

Pastor's Column

Before this calendar year is ended, I will have participated in two candle ceremonies.

The first was on the corner of 58th and Main Ave. It was a somber evening. We gathered to commemorate the tragic deaths of four Ashtabulans. They were innocently riding in their mid-sized sedan. A van blew a stop sign. The van crushed the sedan, killing all four. The driver of the van was severely intoxicated. The people who died so unnecessarily were known in the neighborhood where we gathered for candle light commemoration. I'm sure the candle light meant different things to different people. It may have been a sign of solidarity with and remembrance with those who had died. It may have been a commitment to stand against addictive, violent behavior. It may have been their promise to be light amid the world's darkness. The candle light may merely have meant the desire to see one another's face, to recognize another, to be recognized, to grieve as community.

That kind of grieving candle light has occurred far too frequently. When terrorists attacked Brussels-London-Paris, people gathered in candle light vigil. When mass murders happened in the Florida-Nevada-California, people gathered around candle light. The candle light in those instances symbolized our unity. It was an expression of our resolve to be civilized in the face of forces that despise what is civil.

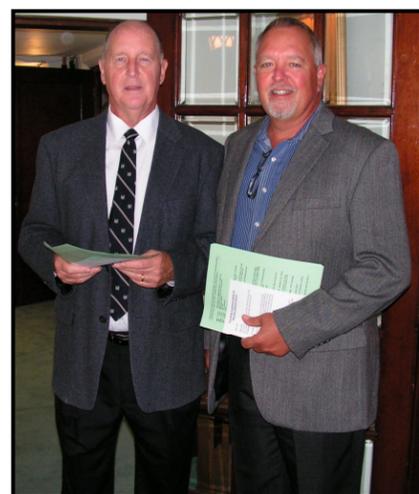
The second candle light I'll participate in is December 24th. At Messiah we'll light candles, dim the lights, and sing "Silent Night". The mood is simply wondrous. We've heard the Christmas story. With St. Mary we've pondered in our depths the mystery of God becoming human. We've marveled at the Christmas decorations. Favorite Christmas hymns echo in our ears. The memories of holiday season linger in our hearts.

When we share light from candle to candle Christmas Eve we are making a statement. We are proclaiming our commitment to live the hope that God is for us. We are sharing our conviction to be persons of light, together. We are exclaiming our confidence that God's light overcomes darkness. We are announcing that God who is Light has come to know us.

This is why one of my favorite Christmas Carols is John Rutter's "Candle Light Carol".
"Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow / Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn / Gloria! Gloria in excelsis deo / Angels are singing; the Christ child is born."

As we light candles in our homes this season, we would do well to pause. When match is brought to wick, be mindful of those who have endured tragedy. Offer to God our private prayer of sadness over an unwelcome event that surprised us. Be silent long enough for God to renew hope in our hearts. Marvel at the flickering light and pray for the gift of joy to increase. Be thankful for the perspective candle light brings. Understand that we too are seen to be so beautiful because we bask in the light of God's love.

Welcome home to Messiah,
 Pastor Michael Meranda



Ushers Working Sunday Forum Underway

John Higgins, L, and Mark Anderson, R, are shown here at the start of Worship recently. John is Usher Captain and also oversees one usher team. His team was on duty this particular Sunday.

Ushers are very important to Worship at Messiah. In addition to handing out weekly bulletins, they collect the Sunday morning offering and deliver it and the Communion Vessels to

the altar. They make certain the public address system is turned on and conduct other duties as requested.

We thank John and Mark and all of the other ushers for their dedication to this task each and every Sunday.



Adult Sunday School, AKA Sunday Forum, is underway for another year. About 10 to 20 members regularly attend the "Forum". As Pastor regularly announces, the coffee is always hot and ready.

This year Forum participants have been studying the book of Mark. Forum is always interesting and discussion is lively. Members are urged to consider attending.

Review of Activities of Messiah

(This is part two of a handwritten history by an unknown author found in the archives by Hal Cooper)

The following year on May 8, 1904 the first Sunday School was organized uptown at the house of Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Johnson 24 Ruth St. (now West 33rd St.) with a membership of 17. Oscar Johnson was the first S.S. Supt. which position he held for several years. Albin Anderson was elected Secy. Teachers were Anna Beckman Mises Betty Jepson, Mr. & Mrs. John Blomgrew. The collection at this first meeting was not very large, only 4 cents.

In 1907 during the time of Rev. Axel C. Anderson (now in Sweden) a chapel was built at the corner of Hiawatha and Fassett Ave. This building served well for our Sunday School and we were glad to have it. Later on services and socials were held there.

In 1911 it was decided that our Services on Sunday was to be conducted in the chapel alternating mornings and evening.

In the year of 1921 it came to a real issue. On Feb. 18 all desiring to come together to organize a new congregation were called and met in the chapel, which was filled to overflow. This group that gathered that night unanimously decided to organize a new congregation. It was decided to name the new congregation The Evangelical Lutheran Messiah Church of Ashtabula, Ohio. 207 confirmed members had designated their intention to join the new congregation. Also 137 children (344 in all).

