



Weekly Advent Devotions

Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ!

The leaves are changing color, the temperature is dropping, and before we know it, Advent will be upon us. To celebrate the Advent season, please join us for a series of Advent Devotional Services!

These services will begin on Wednesday, November 29th, at 12 pm in the sanctuary, and will continue weekly for a total of 4 services. The services will last roughly 20-30 minutes and will be a time for prayer, readings, and reflections. Each session will focus on a specific Advent theme.

The dates and themes for the sessions are as follows:

- December 6th - Silence
- December 13th - Hope
- December 20th - Promise

I hope you will look forward to these opportunities for worship and reflection! Advent is a very special time in the church calendar, full of rich traditions and deep opportunities for contemplation. So, let us await the coming of our Lord together in worship!

In Christ,
Vicar Samuel

*Away in a manger, no crib for
His bed, The little Lord Jesus
laid down His sweet head;*



*Let your face shine upon us, and
we shall be saved. Ps. 80:7)*

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Messiah Staff

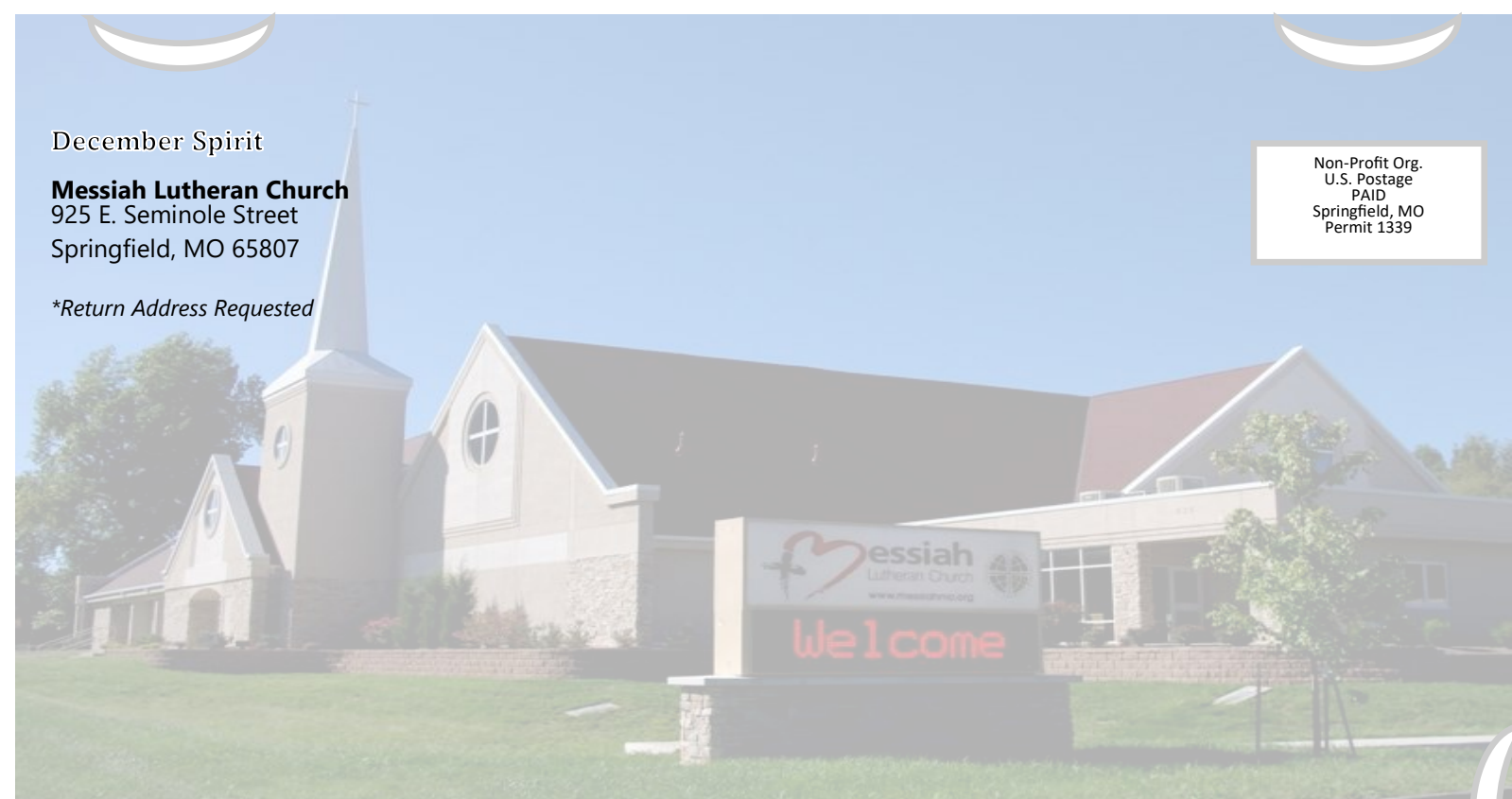
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December Spirit

