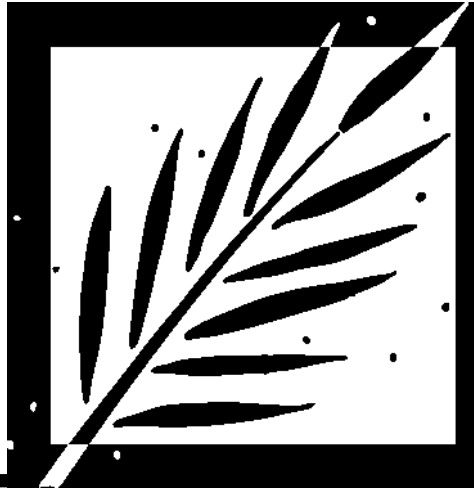


The Column

February 2012

Ash Wednesday

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. Ash Wednesday liturgy is at 7:00 p.m. As we enter Lent we take time to be intentional with our faith practices and to prepare our hearts and minds for the renewing presence of the Risen Christ.



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From The Pastor

Each year I use the February Column to reprise my Annual Report. As we enter this new year we pledge to support one another, prayer for each another and celebrate the good work that God has begun in this parish community. Peace my friends. Pastor Jeff

One man challenged another to an all-day wood chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had. *I don't get it, he said. Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did.* But the winning woodsman just smiled and replied, *But you didn't notice, that every time I sat down to rest - I was sharpening my ax!*

I know it seems a bit of an odd story to begin a pastor's message, but this year I'd like to reflect less on what has taken place in the last year and more on what is before us. I wish to share some thoughts about my upcoming sabbatical. From Mid-June through the month of July I will be away from my work here as pastor for a six week sabbatical. Sabbatical comes from the Hebrew word - *Shabbat* - literally, *to cease*. In the book of Genesis, a *Shabbat* is taken by God on the seventh day. God ceases from creation and rests. In the Book of Exodus *Shabbat* is the first command given after the flight from Egypt. In the Book of Leviticus, God commands that every seventh year is a time of *Shabbat*. In fact the command to *Shabbat* is given 170 times in the bible! And certainly you cannot read the gospels without understanding that Jesus was a person of *Shabbat* - a man who often ceased what he was doing to rest.

These past ten years at Messiah have been a wonderful adventure. There have been so many great memories, great liturgical experiences, joyful gatherings and of course God has blessed this community in abundance. We are growing so quickly and in so many different ministries. Still, I know that to pastor a growing community into the next decade I need to *sharpen my ax*. I need to *Shabbat* - to cease from my daily activity and spend some time learning, reflecting, praying and resting. The ELCA recommends a sabbatical time every seven years for a rostered pastored and the Pastoral Parish Council and I have planned mine for this summer.

Starting in mid-June, Melissa and I and the children will be traveling to the Rocky Mountains as I will be enrolled in the *Luther Academy of the Rockies*. For two weeks I will be in class with seminary professors and theologians updating my understanding of the church and *sharpening my theological ax*. Afternoons will be spent with family, hiking,

Continued from page 2

exploring nature and enjoying the beauty of the Rockies. Melissa and I will then return home for a couple of weeks for family visits before heading off to the east coast. We'll travel to Washington DC to re-visit my old university, spend time in historic Williamsburg, Va. and then spend a few days near the ocean on Virginia Beach.

During this time of *Shabbat*, Pastor Gil will be covering pastoral emergencies and presiding at Sunday liturgies. He will preach some of the liturgies and we will have guest preachers for some as well. The Pastoral staff will continue their great work in keeping the parish alive and healthy. I am aware that few people in life have the opportunity to take a sabbatical. I am grateful for the church's financial support and for the council's encouragement in this time of rest. During these six weeks I will pray for you, my Messiah Church friends, and trust that you will continue to gather faithfully every Sunday morning and lift me and my family in your prayers as well. God has done great things through our common ministry. I believe that God has even greater plans for us in the next ten years.

Pastor Jeff

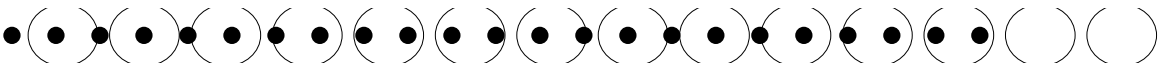


Treasurer's Update

Thank you for your support and comments at the Congregational Meeting. We are now 4 weeks into the calendar year and Pledge Revenue received to date is \$27,600 compared to the budget for the same time period of \$22,400, or \$5,200 ahead of the budget. The amount over the budget can be attributed though to two families who made large prepayments of their 2012 pledge. The Debt Reduction Fund has collected \$27,650 this year.

