

The SPIRIT
April 2026

HE
IS
Risen

Vol. 1 Issue 4

A Season for Flowers to Bloom

We are now in the season of spring. A season of flowers blooming, of leaves returning to trees, and a time of rebirth and growth. But as Christians, spring also brings with it the season of Easter.

I often heard it said that Christians are an Easter people and its true. While our Jewish siblings observe sabbath beginning Friday night and through Saturday, we have our sabbath on Sunday. The day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our whole service is even centered around the Easter promise. We come into service as broken and sinful people. But during worship our sins are forgiven, we are refreshed by the Word, we are renewed by the sacraments, and we are sent out as whole and renewed people of God.

The Easter season is more than just a time to admire spring days. It is an ongoing reminder of all the renewal and rebirth God provides in our lives. Just as Jesus Christ died on a cross and rose to new birth, we too live out our own cycles of death and resurrection. We are not an Easter people because we enjoy the season of spring, but because we recognize the ways that God is active in our lives. God is constantly bringing about renewal, regeneration, and new life in all our lives.

Vicar Abbey Knappman

This Month's Highlights

- Easter Brunch
- Hymn Sing
- Welcome New Members
- LWR Report
- Dalla Thunder



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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	A/V Sound Specialist, p/t	kenny.lourwood@messiahmo.org
Drew Bowman	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,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our crucified, risen, and ascended Lord and coming Savior, Jesus Christ!

Building on the faithful work of last year, the Church Council has prayerfully discerned a set of goals to guide our shared life and ministry in 2026 (see page 4). I write to invite you to embrace the **2026 Church Goals and Mission Alignment** as together we seek to live more fully into who God is calling us to be in this time and place.

At the heart of our vision is a commitment to **welcome all**. We long to be a community where every person is truly seen, deeply valued, and graciously embraced as one of God's beloved children. Toward this end, we will practice generous hospitality and intentionally build relationships across cultures and engage more deeply with our wider community in ways that are genuine, compassionate, and life-giving.

We also renew our commitment to **nurturing youth** and recognize that they are an essential part of the church today. As such, we will seek to create space for youth and young adults to lead, to serve, and to grow in faith, ensuring that their voices are heard and their gifts are joyfully woven into the life of our congregation.

Recognizing the importance of strong and faithful leadership, we are committed to equipping leaders for **growing ministries**. By prayerfully discerning spiritual gifts and investing in leadership development, we trust that God will continue to raise up servants who will guide and strengthen our shared ministry.

Also, we are mindful that our mission is supported by the resources entrusted to us. With this in mind, we will continue to strengthen our infrastructure by enhancing our worship technology and improving our visibility in the community so that all we have may be used faithfully in service to God's work.

Finally, we remember that healthy communication is essential to a vibrant and **caring church**. Therefore, we will strive to connect, care, and communicate with intention. In so doing, we hope to deepen relationships within the congregation while sharing a clear and hopeful witness beyond our walls.

Sisters and brothers, these goals will only come to life through the faithful participation of each one of us. Every act of service, every word of welcome, and every effort to reach out in love matters. Whether you serve on a committee, attend community events, share your ideas, or simply extend kindness to someone new, you are part of God's work in this place. So, with gratitude, let us move forward together in faith, open to the Spirit, grounded in Christ's love, and committed to loving God and our neighbor well.

A blessed Easter to you!

Pastor Orin

From the Desk of Council President

2026 Church Goals and Mission Alignment

EVANGELISM

Mission Statement: Welcome All

Goals:

1. Form a multicultural team that fosters belonging, ensuring all people are valued, respected, and embraced with equity and care.
2. Create and implement innovative ways for the congregation to engage with and serve multicultural communities.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Mission Statement: Nurture Youth

Goals:

1. Intentionally recruit and empower youth to serve on the Church Council.
2. Develop and implement a sustainable plan for continuity in youth leadership.
3. Engage college-age members and young adults in meaningful and consistent ministry opportunities.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Mission Statement: Gather resources for growing ministries

Goals:

1. Identify and compile a team of individuals committed to developing church leadership.
2. Discern and affirm the spiritual gifts of members.
3. Select and implement a comprehensive leadership development curriculum.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mission Statement: Gather resources for growing ministries

Goals:

1. Upgrade sanctuary technology to enhance worship experiences and support ministry growth.
2. Replace the monument sign to improve visibility and strengthen community presence.
3. Prioritize and implement key projects identified by the Property Committee.

