm**. Time's running short to reserve your spot to welcome Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Leininger of First St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Chicago, exploring *Callings for Life; God's Plan, Your Purpose*. You'll leave this seminar more fully grounded in Jesus' teachings and better equipped to live out your callings every day!

There is no charge for this Seminar, and continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. In addition, Pastor Leininger will have copies of his Concordia Publishing House book *Callings for Life* available for purchase.

Please register for the Spiritual Growth Seminar by **Monday, February 3rd**. You can do so by:

- Signing up at Messiah's Welcome Center or in our Bible classes.
- Signing up online. Click the banner at the top of Messiah's website!
- Calling 616-363-2553 during office hours.



2025 ALTAR FLOWER SIGN UP POSTER has been posted on the bulletin board outside the kitchen. Please list who is placing the flowers and what (if any) occasion they are to honor. The cost remains \$25.00.

Messiah Updates for February, Continued;

THE WEDDING FACILITY COMMITTEE - If you would like to help couples navigate the details of our facility for their wedding, we could use your help! Duties would include: explaining our 'facility use guidelines', setting up dressing room areas, preparing the altar and making sure the church is back in order for Sunday service. We are still looking for a few more committee members in order to have a team of at least two per wedding. Please consider joining our team. You will be compensated for your time. If you are interested, or have questions, please see Sherry Troutwine.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY: It is time for our new pictorial church directory. Our dates for photography will be: **Friday, March 21st (2:00 – 8:30 pm)** and **Saturday, March 22nd (10:00 am – 4:00 pm)**. Each week, you may **sign up in person following the worship service or online starting Monday afternoon through Friday morning** by going to ucdir.com or scanning the QR code and clicking on the red “Photography Session Sign-Up” button. Enter *mi1998* into the Church Code field and enter *photos* into the Church Password field.



ALSO COMING IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH:

- **Urdu Worship Service Saturday, February 15th at 5:00 pm.** Led by Pastor Afzal Masih, this service will be held in the fellowship hall, with a Pakistani meal following. Urdu services are held on the third Saturday of each month; Messiah members and friends are welcome and encouraged to attend!
- **Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th.** Lenten midweek services will be held on **Wednesdays at 11:00 am and 7:00 pm from March 5th through April 9th.** Watch more information about midweek services (and Lenten suppers) coming soon!
- **Lenten Prayer Breakfast Saturday, March 29th at 9:30 am.**

OFFERING REPORT: The stewardship report contains regular contributions for the month, including electronic giving, mailed in checks, and offering envelopes. The report does not contain preschool, other special offerings, or miscellaneous income received. The regular offerings budget is \$25,564.00 per month.

December: \$46,681.60; Year to Date: \$383,066.00; Year to Date Budget: \$306,768.00

From the Parish Assistant

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY: During the Epiphany season (which includes the feast of *The Transfiguration of Our Lord* on **Sunday, March 2nd**), we will continue to pray Divine Service, Setting Three from *Lutheran Service Book* in Sunday worship. This month, we also look forward to a special festival: **Sunday, February 2nd**, forty days after Christmas, when we will celebrate *The Purification of Mary & the Presentation of Our Lord*. We are especially delighted that our preschool children will serve as our choir that morning, as we observe the end of *National Lutheran Schools Week*!

Our February *Hymn of the Month* has a long history that crosses centuries and continents! The Latin hymn “Ubi caritas et amor” (“Where charity and love are, there God is”) dates back to the time of Charlemagne, inspired by Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:20 (“for where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them”). Over the years, it became a hymn associated with Maundy Thursday, commemorating Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet and pointing to the

forgiveness and peace He won for us on the cross. The English translation “Where Charity and Love Prevail” (number 845 in *Lutheran Service Book*) is by American Catholic musician and publisher Omer Westendorf.

Where charity and love prevail

There God is ever found;

Brought here together by Christ’s love

By love are we thus bound.

