

The SPIRIT *January 2026*

Vol. 1 Issue 1



Fireflies

One of the most exciting groups I have gotten to work with during my first few months at Messiah is The Fireflies. This group is for the pre-teen and teenage girls of the congregation. This small group has been meeting once a month for Bible study, games, and fellowship.

The Fireflies have an energy and hunger for Bible discussions which is so beautiful to see today. People often remark about declining church numbers and the loss of young children in church. But here at Messiah, we are so blessed to have young people who long to be in church. They want to be involved in the services, they want to understand the Bible, and they want to talk about how their faith is relevant to their lives.

As we continue to live out God's mission at Messiah, we must remember the children who are present in our congregation. We are so blessed by the presence of our youth, and they have been blessed by the church.

Blessings,

Vicar Abbey

This Month's Highlights

- Annual Meeting pg. 4
- Messiah Lighthouse pg. 8
- Wine, Wit, & Wisdom pg. 8

"FAITH GOES UP THE
STAIRS THAT LOVE HAS
BUILT AND LOOKS OUT
THE WINDOWS WHICH
HOPE HAS OPENED."

- CHARLES SPURGEON

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Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Messiah Staff

Rev. Orin W Cummings, PhD	Pastor	pastor@messiahmo.org
Abbey Knappman	Vicar	vicar@messiahmo.org
Nathan Carlson	Business Manager	nathan.carlson@messiahmo.org
Leisa Rushton	Office Administrator	officemanager@messiahmo.org
Missy Fite	Custodian p/t	janitor@messiahmo.org
Chris Evans	Custodian p/t	custodian@messiahmo.org
Karen Bowman	Contemporary Music Coordinator	karen.bowman@messiahmo.org
Sheryl Hansen	Senior Choir Director	sheryl.hansen@messiahmo.org
Kenny Lourwood	Lead A/V Technician, p/t	kenny.lourwood@messiahmo.org
Drew Bowman	Assistant A/V Technician, p/t	drew.bowman@messiahmo.org
Jessica Phillips	Director, Lighthouse	jessicaphillips@lighthousecfdc.org
Melody Farabee	Family Support Coordinator	messiahlighthousefsc@gmail.com

Contractor

Marilyn Boston	Musical Services	bostonmarilyn@outlook.com
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From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Saints,

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

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we reflect on the year that has passed. For some, it may have flown by, while for others, it has been a challenging journey. Whether we are ready for it or not, 2026 is fast approaching. At Messiah, I am pleased to report that the year has been predominantly positive, and we are poised to finish strong.

We began this year with faith as usual, grounded in the challenge presented by our budget. We never know exactly how the year will unfold, but as people of faith, we trust that God is at work in all circumstances of life. And as we approach the new year, we continue to move forward in that same faith. Faith that we will grow in grace and truth. Faith that we will lovingly serve the God who has called us into ministry at this moment and in this place. And faith that we will continue to bear fruit to God's glory.

In the December edition of The Spirit, I highlighted some of the ways we have stewarded love and compassion within our congregation, our community, and even globally. There is no shortage of need in our world today. But rather than being discouraged, we are called to see these needs as opportunities to creatively spread the love of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit within and among us.

As we look ahead to 2026, let us prayerfully seek the Spirit's guidance to discern where God is inviting us to say "yes." I am often encouraged by Mary, who so young with hopes and dreams for a brighter future and whose life was forever changed when God came calling. Her humble trust and faithful response to God's unexpected invitation continue to inspire me, and I pray they will encourage you as well as we step forward together in faith.

I take this opportunity to thank each of you for your unwavering commitment to the mission of Messiah. Your prayers, support, and service have been integral to all that we have accomplished together this year. As we reflect on the year gone by, we see evidence of God's faithfulness at every turn, and we are filled with hope for what God will do in the year to come.

In 2026, let us continue to trust in God's promises, seeking the Spirit's guidance in all things. Let us love one another deeply and be Christ's hands and feet in a world that so desperately needs His peace and reconciliation. And may the new year bring fresh purpose, renewed strength, and an even greater outpouring of God's love in every area of our lives.