Messiah Lutheran Church
925 E. Seminole Street
Springfield, MO 65807

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From the Desk of Pastor Orin

Dear Saints,

Season's Greetings in the name of our crucified, risen, and ascended Lord and coming Savior Jesus Christ!

Today, it can be a challenge or even an insurmountable hurdle to be generous when everyone is feeling the cost-of-living pinch. We complain that there is not enough to maintain our desired standard of living. So, kindness is withheld, and we react to whatever is perceived to be obstacles such as migrants, outsourcing, corporate greed, pandemic, and the government.

It might seem unfair. You should not have to suffer like this. Yet you have been generous, and I want to thank each of you for being compassionate and kind through it all. Indeed, God does not want us to suffer but we do for a reason. It might be for purposes of solidarity and or to make us aware of our surroundings, and of course God's presence.

Each of us knows that suffering changes us. It can transform our myopic vision and attitude, or we can become bitter and turned in on self. Luther called the latter 'sin,' and it is a heavy burden to carry.

With all that is happening in our lives and injustice in the world, it is a challenge to be optimist and charitable. But who ever said that following Christ is or will be easy?

When we gather at the Lord's Table, I am reminded that we share in Christ's suffering. The wine we drink from crushed and pressed grapes symbolizes Christ's sacrifice through which God breathes new life into us. We are changed—empowered by Christ who suffered to set us free from sin, death, and the power of the evil one. Now, "all [we] want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death, in the hope that [we] will be raised from death to life" (Phil. 3:10-11).

So, I am very grateful that God is at work in you and me, and daily we are becoming more like Christ. Owing to this, we can see our local and global reality from Christ's point of view and respond with love and compassion. We are not easily discouraged and there is no martyr complex in us. We give sacrificially and benefit from the pure joy of seeing grateful responses of praise to God e.g., Lana and or with her daughters in worship offering special music.

In this season, we are reminded of God's generosity in sending the infant Christ to be our salvation. He makes it possible for us to walk with two displaced Ukrainian families. Their suffering pales in comparison to ours. As such, their needs are great, and your generosity goes a long way to restore dignity and peace of mind. We cannot save them. That is not what God expects, but to love (action word) the neighbor in tangible ways.

As you do, keep in mind that suffering is not meaningless. It "produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:3-5).

A blessed Christmas and happy New Year to you!

Pastor Orin

December Scripture Readings

Date	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
2/3	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37
9/10	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
16/17	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thess. 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
23/24	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
31	Isaiah 61:10—62:3	Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

Mark Your Calendars

Wed-November 29 through December 20—Advent Midweek Worship each Wednesday leading up to Christmas

Sat-December 9—Women of the ELCA-Christmas gathering

Sat/Sun—December 16/17—Crosslines Toy Store & Holiday

Sun—December 17—Messiah Children Christmas Program followed by Congregational Christmas Dinner

Sun—December 24—Christmas Eve Services @ 9:30 am, 5:00 pm, & 10:00 pm

Sun—December 30/31—Healing and Carols Service

A Message from the Church Council President

As a young child, Christmas for me was a special season. As the youngest in the family, I was responsible for placing the angel on top of the tree as the last step of its decoration. My brother and I were warned that shaking our presents under the tree before Christmas would risk Santa's elves taking them away. (Even when the tag showed a present was from our parents, that risk was enough to keep us in line for years.) As soon as we woke up on Christmas morning (usually by 5:30am), we'd check the living room then scamper to excitedly wake our sleepy parents with "Santa was here and brought us presents!" After opening presents at our house, we'd drive eight miles to spend the rest of the morning and afternoon with extended family at our grandparents' home.

Each Christmas at MawMaw and PawPaw's house I could count on 1) a lot of fun playing with cousins, 2) a smorgasbord of tasty food made with two key ingredients - love and lard, 3) giant pick-me-up bear hugs from Uncle Loyd, and 4) feeling the love for Jesus from my faithful relatives as they thanked God for the birth of His son, the reason we were gathered together. As an adult, I now cherish those Christmas traditions and memories.