From the Parish Assistant, Continued:

Whether in the original language or in translation, this hymn has been set to music by countless composers (a brand-new setting by American composer Dan Forrest will be included in upcoming Grand Rapids Symphony concerts on March 6th and 7th). The LSB melody is a tune in the style of Appalachian folk music written by American Presbyterian music master Lucius Chapin; it was originally published around 1812 (with the oldest surviving copy found in the University of Michigan's rare book collection).

"Where Charity and Love Prevail" is a powerful expression of the God-given faith that binds us to Jesus Christ and to each other. Whether you are returning to this hymn or discovering it for the first time, we hope that you enjoy singing it and learning it by heart, beginning on **Sunday, February 2nd**.

NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT: Regular Senior Choir practices have resumed, held on **Wednesdays at 7:00 pm** in the sanctuary. The choir continues to prepare anthems for Epiphany (including singing on **Sunday, February 9th & Sunday, February 23rd**), Transfiguration Sunday, Ash Wednesday and Lent. Interested in singing with us? Come to a rehearsal on a Wednesday night and try us out! Contact Rick Krueger if you have questions.

Women's Ministry

SANDY'S TRADITION: February 20th at 11:30 am at the **Olive Garden on Alpine**. Contact Judy Gerke at 616-363-8412 so reservations can be made. Hope to see you there!

THE ALTAR GUILD meeting has been rescheduled for **Saturday, February 15th at 9:30 am**. Hopefully all of the members involved can come on this new date when we plan for the Easter season coming soon. If anyone is interested in helping on the Altar Guild, please contact Carol Mushong or any Guild member. We would love to talk to you. The meeting will start at 9:30 am.

WANTED: CORN BREAD BAKERS – The 2025 sign-up sheet is on the welcome center. Please consider signing up. Any questions? Contact Judy Gerke at 616-363-8412.

LWML FEBRUARY MISSION FOCUS is Lutheran Special Education Ministries. This mission grant, adopted at last summer's LWML Michigan District Convention, will supply Lutheran Schools and teachers with necessary resources to support educational and spiritual growth of children, who though in Christian environments, do need special learning difficulties addressed. Mite Boxes may be filled by anyone and, when full, returned to the large Mite Box table in Messiah's foyer. Please keep Lutheran Special Education students and teachers in your prayers as they grow spiritually.

Preschool

NOTES FROM JANUARY – We welcomed a new student this January to our Terrific Threes class. We will begin enrolling for the Fall of 2025, with our **Open House taking place on Tuesday, January 28th from 6:00 – 7:30 pm**. The last week of January will be filled with celebrating Lutheran School's Week. The Board of Ed. provided our staff a wonderful lunch, we dressed in a fun way each day, and will conclude with being the choir for the February 2nd church service!

Preschool, Continued;

LOOKING AHEAD... MARCH WILL BE READING MONTH! – Would you like to read to the Fantastic Fours class? A sign up will be posted outside our classroom door or you may contact me and I will sign you up to read (616-427-0116 / smestadv@messiahgr.org). Time options are 9:00, 10:20 or 11:15 am for story-time. **THANK YOU** for your participation in our coupon book sale. We sold 10 books to the congregation alone and raised over \$400 total. With the combined sales of the preschool families, we were able to purchase t-shirts for all the preschoolers as well as pay for the Fantastic Fours to attend a field trip at no cost to Blandford Nature Center. We still have some funds left that will be saved for the Fall to treat the younger class on their first field trip of the new school year.

LUNCH BUNCH is thriving with an average of 6-8 kiddos now attending the extra hour for lunch and a second recess. Ms. Sally and Mr. Fabris each take a day (Tues/Thurs) during this hour while Mrs. Smestad has her own lunch/office time and prepares for the afternoon.

As always...THANK YOU for your prayers and support. *Vonda Smestad*

Other

PRACTICE STEWARDSHIP WHEN YOU INVEST - "Stewardship" is a familiar word when talking about giving. But it's also appropriate to use when talking about how we save and invest for future needs. Church Extension Fund (CEF) offers a great way to manage some of your funds through investments that not only produces interest income for your needs but also helps build new churches and schools. Just contact Richard Tank at (616) 690-4525 or call CEF at (800) 242-3944 for more information. *(The information provided here is not an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy CEF securities. The offering of CEF securities is made solely by our Offering Circular. CEF will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The securities are subject to certain risk factors as described in our Offering Circular. CEF investments are not insured by the FDIC, SIPC, or any other governmental agency.)*

WMLHS OPEN HOUSE Come learn more about your West Michigan area Lutheran high school on **Wednesday, February 5th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm**. 601 36th Street SW, Wyoming. For questions, call the school office at 616-455-2200.