COMMUNICATION

Mission Statement: Offer healing and care to all in need

Goals:

1. Strengthen interpersonal communication within the congregation.
2. Maintain current, relevant, and engaging content on Facebook and the church website.
3. Use study of the church's Social Statement to foster deeper understanding and promote Christian unity.

ACTION STEPS (congregation wide)

- Each committee will identify and implement practical steps to support these goals.
- Prioritize and promote participation in at least three multicultural community events to build authentic relationships.
- Establish a consistent follow-up process to turn new connections into lasting relationships.
- Invite congregational input to shape worship that is welcoming, diverse, and inclusive.
- Adjust committee meeting times as needed to encourage broader participation.

Crosslines

Crosslines is the largest client-direct food pantry in Greene County, MO, serving over 70,000 people annually. They also provide referral services to other resources available in the community. Crosslines guests can access USDA (government) food once a month. Pantry food (donated) can be accessed 6 times per year. On March 5th, Becky Roark, John and Carol Flanders, Patty Hangen, Dean McDowell and Susan Lane served 98 families/178 people. Produce choices were minimal on this day, but plenty of onions, grapefruit, strawberries, and potatoes were available. As always, guests are allowed to take as much produce as they will use.

A/V Team

The Messiah Audio/Visual team is looking for volunteers to help with the slide presentation for the Saturday and Sunday services in both the Sanctuary and for our online live stream. Volunteers are usually only scheduled once a month. Slide advancement is an easy position that does not take much training. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Drew Bowman
A/V Technician
drew.bowman@messiahmo.org

Easter Brunch

Come join us for Easter brunch following morning worship April 5. Bring a dish to share, breakfast casserole, fruit, or pastries, and we welcome any who can stay to help clean up afterwards. This is a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with your church family. See you then.

Parish Life committee continues to host Sunday morning fellowship hour following worship. Another opportunity to get to know your Church family better.

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 **April 14 at 12 noon.**

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

Hymn Sing

We are once again beginning to make plans for our annual Hymn Sing Service. Sign-ups will begin right after Easter with a poster in the narthex as well as through an electronic format. Please start thinking about your favorite hymns and praise songs that you would like us to include in this service. Watch for the sign-up poster and more information to come, and let's all work together to make this a glorious, praise-filled worship experience!

In His Name,
Marilyn Boston
Karen Bowman
Sheryl Hansen



Messiah Lighthouse is currently enrolling children ages 1 to 6. We also have a short waiting list for infants aged 6 weeks to 1 year. Please share this information with anyone you know who may be looking for childcare. Interested families can contact the center at 417-881-4119 or via email at messiahlighthousedirector@gmail.com.

Scholarship

Central States Synod Women of the ELCA scholarship applications are available to female members of an ELCA congregation seeking post-high school education. Attached is the application, with all the details. The deadline for submission is **April 30th**. Please encourage all female college-aged students to apply. You can also pick up an application in the office or ask to have one emailed to you.

Louise Ahrens
Synodical Organization President

Pick up applications in the church office or call and one can be emailed to you.

Congregational Care

Spring! Don't we all just love it. The days are longer, the early flowers are blooming, trees are budding out, and we are thinking of our gardens and looking forward to planting tomatoes and perhaps some herbs and flowers. At the new year many of us make resolutions determined to change some bad habits. We begin spring cleaning our homes and weeding our gardens.

To the early Christians, rather than Christmas, Easter was the most important holiday of the year. It has been called the springtime of the soul. After the long weeks of Lent and focusing on repentance and reflection, they saw Easter as a time to form new spiritual habits. The old English word "Lenten" meant spring or lengthened, a time of stretching toward greater maturity and deeper faith. Lent is a period of spiritual spring cleaning, an opportunity to remove spiritual inner dirt.

During Lent did you make some spiritual resolutions? In Romans 7:15 Paul says "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not, but what I hate I do." The resurrection gives us hope. We may give up on our new year's resolutions but through Jesus we have assurance that God does not give up on us. "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" Ephesians 2:8.

We plant our gardens in the spring with hope of an abundant harvest. We repent during Lent with hope for a closer relationship with God. Our gardens are dependent on the whims of nature. But with Christ's sacrifice and resurrection we know that we are saved even as we fail.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!
Happy Easter.