If you are a grown-up reading this, I hope you were as fortunate as I was to have happy Christmas memories from your childhood. When you love, support, and fellowship with others during this season, it matters and reflects God's love for all. We should strive to model God's compassion and grace to every youth and adult served during worship services, internal church meetings and activities, or a community group using our space. If you are a young person reading this, know that God loves you and adults at Messiah want the best for you. Also, I might suggest you not shake the presents before Christmas, it's not worth taking that chance.

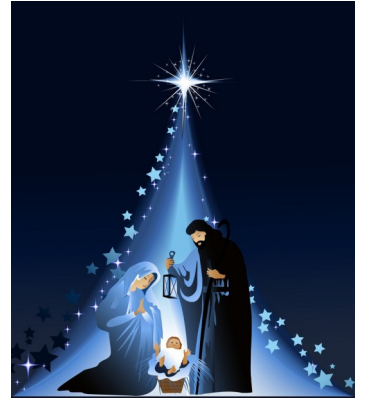
Blessings,
Chris Davis

Staff Support –Personnel Committee

The Staff Support/Personnel Committee consists of six (6) voting members who are appointed jointly by the president of the congregation council and the pastor. This year those members have been Jessica Atchison, Jean Bardy, Ed Donnell, Scot Franson, Genny Maroc, and Nadine Melgren. Prior to having this committee, the executive committee of the council filled this role. Committee members do not hold any other office in the congregation during their two (2) year term.

The duties of the committee are stated in chapter 13 of the constitution. The committee has the responsibility for submitting recommendations on personnel policies to the congregation council. Such policies may address issues such as sick leave and vacations. It may be given the authority to hire and fire non-rostered staff members and to provide advice in the areas of training, employee benefits, employee relations, legal issues relating to employees, recruitment, interviewing, selection procedures, and the like. This committee may be given the responsibility of reviewing the staffing pattern and of making recommendations regarding salaries and benefits.

This year the committee has finalized the employee handbook, standardized and revised the job descriptions for the church staff, developed an onboarding tool, rolled out a performance review process and overseen the posting, interviewing and hiring of several staff members. Recently the committee has focused on the staff support function now that many of the pieces of the personnel infrastructure are in place. Congregation members are always invited to share ideas or input for staff needs and purposes.



For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Annual Reports

ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Your Annual Reports are to be submitted to the church office by **December 29, 2023**.

Please also include what your plans are for the New Year and if there is anything special that we need to be aware of.

Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

Psalms 95:1

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15

Sunday School Team

Some important dates:

Dec. 17: Children's Christmas Program during the Sunday morning service

-Dec. 24 and 31: No classes

-Jan. 7: Sunday School resumes

December Birthdays

December 1 Andrew Bartels Adam Murr	December 12 Lisa Melgren	December 20 Drew Bowman Beth Melgren	December 30 Brandon Dillion
December 3 Laura Helmke Rosemary Nelson	December 14 Patty Hangen	December 24 David Siewert	
December 4 Audrey Dimmick Tom Wiswall	December 15 Jackie Brunner	December 26 Samuel Trottier	
December 8 Samantha Cummings	December 16 Zach Bartels	December 27 Jean Christensen Rose Hohbein Vince Johnson Martha Morris Nora Murr	
December 11 Katie Dogwiler	December 17 Britt Bartels Kris Scott	December 29 Eric Carlson	



Congregational Care

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed. I still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary, today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."



You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, do not tarry. Ps. 70:5

Lydia's Circle

Lydia's Circle meets the 3rd Monday of each month in the Church office for Bible Study and Fellowship. We would love to have you join us at 7 pm . All women are welcome to attend.

MessiahMOELCA   messiah@messiahmo.org
 MessiahMoELCA   www.messiahmo.org
 messi-ahmo   925 E. Seminole, Springfield, MO 65807
 417-881-2192



"PEACE"

As we look forward to Christmas, our thoughts turn to peace. In the midst of the civil war in 1863, Henry Longfellow wrote a poem of peace. He had lost his wife, and his son was injured in the war. His poem was later set to music by several composers. The words of the song have relevance for today.

1. I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men.
2. I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.
3. And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."
4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."
5. Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"
Col 3:15

The Promise of Hope



Springfield Mid-America Singers will be performing
"The Promise of Hope"
 on Tuesday, December 12, 2023
 at 7:30 pm at the
 First Baptist Church
 525 South Ave. Springfield MO
 This event is Free and Open to the Public.