SAVE THE DATE: WMLHS' ANNUAL CELEBRATE FUNDRAISER will be on **Friday, March 21st at Immanuel Lutheran Church from 5:30 - 9:00pm**. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. To reserve your tickets or donate please go to celebrate2025.square.site or call the school office at 616-455-2200.

MEIJER SIMPLY GIVE CAMPAIGN for North End Community Ministry runs **through Saturday, March 29th**. Simply Give Cards can be found on our Welcome Center or purchased at the checkout. *Double Match days are Saturday, March 1st and Saturday, March 22nd*. For every \$10 Simply Give card contributed on this day, Meijer will provide an additional contribution of \$20, bringing the total to \$30 for a single customer purchase. (North End Community Ministry partners with the Plainfield Avenue Meijer, and is also supported with mission donations from Messiah's budget.)

In Our Prayers

- ✦ Those with immediate prayer concerns: **(Laura Altemann)**; **Walt**, friend of Pat Mull; **Holton Stanley**, friend of Lisa Van Etten; **Anya VerMerris**, friend of Lisa Van Etten; **Marian Stelter**, aunt of Renee Davis; **Lynn & Jeff Roof**, friends of Larry & Marijo Pataniczek; **Larry Troutwine**, brother of Mel Troutwine; **Sandy Schultz**, aunt of Cathy Quackenbush, **Judy**, friend of Louis Welke; **Linda Reed**, friend of Rich Griffis; **Mike Brumley**, brother of Shirley Kremm and **Mike Buckley**, brother-in-law of Sandy & Larry Goodlander.
- ✦ Those with ongoing prayer concerns: **(Gary & Nancy Buss, Carol Hull, Eileen Ottenjan, Claudia London, Kathy Mueller)**; **Jan Reister**, mother of Deb Krueger; **Gulaug Peterson**, friend of Lisa Van Etten; **David Brock**, friend of Sandy & Larry Goodlander; **Kris Doris**, friend of Lisa VanEtten; **Sharry Milner**, daughter in-law of Shirley Lang; **Tina Eikenroth**, friend of Matt VanEtten.
- ✦ Those serving in the military: **Eric & Kristel Gerke**, grandson and granddaughter of Judy Gerke; **Trevor Gerke**, grandson of Randy Gerke; **Ty Hilton**, grandson of Joann Hilton.
- ✦ Our Missionaries: **Pastor Masih and Pastor Mahlburg**.
- ✦ All those in authority, especially Donald our president, Gretchen our governor, Rosalynn our mayor, and all those who make, administer, and judge our laws.
- ✦ Peace in our world, our nation and our community



“WORSHIP ANEW” is a Lutheran television, 30-minute worship service with no commercials or repeats. It is a special taping done just for the viewer at home. Worship for Shut-Ins airs locally **Sunday mornings at 11:30 am** on Comcast (channel 21), Charter (channel 2), AT&T (channel 24), Dish Network (channel 54) and DirecTV (channel 377).

February 2, 2025 – The Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord

“Live in the Light” - Sermon Text: Luke 2:32 - Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

February 9, 2025 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

“Holy, Holy, Holy” - Sermon Text: Isaiah 6:1-8 - Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

February 16, 2025 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

“Blessed Are You” - Sermon Text: Luke 6:22 - Rev. Thomas Eggold

February 23, 2025 – Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

“The Baptized Life” - Sermon Text: Luke 6:27-28 - Rev. Shayne Jonker

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES - is available on these radio stations:

WTRV –100.5 FM Sundays at 7:00 am

WSRW –105.7 FM Sundays at 6:30 am

Visit **lutheranhour.org** to read about next Sunday’s message.