We invite the women of Messiah to join us for Wine, Wit and Wisdom gathering for great food and fellowship. **Please watch the Midweek Messenger for April's date and location.**

For more information, please contact Debbie Corlett at 417-848-9426 or debbiecorlett@sbcglobal.net

LWR

In addition to distributions across many countries around the globe, the following numbers reflect quilts and kits distributed within the United States in 2025 by the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) network:

United States – East

85,737 quilts; 40,794 school kits; 65,651 personal care kits; 20,950 baby care kits; and 5,360 fabric kits

United States – Central

17,720 quilts; 4,350 school kits; 9,150 personal care kits; 784 baby care kits; and 1,800 fabric kits

United States – West

10,581 quilts; 28,036 school kits; 33,800 personal care kits; 1,200 baby care kits; and 640 fabric kits

Messiah volunteers meet in the church fellowship hall to assemble and tie warm quilts using quilt tops prepared at home, along with batting and gently used sheets for backing. Other volunteers cut donated T-shirts to be sewn into diapers and baby quilts.

If you are doing some spring cleaning, please consider donating T-shirts (and sweatshirts, too). Donations can be placed in or on the LWR oak cabinet near the men's restroom.

For LWR workday dates, times, and announcements, please check the *Weekend Messenger*.

Please keep our volunteers and the recipients of these quilts and kits in your prayers. We have truly been "blessed to be a blessing to those in need."

LWR Representative at Messiah

On **April 27th**, Diane Covert, Senior Donor Advisor for Lutheran World Relief, will be visiting Messiah. At 10:00 a.m. she will provide a brief update on programs in the United States and around the world, highlighting the lives that we are positively impacting with the work we do here at Messiah for LWR. The update will cover humanitarian efforts, disaster response, and a new education initiative focused on helping keep girls in school. It will be a time of sharing. All are welcome to join. Location of the gathering will be posted.

Messiah Book Club

We will meet April 9 at 2:30 p.m. in the Library at church.



April 2026 The Great Divide by Cristina Henriquez is a powerful novel about the construction of the Panama Canal.

Published in 1924, it casts light on the unsung people who lived, loved, and labored there. This canal is said to be the greatest feat of engineering in history.

New Members



Delaney Metzger

Delaney was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH, and was baptized and confirmed in an ELCA church. She moved here three months ago. She

found Messiah on Facebook, and has attended since last Christmas Eve. She has completed classes in both EMT and firefighter's school. She presently works for the Community Blood Center, which serves MO, KS, and AR. She is currently enrolled in phlebotomy training.

Before joining our congregation, she visited many other denominations. She finds Messiah to be "very solid" theologically. She identifies our members as "kind and extremely welcoming." Her experiences have been "all good," she says.

In her leisure time, Delaney enjoys fishing, hiking, and spending time with friends.



Cheryl and Shannon Kruse

Cheryl grew up between MO, TX, and AL. Her dad was in the Air Force. She and her husband, Shannon, moved here to be close

to their daughter and family. Their daughter is scheduled to deliver a baby any day now. Another daughter lives in Houston, TX and has two children.

Cheryl has been an ELCA member for over 30 years. She and Shannon began visiting Messiah at the end of November 2025. She has found Messiah to be "warm and welcoming."

Cheryl has an educational background in criminal justice and has worked as both a paralegal and court reporter. She retired in 2022. Her hobbies are reading, crocheting, and sewing. She has visited our knitters' group.

Shannon was born on a family farm in Dawson, MN, and then raised in SD. After high school he graduated from the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. Following that he attended jet pilot training in TX, where he met Cheryl. He earned his first master's degree in material engineering at Iowa State. He then was stationed as a B-52 pilot at a base in Minot, ND. He taught weapons classes and obtained his second and third master's at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

The couple were living in Omaha, NE, when he retired from the Air Force after 25 ½ years. He then ran companies in Boise, ID and Watertown, SD. During this time, he was treated and cured of cancer at the Mayo Clinic. He and Cheryl moved here four years ago. He is working as a flight instructor in Bolivar and building an airplane in his own shop.

His religious background is the former ALC. He was baptized at Zoar Lutheran Church in Mariette, MN. Shannon's dad still lives in Watertown, and one brother is running the family farm. Shannon's hobbies are reading, flying, astronomy, and building his own plane. He says that Messiah is "something wonderful".