"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Coats for Holland School Kids

I would just like to thank everyone who donated new, gently used, coats, mittens, gloves, scarfs, & hats for the children of Holland School, as well as monetary donations. We will be able to bless a lot of children this winter .

Thank you,
Irene Chaloupecky

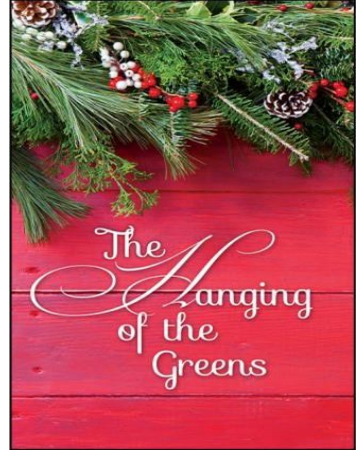
Do you love to do creative writing?
 Cathy Carleton has done the grant writing and research for the church for a long time and she is needing to take a step back due to declining vision. She would love to train someone who loves to do creative writing and research on how to write grants.

"Save the Date"

The Greening of the Church
 Will be **Saturday, December 2, 2023**
 From **9:00 to 11:00 am**

Coffee & donuts provided

Contact Jean Bardy if you have questions



December Flowers

December	2/3	9/10	16/17	23/24	31
Vase 1	Kip & Kris Scot	Vic & Peggy Shelton	Bowman Family	Hoeman Family	
Vase 2	Kip & Kris Scot	The Cummings Family		Dan Carlson	



Flower Vase Costs

Cost per vase is \$20. Please make checks payable to Messiah Lutheran Church, and then in the memo line, write "Altar Flowers" and the date for which you are paying. If you are using an offering envelope, you will find a line for "Altar Flowers" and the amount.



Christmas Eve Choir

It is time to start planning for the Christmas Eve Services. The choir will be singing special Christmas music for the 10:00 pm service and anyone who would like to join us is invited.

Before the 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm services begin, members of the church contribute by playing instruments or singing solos or ensembles. If you would like to be a part of this tradition, please contact Marilyn Boston.

Children's Christmas Program

On Sunday, December 17 at 9:30 am will be the Children's Christmas Program. The Service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion and will be followed by Christmas Dinner in the fellowship hall.



Messiah Women Christmas Gathering

WHERE: Church Fellowship Hall

WHEN: Saturday December 9th, 9:30 a.m.

WHAT: refreshments, Christmas devotion, craft making a beaded Bible bookmark, cookie exchange, Christmas hymn sing (requests taken from our hymnal)

DETAILS: Please join us as The Little Debbie Circle hosts a general meeting/Christmas celebration for ALL women who attend Messiah Lutheran Church.

*If you would like to participate in the optional cookie exchange, please bring 2 to 3 dozen of your favorite Christmas Cookies to exchange.



Evangelism Committee

Planning to receive new members!

Are you or someone you know ready to explore more about the Christian faith or church membership as practiced by Lutherans and Messiah members? There is a Lutheran/Messiah Basics Class planned for December 3rd at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. A light meal will be served. Please notify the church office at 417-881-2192 or officemanager@messiahmo.org to let us know how many to plan for. New members will be received during worship on December 10th.

*Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.
2 Peter 3:14-15*

Congregational Care

Christmas Love

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of our savior by sharing time with families and good friends, a time of love. But for some of our congregational family it may be a time of loneliness, or grieving, or health challenges for self or loved ones. All of the emphasis on celebration in our culture can add to a sense of loneliness for some. You are invited to soothe some of that loneliness by sharing some Christmas love with those members.

In the narthex you will find envelopes with the names of members the Congregational Care committee has identified as perhaps needing a little Christmas love. Please consider taking one or two envelopes and visiting a member, bringing a small gift such as a plant, an ornament or some cookies and especially some love. "For God so loved the world" and you can be a Christmas angel.



Crosslines

In the November Spirit some folks did not get recognized and the numbers of families and individuals helped was missing. Linda Elliott, Mary Anne Johnson, Susan Lane, Lisa Melgren and Becky Roark served 86 families/195 individuals at Crosslines October 12.

Thursday, November 9 was a huge day at Crosslines. Sandra Carlson, Susan Lane, Martha Morris, Margaret Peterson, and Becky Roark served 98 families / 221 individuals. Please consider being a regular volunteer or filling in occasionally when we are short, which was the case this month. We always volunteer on the second Thursday of the month. Don't forget to fill the wagon with boxed and canned goods, including cleaning and hygiene items, empty plastic water bottles and Best Choice labels/bar codes.



