

Pastor’s Page

Welcome 2018. I’ve been writing articles for church newsletters since 1978.

The Shophar was the name of the newsletter at St. John Lutheran in Salem, Oregon. I was vicar there. St. John is two blocks from Oregon’s capitol building. It was common to see logging trucks and the governor’s limousine driving down State Street. (The Shophar is a hollowed out ram’s horn used for public announcement and worship.)

The Shepard’s Staff was the name I gave to the newsletter at Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington. That inner city parish ministered in a rough neighborhood. Resources were scant. The congregation had no newsletter before my arrival. I published one with the aid of an IBM rolling ball typewriter and an ink mimeograph machine.

The Michaelscope was the newsletter at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church in Portland, Oregon. A lot of educators were members there in a culturally rich environment. So there were a lot of interesting submissions for *The Michaelscope*.

Jehovah Jottings was the newsletter at Jehovah Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. That building had been designed during the height of church attendance in America. Because of its extraordinary scale and amenities, architectural students and associates would come to check out the place. One day I asked what would it cost to build that type of building with all its features today? The architect said that it would not be possible because so many of the materials are unavailable. For example there was a huge sculpture up front made of mahogany and teak. Walnut door handles came together and formed the shape of a dove.

The Deacon’s Spirit was the new name my successor gave to the newsletter at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Wausau, Wisconsin. I’m afraid I forgot the name of the newsletter when I wrote for it there. St. Stephen was the first martyr and deacon in the Book of Acts. *Deacon’s Spirit* was a natural name for a newsletter for a church named after St. Stephen.

The Messenger is the newsletter at Messiah Lutheran Church in Ashtabula, Ohio. Messiah had been described by a former synod bishop as “the best congregation in the Northeast Ohio Synod.” She said this at a synod assembly. I love writing newsletter articles for *The Messenger*. Our readers are so literary and have great senses of humor. Thru the years I recall touching upon topics from Michael Jackson to Thanksgiving Buffet to Olympia Beer.

All the above congregations are different from one another. Yet all of them are the same. We have the same calling, to proclaim The Word. The Word is Christ. Christ is person and Christ is event, from incarnation to crucifixion to resurrection to sending the Holy Spirit. The Word with which we are entrusted is the living word of the gospel, the *viva vox*. *The Messenger* is only one means of getting the word out about how God meets us in Christ. Our lives, commitments, thoughts, words, and deeds are our primary means of communicating the hope that is within us.

Faithfully your pastor,
Michael Meranda



Pastor Meranda preparing for worship in his office.



WinterFest

In 2018 we will have a “WinterFest” in lieu of NationFest. (Just to try something a little different.)

The date is Sunday, February 11, 2018 at 5:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. If you can help with hosting and/or set-up, please put your name on the sign-up sheet which is available in the upstairs foyer. Set-up will be on Saturday, February 10th at 10:00 AM.

We ask the congregation to bring your favorite dish and/or dessert.

Mrs. Ruth Kujala from the Ohio Wine Producers Association will speak to us about the history and making of wine. We can participate in wine tasting. Bring family and friends to enjoy the evening with us. By pulling together we can make this a great way to drive out the “Winter blahs!” Thank you all for pitching in.

Ruth Hlinovski



Caroling to our shut-ins



Church Mouse Says...
“Feed your Faith and your fears will starve to death.”

Thanks Braden Junior High,

Lend-a-Hand Food Pantry wants to again thank the students of Braden for the food contribution. Coordinated by Ms. Deeks and her Student Council, we received 700 lbs. of various food items for us to distribute to our clients.

Over the last few years we have received over 5,000 lbs. of food from the school’s food drive. We hope they will keep up the good work. Thank you!

Turkey Donations

Lend-a-Hand would like to thank all the members of Messiah who participated in the Adopt-a-Turkey program initiated by Frank Maenpaa. As a result of your donations, we were able to increase the value of gift cards we gave our clients to help with their holiday meal. We gave out cards to 113 clients this year. Thank you again Frank and all the donors.

THANK YOU FOR THE STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFT.

IT WAS MUCH APPRECIATED.

Pastor Meranda, Cathy Carle, Debbie Fleming, Julie Hunt, Randy Lewis, Ed Spencer, Ed Schroeder, and Homer Young.

KEY DATES

January 7th: Messiah Forum resumes.

January 8th: Last day for committee chairs to submit to the church office their annual reports for reviewing 2017.

January 21st: Annual Meeting of the Congregation right after church service.

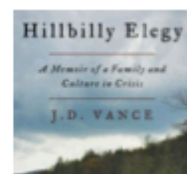
February 10th: Set-up for the Winterfest. 10:00 A.M.

February 11th: Winterfest. 5:00 P.M.

February 14th: Ash Wednesday.



CHURCH CANDIDS



BOOK REVIEW TO MEET

The book review group is currently reading *Hillbilly Elegy, A Memoir of Family and Culture in Crisis* by J. D. Vance.

A powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class.

We will meet at a date to be announced sometime this January to discuss this novel.



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*An ELCA Congregation
in mission to Ashtabula*

Messiah Messenger January 2018

"We're Open Sundays"
11:00 A.M.—Worship
9:45—Adult Forum

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