

Pastor’s Column

As you’ve heard (*ad nauseum*) I’ve recently been on stage. I played a few supporting roles in the Ashtabula Arts Center’s production of Mel Brooks’ “The Producers”.

I experienced an interesting feeling of closure every time our musical ended. The cast takes its final bow. Then we sing the goodbye song. The song ends with the phrase, “so long, get out!” At the phrase “get out” we point to the exits. As we point to the exits we walk determinedly off stage right. The director instructed us to emphasize the “t” sound in “get out”. That’s it. Play is over. We are done.

The final performance at “so long, get out!” felt so existential. The moment we put the final bite into that consonant “t” in the word “out”, I realized it’s all over. Not only is this final performance over but this whole project is done. We began rehearsals in November 2017. We learned songs and choreography. We learned timing and delivery. We formed new friendships. New talents were discovered or developed. A lot of work was invested and a lot of fun was harvested. But at that final “t” in “out” it was all over. The configuration of this production with these personalities will never happen again.

Something similar will happen with our life spans. A moment in time will arrive when we will take our last breath. Then this will be over. The project our lives, made distinct by our configuration of relationships, will never happen again. No one else will see the same things or the same places exactly as you did. No one else will experience those places and events with the same people that you did. That should not be a morose thought. That should be a grateful thought. Yes, someday we all shall die. But that means there are many other days when we do not die. So imbibe all the life you can before that final breath is taken. As you do, keep in mind God has more in store. For the next gift of life, the new heaven and new earth, we wait for God and trust God’s promises.

Mel Brooks made “The Producers” movie 50 years ago. I was in 9th grade. His comedy has spanned my adolescent and adult life. When I first saw “The Producers” most of my life was ahead of me. Now, 50 years later, when I was part of “The Producers” on stage, most of my life is behind me. Most of my fellow cast members have most of their lives ahead of them. I was the oldest among them but had the least experience. It was a privilege to be among them.

Until we take our final breath God, wants us to: make new friends, work hard, enjoy laughter, sing, dance (but only if we are able), cooperate, learn, and humanize this world thru the arts and sciences. Thank you, Messiah Lutheran Church, for permitting me to do just that these recent months.

Faithfully your pastor,
Michael Meranda (stage name “Mel”)

Teddy Bear Program

By: Mark Anderson, Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is starting a new Teddy Bear program. At the end of each church pew we will place a Teddy Bear with a laminated message attached to the decorative ribbon. We encourage church attendees in need of comfort or if they know of someone that is in need of comfort, going through a tough time, to take a Teddy Bear. Hopefully this will raise the spirits of the person receiving the Teddy Bear. We are asking for a \$10 donation for each Teddy Bear to help absorb the cost of the program and to ensure we can replace Teddy Bears taken. Please take time to check out our Teddy Bear and read the laminated message. The added benefit of getting Messiah Teddy Bears out to the community, beyond helping the person receiving, is spreading the message of continued giving by Messiah Lutheran Church and its members. Any questions or suggestions are welcome.

Mark Anderson, Stewardship Chairperson



WinterFest Is February 11 at 5:00 pm

A New Church Directory Coming

By: Cathy Carle, Secretary

A new Church directory will be printed in the coming weeks. Please let the Church office know any updates to address and phone number changes.

Also, you may add your email to The directory listing.

Church Mouse Heard

A mother called her son on Sunday morning to make sure he got out of bed and was ready for Church. “I’m not going” he replied. “Yes, you are going, so get out of that bed !” his mother demanded. “Give me one good reason why I should go,” said her son. “I’ll give you three good reasons. One, I’m your mother, and I say your going. Two, you’re forty years old, so you’re old enough to know better. And three, you’re the pastor, so you need to be there.”



St. Peters Worshipped With Us



St. Peters Episcopal Church members worshipped with us recently. Their Church had water problems and the Church was closed on that particular Sunday. Pastor Meranda invited them to our service and many came!

Pastor Meranda is shown in the picture above with Father Peter W. Nielsen, St. Peters Rector.