The current balance of the mortgage is \$1,396,000 and if we only make the required minimum payment of \$9,229 we have more than 20 years of payments remaining. If we could increase the payments to \$12,000 per month we could trim the payment period by 7 years. With the current balance in the Debt Reduction Fund we should be able to make extra principal payment for the next six months.

Also, as was mentioned at the Congregational Meeting, an audit of the church funds has been completed for 2011 and no adjustments were identified. One name change was noted on the last page of the financial statements, changing Building Study Expense to Building Mortgage Expense. - Tim Coulthart, Business Manager





Coming in March: Team Trivia Night

Saturday, March 3, 2012
Messiah Fellowship Hall

Doors open at 5:30
Play begins at 6:00

- 4 rounds of brain teasing trivia questions
- Complimentary light snacks at each table
- Food available for purchase too!

Assemble your teams now!! Invite

family, friends, co-workers or any trivia nuts you know to join you. Sign-up sheets available in the Narthex, or just come on March 3.

Tickets: \$8.00 per player—pay at the door

More information available in the Narthex or contact Lou Jellings, la-jellings@gmail.com

All proceeds benefit the 2012 Messiah Youth Mission Trip



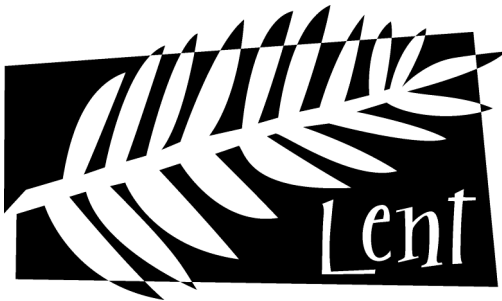
Lenten Devotionals

Pick up a copy of the Lenten Devotional booklet, available on Sunday, February 19.

Each day during Lent has a bible verse, a reflection written by a member or friend of Messiah Lutheran, a prayer, and a short bio about the writer.



We need volunteers to provide soup and bread for our Lenten Soup Suppers. Want to help provide soup or bread? Watch for a sign up sheet on the kiosk in the Narthex starting the first week of February.



Join us each Wednesday during the season of Lent as we gather for a simple Soup Supper @ 6:00 PM and a brief time of prayer @ 7:00PM. This year's theme is taken from the ancient Jewish Morning Prayer - the *Shema*. Jesus quotes this great prayer in Mark 12: 28-30. *And a scribe*

came up to Jesus and asked him: 'Which commandment is the greatest of all' Jesus answered him: 'Hear O Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is One; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Let us gather during this Lenten Season as we reflect on our fidelity to God's call.



Birthdays

Michelle Larson	Feb-1	Hazel Olson	Feb-12	Todd Menzel	Feb-20
Ty Paulios	Feb-1	Dan Schultz	Feb-12	Sarah Weise	Feb-21
Stephen Peterson	Feb-1	Eleanor Paulson	Feb-13	Devin Frank	Feb-22
Michael Reinkober	Feb-1	Emma Schwarting	Feb-13	Gary Hall	Feb-22
John Herrem	Feb-2	Liam Schwarting	Feb-13	Alexander Jurkuta	Feb-22
Ian Hoffman	Feb-2	Jeff Alexander	Feb-14	Riley Olson	Feb-22
Trenton Imhoff	Feb-2	Kole Dennis	Feb-14	Baylor Skolaski	Feb-22
Carol Johnson	Feb-2	Janice Durkin	Feb-14	Shannon Turnbill	Feb-22
Jeri Kamasky	Feb-2	Randall Kaminski	Feb-14	Megan Bormann	Feb-23
Ronald (Ron) Olson	Feb-2	Anthony Lichtie	Feb-15	Naoma Michaelis	Feb-23
Jackson Armstrong	Feb-3	Bill Durkin	Feb-16	Jan Piddington	Feb-26
Kristie Palovcsik	Feb-3	Lori Groskreutz	Feb-16	Donna Huggins	Feb-27
Kim Bagley	Feb-4	Dave Moffett	Feb-16	Julie Burk	Feb-28
Karah Bentler	Feb-4	Diane Nelson	Feb-16	Tim Masters	Feb-28
Diana Krug	Feb-4	Jordan Hotchkiss	Feb-17	Heidi O'Brien	Feb-28
Jenna Peterson	Feb-4	Steve Kowalski	Feb-17	Julia Lust	Feb-29
Sharon Slechta	Feb-4	Andrew Cronk	Feb-18		
Jessica Tomberlin	Feb-4	Jake Hotchkiss	Feb-18		
Carter Amundson	Feb-5	Shirley Klinkner	Feb-18	Bill and	
Cole Amundson	Feb-5	Pat Krebs	Feb-18	Jewell Nelson	Feb-12
Carrie Cronk	Feb-5	Yvonne Manthe	Feb-18		
Paula Pope	Feb-5	Erica Meinke	Feb-18	Patrick and	
Jenna Shinstine	Feb-5	John Montague	Feb-18	Elizabeth Reagan	Feb-18
Joseph Plautz	Feb-6	Claire Zegadlo	Feb-18		
Chase Wood	Feb-6	Brian Bagley	Feb-19	John and	
Katie Masters	Feb-7	Amanda Durkin	Feb-19	Deborah Herrem	Feb-23
James Zempel	Feb-7	Sandy Lovell	Feb-19		
Mike Digman	Feb-8	Brayden Turnbill	Feb-19	Greg and	
Clint Soule	Feb-8	John Mallow	Feb-20	Elaine Strom	Feb-24