Evangelism Committee

Last Call for Membership Directory Updates

If there are corrections that need to be made in the information on your family unit's directory page and you have not already notified the church office, please let the office know as soon as possible. Updates will be available in early 2024.

Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
Psalm 80:3

ADVENT SERVICES

Advent Midweek Services will begin on Wednesday, November 29 through December 20 at 12 noon.

December 2/3, 2023 will be the first Advent weekend Service leading up to Christmas.



CROSSLINES TOY STORE

Messiah will support the community toy store again this year.

The collection box will be in the Narthex beginning the weekend after **Thanksgiving through December 11, 2023.**

The setup for the Toy Store is at the Fairgrounds E-Plex **December 12-15** with the **distribution on December 16, 2023.**

Flyers with gift ideas will be by the collection box and around the church. We have chosen "**Teenagers**" again this year because we feel it is an overlooked category. All age group toys will be accepted.

Please contact Terry Dunham with any questions.



Parish Life Committee

Dear Church Family, we continue to provide refreshments following the Sunday morning services. If you have not joined us before, please feel free to do so, even if it is just a quick stop on the way to Sunday School.

Sunday, Dec. 17—Sunday School Christmas program followed by the **Congregational Christmas Dinner**. Parish Life will provide beverages, chicken, and rolls. Side dishes and desserts will be provided by the congregation. See the signup sheet in the narthex. Please sign up so that an accurate count can be made for ordering the chicken.

Sunday, Jan. 28, is the congregational meeting. After the meeting there will be a potluck and board games in the fellowship hall.



On the first day of Christmas the Savior gave to me...

LIGHT

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

John 8:12

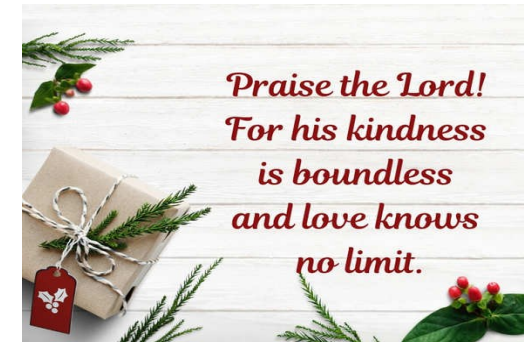
Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. Ps. 85:13

God's Kids

Have you attended the Sunday Services and heard God's Kids sing? They look so Angelic up there singing. **All your children shall be taught by the LORD**, and great shall be the peace of your children. Isaiah 54:13.

Can you just imagine the smile on the Lord's face as He hears these children singing? They are ringing Joy Bells in Heaven.

Pictured below is Piper Jones, Nora Dimond, Lucy Weaver, Alexis Bergin, Jaymin Charles, Zac Bergin, Oliver Jones & Rachel Bergin leading the Children's Choir.



Messiah Women of the ELCA

Thank Offering

Every year the Messiah women's organization has taken a Thank Offering which will be sent to the National Women of the ELCA. Thank Offerings are sent from women all over the country and support the many ministries of the Church wide Organization.

We will be collecting the Thank Offering through the end of the year.

Church Council

Messiah Church Council wishes to thank everyone who completed their Time and Talent Survey and turned it in. Our office volunteers have now documented that information and it is being shared with the committee chairs, small groups, worship leaders, etc. so they can contact any new individuals to welcome them and provide them with the information they need.

We also want to thank you for devoting your time, expertise and effort to the many varied ministries and services that represent the focus of Messiah on fulfilling God's mission with all our gifts, our talents, our time, and our resources. We are a church that broadly depends on the many disciples that serve in an array of areas. During your time of reflection throughout this season, as you consider your many blessings, we hope you recognize the contributions of your brothers and sisters in Christ and know that we are blessed every time one of them offers to help in the office, create a beautiful banner, lend their voice to a soul inspiring hymn, trim the shrubs, repair a broken cabinet, install a needed computer program, monitor church budgets and spending, share a meaningful message, welcome a brother or sister, show compassion in times of illness or despair, teach a child or say a prayer for others.

As a family of followers of our Lord Jesus, we share our lives together, joys and sorrows, confidence and insecurity, questions and answers. As we look forward to the coming new year, we have no knowledge of what may be in store for us. Yet, in faith, we move forward with great anticipation. Please join your brothers and sisters in preparation for a new year of possibilities for welcoming all to worship, making new disciples, focusing on ministry, nurturing youth, and caring for those in need wherever they may be.



