

Pastor’s Column

I remember my 5th Grade Oregon geography lesson. Mrs. Wood assured us that the gentle Willamette River flows northward. If you go downstream on the Willamette, you go north. No, the Willamette does not start in Portland and go south to Eugene. The Willamette starts somewhere south by Eugene and it flows 190 miles north up to Portland. To my 5th Grade intellect that was so counter intuitive. Anybody could see on a map that the Willamette parallels longitude line 123W. Doesn’t it flow “down” on the map? Yes, the Willamette orients north-south on the map, but the flow is definitely from the south to the north. So, to go downstream you go up on the map.

I’m not sure what I did with that piece of information once I understood it. Perhaps I tried to show off my insightful knowledge to younger kids on the block. Perhaps I brought it up that night as dinner conversation, relishing that factoid along with meatloaf, green beans, and mashed potatoes. I do know I squirreled away that information and applied it to marveling at other natural wonders. Where does the Cascade mountain range begin? How large is that desert? What river does that stream flow into before it reaches the ocean? Does the Rocky Mountain continental divide really mean all the water on one side goes east and all the water on the other side goes west? How can western Oregon be so cloudy and eastern Oregon be so sunny, it’s the same state?

Back to the north flowing Willamette, direction is so important in life. We ache over a young person who seems to have lost their direction or a middle aged person who never found their direction. We lament the life lost by a person who lived without direction. After their time of searching, we are relieved when the one we love seems to have found their direction again. In corporate motivational lingo there is a saying about finding your “true north”. When the person or organization follows the direction they are intended to they become engaged and effective.

One of the sweetest insights of a theology based upon grace is the notion that God has a definite direction. God’s direction is to us and for us. God came to us dramatically in the birth of Christ. In that Bethlehem manger God signaled the intent to love us so much as to walk among us. God came to us decisively on the cross of Christ. In that event God assured us there is no deep dark secret we may harbor that is beyond the reach of God who loves and desires us. God comes whenever we bless and splash water in Holy Baptism. God comes to us whenever we gather at the chancel rail to receive Holy Communion. God comes to us whenever we hear God’s words of forgiveness and hope. The Willamette River has a definite direction, south to north. God has a definite direction, to us and for us, no matter where we may find ourselves. We don’t climb up to God. We cannot, because God has already come “down” to us.

Summer is near. It’s time for hikes and picnics. Next time we pause at the Ashtabula River flowing into Lake Erie, next time we pause at the Grand River flowing into Lake Erie, the next time we pause at any river near we live or are visiting, think of that river’s direction. Then think right away of God’s love directed into us. Then realize right away God would have us direct that same love toward our neighbor.

Welcome home to Messiah,

Pastor Michael Meranda



Easter Garden Again Beautiful

Our Easter Garden was beautiful again this year just as in past years. Thanks to Martha Pallutch’s skills, the flowers were placed strategically at the front of the Sanctuary and made quite an impressive site. The picture at the bottom shows most of the flowers in their location in the Sanctuary. In the picture at the right, Rebecca Ollikainen is shown handing her flowers to Martha.



This Easter Garden is a long standing tradition at Messiah. Members place flower plants in the Garden in memory of loved ones or someone special who has departed this life.

Your newsletter editor has been a member of Messiah for 77 years and doesn’t ever remember not having an Easter Garden. That’s quite a record!



Palm Sunday Was Different

Our Palm Sunday service was different and was unusual this year. Rebecca Ollikainen, a retired art teacher from St. John’s High School, and a member of Messiah, shared with us art work depicting events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus. She did this via a power point presentation.



Rebecca narrated the presentation and shared information about each drawing, the artist who created it and other interesting facts.

Rebecca is shown above visiting with Bill Schmidt. Members seemed to agree that this was a very good alternative to a traditional Palm Sunday service.

From The Archives
By: Cathy Carle



These pictures are from a Mother/Daughter banquet in the early 2000’s. About 150 people attended. This event featured members wearing wedding gowns from many generations.

Top picture L to R: Tim Spencer, unidentified, Norma Dalin-Gosmer, Katie Schoneman, Jennie Nordquest, Judy Meier, Pam (Anderson) Kowalczyk, Erin (Haught) Siler, unidentified, Tatiana Krajec, Pastor Elizabeth Eaton, and Ruth Martinez at the piano.