Women’s Ministry

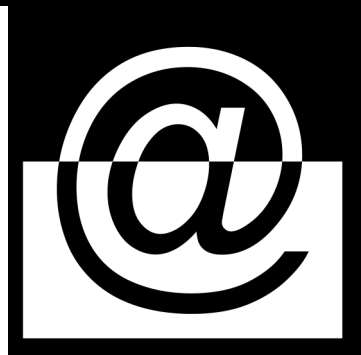
Bible Verse of the Month:

Psalms 16:7-8

New Living Translation (NLT)

- ⁷ I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

How many times have you not been able to sleep thinking about all there is to do? So often solutions to our problems come when we aren’t able to sleep. Pay attention to your thoughts and who is directing them! What great comfort in knowing the Father is always with us, always listening and offering us His guidance.



Find news and event information at www.messiahchurch.com and Facebook. Join us on Facebook by clicking “Like Us” from the church homepage.



The Season of Lent points us toward the Easter Mysteries. Here is an Easter message from our bishop, Bruce Burnside. We pray for him and all the Church.

Bishop Burnside’s Easter Message

Dear Children of Easter Dawn,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... *Revelation 21*

Dear Children of Easter Dawn:

The vision of John, banished to Patmos was, I suspect, not unlike the vision that somehow, someway, defied the darkest night and came to the frightened Marys at the tomb and to all the other starring characters in the Easter stories: stupefied men behind secured doors, travelers on the way to Emmaus, guards and angel messengers.

But not those ones only - there were all those unnamed, not counted, never recorded, easily missed characters in the Easter story who inexplicably, mysteriously, in a way that perhaps can never be understood, saw a new heaven and a new earth...

Continued on page 10



We will be starting a new segment called Of Service. In this section we will be highlighting volunteer opportunities within and outside the church. If either of these opportunities interest you please follow the contact information listed.

Here is your chance to be of service.

Coffee Making for Sunday Service

This opportunity is essential to providing hospitality to all who attend Sunday worship. It only takes about 45 minutes a week on only a couple Saturdays a month to get the coffee ready and clean up the small kitchen for Sunday worship. Contact Doris Zache at 222-3812 for information.

Refreshments for Sunday Services

You can sign up to bring cookies, treats for Sunday services and help us provide hospital-

Of Service

ity to fellow worshippers on Sunday. Sign up on the sign up sheet on the kiosk in the narthex.

Meals on Wheels

We will be driving for Sunday Meals-on-Wheels during the month of March. A sign-up sheet will be on the kiosk the first Sunday in February for this service to others. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Iverson, (608) 242-0462.

RSVP of Dane County Driver Escort Program

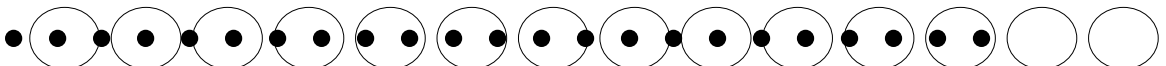
As an RSVP Volunteer Driver you will help adults 60 and over who do not have access to personal transportation. Volunteers respond to requests for medical needs and are reimbursed 50 cents per mile and provided with necessary insurance. This program is flexible and will work around your schedule. Call or email Gene (441-7896) at RSVP to find out more. gkundert@rsvpdane.org



Health Care Kit Collection

The Social Ministry Committee will be starting collection for Health Care Kits in February. We collect an item each month for seven months for the fall Lutheran World Relief Drive. There have been some changes this year and we will no longer be collecting band-aids or wash cloths. The towel size has also changed. Look for the bin marked "Health Care Kits" in the lower Narthex. In February we will be collecting metal clippers, with the packing removed. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Jane Hill at 221-1410.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
Anne Frank



Children's and Family Ministry News

God Loves Us!