Messiah Child Development Teacher of the Month

"Hi, my name is Andrea Singletary. I have been here 3 years and I am currently in the Preschool classroom. I have a 3 year old daughter, Honey Marie, here at Messiah. It is such a blessing to have her here at the school with me. I love my kiddos and you can find me playing or building things with my class!"



Messiah Lighthouse Christmas Program

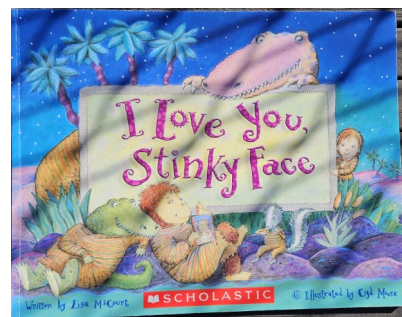
MLCFDC will host a Christmas Dinner & Children's Program in the Messiah Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall on December 21st starting at 5:30 till 7:30 pm. Guests will be Childcare children and their families and will number between 60 and 80 people. Dinner will be served by the Messiah Lighthouse Board of Directors. This will be followed by a Christmas program in which each of the Childcare classes will perform their own contribution to the combined program. Dessert will be served after the program and there will be time for pictures with Santa.

Pastor Orin and the Messiah Lighthouse Board of Directors are appealing to our Messiah members to assist with this event. We need a team of members who are willing to assist with setting up in the Fellowship Hall, a team of members who are willing to assist with the clean-up afterwards. Please contact the office, either by email or a phone call, and let us know in which of these areas you would be willing to help with this event. This is a lovely opportunity for our members to interact with the employees and families involved in the Childcare Center we house ministry.

Psalm 127:3. Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.



Chapel with Vicar Samuel & Mary Keidle



Chapel with the Children in the Daycare

Mary came to the church office and went into where Ms. Sue keeps the books for the Little Library. She was in there for a while and pretty soon came out and said, "I have found the perfect book. I Love You Stinky Face".

As you can tell, the children and the teachers are listening intently as Ms. Mary reads I Love You Stinky Face. Don't you wish you could have been a fly on the wall as Ms. Mary read and animated the book?

If you love children and would like to be a part of Chapel by volunteering maybe once a month, we would love to have you share in chapel. Chapel is no more than 15 to 20 min. long. If you have any questions about Chapel time in the Daycare, please reach out to Vicar Samuel.

You can email him at vicar@messiahmo.org or call him Monday through Thursday at 417-881-2192.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 38-39

Pastor Linda Bollenbach

Chapel with Pastor Linda Bollenbach in the Messiah Lighthouse Child Care Center reading to all the little ones. They seem to really enjoy her getting down to their level as they listened intently to the story.



It is so sweet to see how they react to a story and how much they like the animations. This is such an enjoyable age to read too. Can you imagine what they are thinking?



If you ever visit the daycare and see all the precious little faces you will be hooked. The babies will wave and the 2, 3, & 4 year olds are quick to say hi to you. Bring a smile to your face everytime.

Church Office Renovation

If you have not stopped by the Church Office, you should. It is so warm, inviting, and professional looking.

Charles Hill did an amazing job on the design. We thank Joy Ward for the beautiful desk and her husband for lending his trailer. Then on Saturday October 28th the office was buzzing with help and humming saws making all the cuts and renovations.

Thanks to Charles Hill, Mark Herron, Pastor Orin, Frank Noto, Mary Keidle, Vic Shelton, Colleen Prosser, Terry Michael, Robert & Leisa Rushton, and Tom McConnell for the beautiful furniture addition.

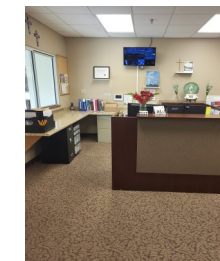
Mr. Charles Hill, Supervised and lent his expertise on taking the partitions apart. He watched his design transform before his eyes.



They had a bit of a hard time with some of them.



Terry Michael worked hard getting all the cables and wires ran for the phones, computers, and wifi. He did an awesome job getting it all set up and ready for us to work on Monday.



This is Leisa's work area. There is ample work space to spread things out if needed. She is able to greet people when they visit the office.

This is the volunteer work area and there is a third workstation for volunteers or staff to use.

Thank you all so much for a beautiful workspace.