Pastor Nielsen was the preacher for the day and delivered the sermon.

Letters & Emails

Thank you to the Messiah carolers for their beautiful music and visit during the Christmas holidays. Also, thank you for the delicious cookies that you brought me. Your visit meant so much to me and it was so nice to see all of you again.

Ruth Jepson

WinterFest Is Coming

By: Ruth Hlinovsky, Hospitality

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 10 at 10:00 am.

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

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.



Readers/Lectors Needed

By: Faythe Jerome

Lectors are needed for reading the lessons at Sunday morning worship.

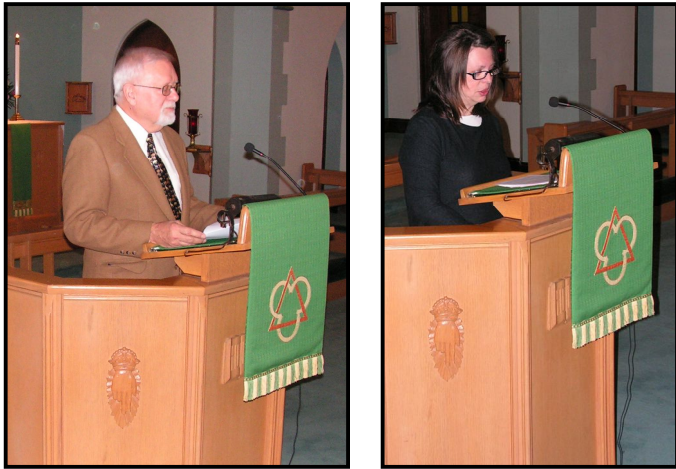
If you are interested contact Faythe Jerome at 466-2718.

Lectors receive the lessons by mail from the Church office the week before they are scheduled to read. This allows the reader to “practice” before hand.

Readers are responsible for the “first” and the “second” lessons of the day. The Gospel lesson is read by the Deacon.



We Had A Meeting



The congregation had one of two Annual Meetings recently. Michael Shaffer, left, conducted the meeting. Michael is our President this year and he explained that we were to hear financial reports from 2017, approve the budget for 2018 and approve the expenditure of funds to repair the east large stained glass window. An anonymous donor is providing the funds for the stained glass repair.

Candace Rodgers, Church Treasurer, right, gave the financial reports and presented the Council approved budget for 2018. The budget calls for us to receive \$189,453 in the new year. Our carryover from 2017 was \$10,170. Our anticipated carryover at the end of 2018 is \$9,964.

The budget was unanimously approved by the congregation as was the expenditure of funds for Stained glass window repair.

Benevolence Giving Increases By 17%

By: Lanny Anderson, Finance Committee

In 2016 our Church contributed \$13,233 to the NEO Synod. In 2017 we contributed \$15,489. A whopping 17% increase in giving to Benevolence. This was the third consecutive year of increases to Benevolence giving.

Let’s all work together to make it four in a row this year!

The Synod provides us with many services that are much appreciated. Chief among them is assistance in calling a new Pastor and the providing of interim Pastors when needed.

Church Mouse Learned

About the Pastors who formed a bowling team. They call themselves “The Holy Rollers”!



Daytimers Meet

Daytimers continue to meet on the first, third and fifth Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 am. About 10 to 20 Daytimers are usually present.

They play cards and have a pot luck lunch together. In the picture below they are seen getting their lunch at the buffet table.



Coffee Hours Popular



The once a month “coffee hours” sponsored by the Hospitality Committee continue to be very popular with Church members. Here left to right, Sherri Hurst, Jim Lindberg and Janet Anderson are seen visiting while enjoying their coffee and refreshments.

Hospitality Committee is recruiting volunteers to serve as “hosts” for 2018. Contact Ruth Hlinovsky if you are interested.

Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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Welcome
Home To
Messiah



Messiah Messenger

February 2018

Worship:
11:00 am - Sunday

Adult Sunday Forum
9:45 am—Sunday

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