SERVING YOU

Staff:

Eric Black, Pastor
Richard Krueger, Parish Assistant
Noelle Kaminski, Office Manager
Tammy Ahrens, Office Assistant
Sandy Goodlander, Office Assistant
Vonda Smestad, Pre-school Director

Officers and Board Chairmen:

President, David Ahrens
Vice-President, Ken Martin
Treasurer, Dale Robart
Secretary, Kurt Veitengruber
Education, Dan Bohlinger
Elders, Kevin Mueller
Outreach, Rick Krueger
Social Ministry, Shirley Kremm
Stewardship, Dan Hula
Trustees, Kurt Veitengruber

Congregational Auxiliaries & Services:

Acolytes, Pastor Eric
Altar Guild, Carol Mushong
Bowling League, Joanne Gillette
CARES Bible Study,
Church Extension, Richard Tank
LifeLight, Dwight Anderson
LIFT, Dave Ahrens
LWML, Linda Blain
Parish Service Guild, Barbara Brinkman
Prayer Chain,
Wedding Coordinator, Sherry Troutwine
Ushers, Pete Garchow

Messiah Service Calendar – February 2025

Sunday, February 2, 2025 – 10:00 am

Elders: Steve Dengler

Ushers: Team 1

Acolyte:

Altar Guild: Team 3: Judy Gerke, Deb Krueger, Diane Wheeler, Barbara Wilson

Counters: Mark Altemann and Dave Kremm

Sunday, February 9, 2025 – 10:00 am

Elders: Larry Pataniczek

Ushers: Team 2

Acolyte:

Altar Guild: Team 3: Judy Gerke, Deb Krueger, Diane Wheeler, Barbara Wilson

Counters: Lori Martin and Joann Hilton

Sunday, February 16, 2025 – 10:00 am

Elders: Pete Garchow

Ushers: Team 3

Acolyte:

Altar Guild: Team 4: Sharon Hula, Joann Hilton, Rita Van Etten, Marcy Merkle

Counters: Judy Gerke and Diane Wheeler

Sunday, February 23, 2025 – 10:00 am

Elders: Larry Goodlander

Ushers: Team 4

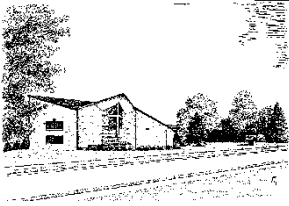
Acolyte:

Altar Guild: Team 4: Sharon Hula, Joann Hilton, Rita Van Etten, Marcy Merkle

Counters: Jerry Tiedt and Marijo Pataniczek

Sign Changer: Dick Wilson


Thank you all for serving!



February 2025

Messiah Lutheran Church



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Bill Brinkman Visitation 10:00 am Funeral 11:00 am
2 Bible Class/ Sunday School 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Bowling 3:00 pm	3 Elders 6:00 pm	4 LifeLight 10:30 am Trustees 7:00 pm Outreach 7:00 pm	5 CARES 9:45 am Choir 7:00 pm	6 Confessions Study 10:00 am	7 Pastor's Day Off Rick's Day Off	8 Spiritual Growth Seminar 9:00 am
9 Bible Class/ Sunday School 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am	10 Education 6:00 pm	11 LifeLight 10:30 am	12 CARES 9:45 am Choir 7:00 pm	13 Guild 1:00 pm	14 Pastor's Day Off Rick's Day Off 	15 Altar Guild Meeting 9:30 am Urdu Worship Service 5:00 pm
16 Bible Class/ Sunday School 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Bowling 3:00 pm	17 Council 7:00 pm	18 LifeLight 10:30 am	19 CARES 9:45 am Choir 7:00 pm	20 Newsletter Deadline 9:00 am Sandy's Tradition 11:30 am	21 Pastor's Day Off Rick's Day Off	22
23 Bible Class/ Sunday School 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am	24	25 LifeLight 10:30 am	26 CARES 9:45 am Choir 7:00 pm	27	28 Pastor's Day Off Rick's Day Off	