With much gratitude and anticipation for what lies ahead,

Pastor Orin



Announcements

01/01—Church office closed
01/02—Messiah Lighthouse Childcare closed
01/05—Peacemakers resumes normal schedule
01/08—Fireflies Girls Youth Meeting
01/12—LWR resumes normal schedule
01/13—Lunch & Scripture
01/14—Midweek Bible Study @ 10 a.m. resumes weekly
01/18—Church Council Meeting @ 12:30 p.m.
01/19—New GriefShare session begins
01/22—Fireflies Girls Youth Meeting
01/25—Annual Congregational Meeting
01/25—Parish Life Potluck & Games

Bishop Donna Simon Visit



Having completed our Adult Forum series *Me? An Evangelist!*, we look ahead to our next opportunity for learning and engagement. Bishop Donna Simon will visit Messiah on **February 7–8** and will launch

our next study based on the ELCA social statement, *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All*. We will host a dinner in Bishop Simon's honor on Saturday, February 7, followed by her presentation to introduce the series. This weekend offers a meaningful opportunity to welcome our bishop, gather around table and conversation, and set a strong foundation for our upcoming study. More details to come. Please mark your calendars!

Altar Flower Committee



If you are interested in contributing to the altar flowers, we still have openings in the book throughout the year. Please check with the church office by calling 417-881-2192, stopping by or emailing officemanager@messiahmo.org. The cost per vase is \$20.00. If you pay by check please put "for altar flowers" in the memo section.

Midweek Bible Study

Meeting on **Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.** in the sanctuary. Will resume January 14, 2026

Crosslines

On December 4th, 105 families/269 people were served at Crosslines. Volunteers included Becky Roark, Lisa Melgren, Marilyn Dial, Martha Morris, Sheila Schaefer, and Susan Lane. Our partners at Grace Methodist also helped out. The Crosslines waiting room was filled the entire day. Many guests had come to fill out an application for a holiday food basket, toys and gifts. Your donation of canned goods was greatly appreciated by those shopping for food. Continue to save Best Choice UPC labels and plastic grocery bags. Everything can be placed in the wagon outside the Fellowship Hall.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, January 25 immediately following worship and before the Potluck.

The business of the meeting will focus on the following items to be approved:

1. The 2025 Financial Statement
2. Approve the 2026 Budget
3. Approve revisions to the Constitution



Congregational Care

The New Year begins with a joyful celebration of the birth of Jesus that fills our hearts with hope and gratitude as we look forward to what service opportunities God is preparing for us. Congregational Care's focus on our mission to, ***"offer healing and care to all in need,"*** and the prophet Micah says: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and *what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"* (6:8)

We feel grateful that Messiah is our home and family in our global community. Our strength and faith are nurtured here as we work together providing love and support to our church, surrounding communities, and global families and friends. The wisdom of Micah 6:8 centers our lives.

We feel inspired looking forward yet also are reminded of a recent annual event in December which focuses on ***"care to all in need."*** December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly. This remarkable document has inspired several of us as we have worked in churches and with several community organizations trying to ensure the protection of freedoms and rights of our human family.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights consists of 30 articles that detail the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all individuals are entitled, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or any other status. The inherent dignity of all human beings inspires movements for justice and equality worldwide.

The Preambles states: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." (United Nations)

How will we live our lives this year? We remain keenly aware of our universal interdependence and the cries of those in need. Our prayer is that God will enlighten our hearts for service, deepen our faith journey, and strengthen us to love the Lord and follow where he leads.

"Let the Peace of Christ rule in your hearts." (Col 3:15)



Thank You

As we begin this new year and I have been reflecting back over the past year, I am so thankful for all of the volunteers who have helped in the office. Everyone is so welcoming, willing to help wherever is needed, and I so appreciate each and every one of you.

I am looking forward to all the things going on in the new year. Each step we take, each task we complete and for every service, let's give all the glory to God.