Thank You

Carol Ann Bickel would like to express her sincere thanks to the makers of the Prayer Shawls for the warm and beautiful shawl that was presented to her husband, Tony Bickel, before his passing in June 2025. Carol now uses the shawl herself and wants everyone to know what a great comfort and blessing it has been to her. The shawl, along with the Prayer of Blessing for Healing, continues to bring her peace and reassurance.

Linda Waltz would like to say thank you for the beautiful flowers that were brought to her via the church.

Council Member



Hello, I'm Myril Stewart, and I'm a proud member of Messiah Lutheran.

I'm in my second year on Church Council, and I also serve on several committees: Mutual Ministry, Finance, and Stewardship. These experiences have made me realize several things.

Foremost, there are a lot of amazing people at Messiah that volunteer their time, skills, and energy, to make our church one of the finest in our synod, and in our community. Secondly, our church leadership (clergy, staff, and lay persons) provide the vision, and commitment, necessary to ensure Messiah is a church dedicated not only to our parishioners, but to the many ministries we have that provide much needed spiritual and physical needs to our neighbors in our community.

For Messiah to continue to serve, we must continue to focus on how we, as a congregation can contribute to our many ministries and to the spiritual well-being of our parish. Being a member of the particular committees I am on, I now have a better understanding of the financial needs of our church. Our church had a budget deficit last year, and so far this year, we are running a deficit. Last December Messiah received an unexpected, and generous, financial gift that allowed us to balance our budget. Messiah cannot properly plan, and budget, for our ministries if we must estimate non-pledged giving. I encourage our members to review their giving and see if they can do more with their planned giving.

The ELCA continues to lose congregations and baptized members, as most denominational churches are doing. However, this past year has seen a very significant increase in Bible sales, and a resurgence in the number of young people attending church, as they look for spiritual guidance. That resurgence is a blessing, as more young people discover their path to salvation is through God's grace, and their faith in Jesus Christ as our savior.

Last year your Church Council led a study session each month on Evangelism. With so many young people today searching for a place to worship, Messiah can be a beacon of light within our synod and our community, by attracting them to Messiah, a place of acceptance for all wanting to worship our Lord. Our motto should be, "each one, reach one." Think of the

number of people who could learn of our loving Triune God, if we are willing to share our faith with others.



Dallas Thunder

We have hosted Dallas Thunder Homeschool Basketball group now for several years. This year was no different. They are in town playing in a huge basketball tournament with kids from all over the United States.

If you do not know who Dallas Thunder is, they are group that was founded in 2003 to provide the greater Dallas area home school students with the opportunity to develop their basketball skills in a competitive basketball environment. In order to help the students strengthen their Christian walk and develop Christ-centered relationships, they combine the leadership of experienced, paid and volunteer coaches with that of our Christian parents to model good Christian values.

They brought a lot of their teams and families to our church for a time of devotion, singing and prayer. Below are some pictures of their group this year. Phil said, "they take this hour or so to bring Christ to the center of the reason they are here."

Thank you to Messiah for always being gracious and hosting us every year. We appreciate your church.



April Flowers

	4/5	11/12	18/19	25/26
Vase 1	Gene Chrisman	Martha Morris	Vic & Peggy Shelton	Mike & Susan Lane
Vase 2			Dave & Patty Hangen	Mike & Susan Lane



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.



www.messiahmo.org



messiah@messiahmo.org

MessiahMOELCA



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

MessiahMoELCA



925 E. Seminole, Springfield, MO 65807



.417-881-2192

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

April Scripture Readings

DATE	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
4/2	Exodus 12:1-4,[5-10], 11-14	116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
4/3	Isaiah 52:13—53:12	22	Hebrews 10:16-25	John 18:1—19:42
4/5	Acts 10:34-43	118:1-2, 14-24	Colossians 3:1-4	Matthew 28:1-10
11/12	Acts 2:14a,22-32	16	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
18/19	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	116:1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
25/26	Acts 2:42-47	23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10

Mark Your Calendars

April 2	Maundy Thursday-Seder Meal-Worship	April 19	Lay Internship
April 3	Good Friday Worship	April 19	Church Council Meeting
April 3	MLCFDC Closed	April 22	Seminole Holland Potluck
April 3	Church Office Closed @ 1 p.m.	April 22-25	Piano Guild
April 4/5	Easter Weekend	April 22	Seminole Holland Potluck
April 5	Easter Egg Hunt	April 25	A/V Upgrade Meeting
April 5	Easter Brunch Potluck		
April 6	Church Office Closed		
April 12	Pack 193 Brunch Fundraiser		