In the bottom picture, L to R: Pam (Anderson) Kowalczyk, Katie Schoneman, Rebeckah Selnick and Jennie Nordquest. Our sincere thanks to Cathy for uncovering these gems from the Church archives.

John the Baptist Vespers

By: Tina Tallbacka

John the Baptist Vespers are Wednesday, June 20, at Redbrook Boat Club, Lake Road West . The evening will begin at 7:00 p.m. with a half-hour vesper service, led by Pastor Meranda. We will then enjoy appetizers and drinks, followed by watching the sunset together.



Our Hospitality Committee members will be bringing appetizers, and anyone else who attends is welcome to help out by contributing a goody, although you do not have to bring anything. Just come and enjoy.

The Redbrook gate will be open from 6:30 to 7:15, but will be closed after that. If you will be arriving later than 7:15, please let me know, so we can arrange to let you in. Please join us for fellowship at the lake. My phone number is 440-812-1947.

Church Mouse Heard

Freddie, in Church for the first time, watched as the ushers passed the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, the boy piped up, “Don’t pay for me, Daddy, I’m under five.”



Easter Breakfast

Many members enjoyed Easter Breakfast at Church Easter Sunday morning. As usual, Messiah cooks put on a great show of their culinary skills. We enjoyed various egg bakes, coffee cakes, muffins, and lots of hot coffee. Our thanks to all of the cooks who prepared the delicious food and to the committee members who organized it and cleaned up afterwards.



In the picture above, Nancy Krajec, Left, and her daughter, Tatiana Krajec, enjoy their breakfast.

Church Mouse Saw:

A Church sign board that said:
“Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here.”



Messiah Scholarship

By: Beckey Young

Messiah Lutheran Church established this scholarship from funds given to Messiah in memory of Robert Bjerstedt and Rosella Lewis. The money was combined with permission of Church Council and the families of Robert Bjerstedt and Rosella Lewis to form the Messiah Scholarship. Donations are accepted to add to the Scholarship Fund and we recycle cans as part of our income.

Each August up to \$500 may be awarded to a high school graduate who attends Messiah Lutheran Church and has been active at Messiah and plans to attend a College, University, or Trade/Tech. School. Applicants and recipients may reapply each year.

Application forms may be picked up and returned to the Church office. Applications must be returned by June 30th. The scholarship will be awarded on August 1st of each year. Scholarship money is for one year only.

Messiah Scholarship Committee members are Barb and Randy Lewis, Jan Anderson, Tina Tallbacka, John Lovas and me.

Tapestry Ends For The Year

May 1 is the final day for Tapestry Bible Study group for this year to meet. The group will reconvene in the fall at a time to be announced.

Congratulations to all members of the group for another successful year of bible Study and fellowship.

Summer Schedule To Start

May 20 is the final Sunday for the winter schedule at Messiah. Starting May 27, the Worship time changes to 9:30 am.

Rick Ranta Speaks To Forum



Retired AACS teacher, Rick Ranta, shared his experience participating in the school safety rally in Washington, DC recently. Rick spoke to the approximately 15 members of the Adult Forum class and answered questions.

Theology On Tap Studies Ghosts

Wednesday, April 18 about 25 members and friends gathered at Halcyon in the Harbor to consider “ghosts” and our relationship to them. Pastor distributed an excellent handout and led discussion.

Handout topics were: Ghosts in Ghosts, the Musical; Ghosts in the Bible; Encountering Ghosts and We are Body, Soul and Spirit. This was a very interesting topic and one that we could have discussed for much longer than the one hour allotted to it.

Watch for the next Theology on Tap coming soon!

Methodists Going To Kentucky

First United Methodist Church in Ashtabula is taking a one day trip to the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY. on June 7th. More details on our Church bulletin board.

Or, call the Methodist Church at 993-3806.

Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Permit No. 313

Messiah Messenger

May 2018

Worship:

11:00 am - Sunday

Adult Sunday Forum

9:45 am—Sunday



Welcome
Home To
Messiah



Produced For The Members and Friends of Messiah Lutheran Church, 615 Prospect Road, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Phone 440-992-9392

Fax 440-992-1348

Email: messiahlutheranbulao6@windstream.net

The Rev. Dr. Michael Meranda, Pastor

Phone: 440-998-7321

Redbrook Vespers June 20 at 7:00 pm