If you are interested in volunteering in the office, helping with the Spirit mailings, etc. please see Vickie Donnell or call the church office. We welcome anyone who would be willing to help.

Blessings to all,
Leisa
Office Administrator

Messiah Book Club

We will meet January 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the Library at church.

JANUARY 2026 *Mother of Pearl*, published 1999, by Melinda Haynes, is set in 1950s Mississippi. The story is about Even Grade, a black man who grew up an orphan, and Valuable Korner, a white girl who is the daughter of the town prostitute. They are both separately seeking the family, love and affection they have not had.

Parish Life

Our congregation enjoyed the Christmas dinner that followed the Sunday school program. We had great attendance and wonderful food to share. Many thanks to everyone that participated.

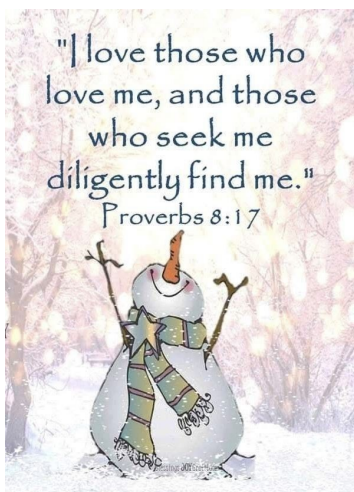
Next month's activity will be January 25. It will be a potluck, followed by board games. Look for a sign-up sheet in early January. Bring a dish to share and feel free to bring your favorite game if you wish.

Our committee continues to provide for the fellowship hour following worship on Sunday mornings. Come join us.

Lunch & Scripture

Everyone is welcome to join us at MaMa Jean's on the corner of South Campbell and Sunshine for Lunch and Scripture on **January 13 at 12 noon.**

If you have any questions please reach out to Ileen Kendall.



Messiah Lighthouse Child & Family Development

Messiah Lighthouse Child and Family Development Center is now enrolling!

We are licensed to care for children ages 6 weeks-6 years. We have openings in all of our classrooms currently. If you know of anyone looking for a playful, family-oriented, faith-based childcare center please send them our way!

If you would like more information, call the church office, or reach us directly at 417-881-4119.



Do you ever feel like going out to dinner, instead of cooking? Duh, who doesn't! Maybe you'd enjoy sipping on a glass of wine while enjoying the company of a group of witty women! Sound even better? Then we hope you will join us for **Wine, Wit and Wisdom**. We generally meet on the fourth Thursday of each month, however this month we will meet on **Thursday, January 29, at 5:30 p.m. at Primas Mexican Kitchen, 3662 S Glenstone Ave.** Please consider joining us then or anytime your schedule permits. For more information you can contact Debbie Corlett at 417-848-9426 or debbiecorlett@sbcglobal.net.

Who knows, **unwittingly**, you may gain some "pearls of wisdom" through the conversations we have. Hope to see you then!

January Flowers

	3/4	10/11	17/18	24/25
Vase 1	Gene Chrisman	John & Linda Charles		
Vase 2		John & Linda Charles		



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.



Prayer of the Day

Jan. 4, 2026

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

www.messiahmo.org



messiah@messiahmo.org

MessiahMOELCA



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

MessiahMoELCA



925 E. Seminole, Springfield, MO 65807



.417-881-2192

Fireflies Girls Youth Group



Left to right: Vicar Abbey, Piper, Nora, Lucy, Alexis, Sadie and Lisa Melgren.

Caroling Group



Our carolers went and visited the homebound yesterday and sang an arrangement of Christmas Carols.

Children's Christmas 2025 Program



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

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*He restores my soul, He leads me in the paths of
righteousness, for His name's sake. Psalms 23:3*

January Scripture Readings

Date	First Reading	Psalms	Second Reading	Gospel
3/4	Jeremiah 31:7-14	147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:[1-9], 10-18
10/11	Isaiah 42:1-9	29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
17/18	Isaiah 49:1-7	40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
24/25	Isaiah 9:1-4	27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23

Mark Your Calendars

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