February 12, at 9:30 a.m., Sunday school classes will have special activities to remind us how much God loves us and that we are to share God's love with others.

Wade in the Word

For: Parents (and other adults)

When: Sunday's 9:30 - 10:20 a.m.

Place: Office Conference Room

Drop in to engage with God's Word in weekly Gospel texts, using Lectio Divina and mutual invitation. **Wade in the Word meets whenever Sunday School is in session.**

Receive Updates by Email

You can receive news, reminders and updates about Children's and Family Ministry via email. If you aren't on the "e-mailing list" yet, please contact Catherine Puisto. Indicate you would like to join the list.

Messiah's Facebook Group

Join us online on FACEBOOK. Our group is over 100 and we would love to have you join us. Our Family Ministry photo album has lots of pictures of events and programs. You will find links to resources and information for families (of all ages). Reminders and events are also posted here. You can join the group from the Messiah homepage. Just click the Facebook link and stay connected!

1st Communion Classes

Children in 2nd grade and older will begin preparation classes on March 18. April 21 (Saturday) is the rehearsal date. First Communion will be celebrated on April 22 during the 10:30 a.m. liturgy. Contact Catherine Puisto for more information.

Lenten Devotional

Pick up a copy of the Lenten Devotional booklet. They will be available on Sunday, February 19 (before Ash Wednesday).

Each day during Lent has a bible verse, a reflection written by a member or friend of Messiah Lutheran, a prayer, a short bio about the writer is included, too.

The day's devotional can be read aloud and discussed at the dinner table, at bedtime, etc. Children can help with the reading. Draw together as a family and feel God's close care through the heartfelt reflections and words of our members and friends.

Use the day's verse and reflection as a discussion opportunity. What does it mean to you? Does it remind you of an experience you've had? What do you learn from the devotional writer's experience? How has God been present in your daily life?

Conclude your reading by offering a prayer for the devotional writer.

Contact information: Catherine Puisto, Coordinator of Children's & Family Ministry

Phone: 838-4750

Email: finnish4@frontier.com

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Years ago a pastor said to me: "I hate preaching at Easter because there is nothing new to say - nothing that has not been said before."

Undoubtedly that preacher was right. But.... Dear proclaimers of the mystery - the 'oh thank God!" good news for you is that you don't need to look for something new to say! You are entrusted with the proclamation of the already most amazing new story that can be told. We are so wearied by all the dark of night stories; just tell the new dawn story. There is a whole cast of characters, broken hearted, worn out, scared near to death, bitter, disillusioned, riddled characters so needing to hear it from you. . . . Just preach Easter and leave the rest to the giver of resurrection who defies the darkest night and gives us to see a new heaven and a new earth...

*People who walk in darkness have sought
a light in the heart of the darkest night
Just when we thought all would be lost,
we were drawn to the light of God.
Dawn is in sight! Gone is the night,
drawn to the light and the morning.
Glorious and bright, oh what a sight
to be drawn to the light of God.*

Easter Vision to you!

Bishop Burnside

Drawn to the Light; John Ylvisaker

A big **Thank you** for the reception that was given in my honor on December 11th between services. I am enjoying my retirement, but do miss seeing and talking to all of you. Thanks to all the people that made it a special day for me and for all the good wishes I received from you.



Thank you for the many sympathy cards and memorial gifts in memory of Ron Peterson. The money will be used for the Messiah Building Fund.

In appreciation—Kay Peterson, Tim Peterson, and family

Bev Schedel

Holidays

February 2—Groundhog Day

February 8—Boy Scout Day

February 14—Valentine’s Day

February 20—President’s Day

February 22 Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

Feb 29—Leap Day

Sunday Service Schedule

Early Service 8:15 AM

Late Service 10:30AM

Wednesday Service Schedule

for February Lent Service Starting February 22

6PM—Soup Supper Gathering

7PM—Lent Service



Column Survey

We are in the process of updating the Column newsletter and how we deliver it to our members so would appreciate your filling out the following survey and either dropping it off at the office or dropping it off in the offering basket on Sunday if you would like to continue receiving the Column. Your input will help us better the Column. Thanks!

YES NO

Do you read the Column regularly?

Do you find the information in the Column useful?

Would you like to continue receiving the Column?

Would you prefer to receive the Column through email?

If so what is your current email address? _____

Are there any news items you would like to see in the Column? _____

	YES	NO
Do you read the Column regularly?		
Do you find the information in the Column useful?		
Would you like to continue receiving the Column?		
Would you prefer to receive the Column through email?		

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Coord. Of Children's and Family Min.	Catherine Puisto	838-4750
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	Naoma Michaelis	230-6768
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	Kirk Robinson	226-8628
	Sue Meng	839-4277