Officers for the new congregation were:

Rec. Secy: J. H. Johnson
 Deacons: John Larson, Arvid Arvidson, A. L. Johnson, John Peterson, Oscar Johnson & Werner Mattson
 Trustees: Harry Johnson, Emil Pearson, Alfred Borgeson, E. H. Johnson, Martin Lind, Fred A. Anderson
 Organist: Anna C. Anderson
 Janitor: 9 men and 1 lady volunteered to serve as Janitors 1 month each for the balance of the year without compensation, namely Oscar Johnson, Gustof Anderson, C. A. Gillquist, Clair Johnson, John H. Johnson, Mrs. Augustus Dahl, Oscar Olson, John Carlson, John Larson, C. A. Halbrun
 S. S. Supt; Swedish Department: Gust Anderson
 S. S. Supt; English Department: Anna C. Anderson
 Ushers; Morning Service: Clarence Halleen, Algot Anderson
 Evening service: Carl Nelson, Carl Gillquist

(To be continued)

Bishop Allende Here January 13

On Sunday, January 13, 2019, Northeast Ohio Synod Bishop Abraham Allende will preach at Messiah. Coffee Hour will follow the 11:00 am Holy Communion service. Let's plan for a nice turnout for the Bishop and a great Coffee Hour after!

Church Mouse Heard:

Reason we need to tithe is that parking meters have been installed in the Church parking lot.



Sunday School is Back!

By: Shyanna Lindberg



First and foremost thank you to our Church family for always supporting our ideas, it means so much!

Beginning in January we will be hosting Sunday School for children of all ages. The lesson will be about a half hour in length beginning at 11:00 am. Then the children will come up and join the congregation for communion and the rest of the service. Until we see our numbers we will have one

class. With this, we need volunteer teachers on a rotating basis. Please let Emelia or Shyanna Lindberg know if you are up to this rewarding experience. Our phone number is 855-5415.

The first Sunday we will have Sunday School is January 6.

Financial News

Mark Anderson, Stewardship Chair, has assembled our 2019 offering envelopes. They are in the Narthex near the elevator ready for pick up.



Staff Gift

We are once again accepting donations for the Staff Christmas Gift. Anyone wishing to donate can place the gift in a plain regular envelope, write your offering envelope number on the envelope and mark the gift for "Staff". Or use your regular Sunday offering envelope, mark "Staff Gift" on the extra line., Messiah has eight hardworking staff members who serve us.

Christmas Schedule

December 23	Regular Worship Service	11:00 am
December 24	Family Friendly Holy Communion with candle light	4:00 pm
December 24	Christmas Concert	10:30 pm
December 24	Festive Holy Communion With Candle light	11:00 pm

Annual Christmas Caroling

By: Tina Tallbacka

Sunday, Dec. 16, noon right after Church to our shut-ins. We hope many adults and children will join us for this festive event to show our "housebound members" that we care about them.

First, a little Christmas cheer for us, with pizza and cookies for lunch. Then process in a caravan to homes and nursing homes.

Done by 3:00 or before. Talk to or call Tina Tallbacka for more info. 440-812-1947.

Cookies For Caroling

By: Tina Tallbacka

Many dozens of cookies are needed on Sunday morning, December 16, for our annual Christmas Caroling Caravan to our shut-ins. Please bring them to the kitchen downstairs, where they will be packed into Christmas cookie tins to take that afternoon to our shut-ins.

Please contact me at 440-812-1947 if you plan to make cookies, so I will know we have enough. Thank you in advance!

Letters & Emails

Dear Messiah Friends:

Please accept this modest token for postage and paper for sending me Messiah's monthly newsletter.

I enjoy seeing photos of old friends and especially appreciate Pastor Meranda's reflections.

Blessings! Judy Hoshek, NEO Synod Staff

Dear Pastor Meranda and the Messiah Congregation,

We want to thank you for the wonderful service. We appreciate everyone's kindness to her at the hospital and while at home. A heartfelt thanks to everyone for the beautiful cards, phone calls and prayers.

Thank you for the beautiful music and delicious food at the luncheon. Your generosity and kindness was truly appreciated.

Thank you
Bruce and Debbie Anderson
Todd and Joyce Anderson

Happy Thanksgiving to you all! May your Thanksgiving be filled with joy and blessings from God.

The Hess Family
Amber, Ader, Landor and Chance

Giving Tree Is Up

By: Cathy Carle

The Giving Tree is up in the Luther Room. Please select an ornament or two or three, purchase the gift removing the price tags, wrap the gift and return it with the ornaments on top.

Please return your presents no later than December 23, when they will be delivered. If you cannot shop, but would like to help, you may put a donation of any amount in an envelope marked "Giving Tree" and place it in the Sunday morning offering.

This year we are sponsoring a mother and four children and five boys from two other families ages one to 13.

Thanks For Giving Dinner A Success



Even the kids got involved in "helping out". Abby, L, and Jack Sullivan were drying silverware.



In this picture, servers L to R Marilyn Brown, Rebecca Ollikainen, Kurt Nordquest and Norma Eble are awaiting members to serve.

In addition to volunteers who helped at the dinner, about a dozen volunteers met Saturday morning to "set up".

A big Messiah thank you to Mark and Beth Anderson and Ruth Hlinovsky who led this effort. We appreciate their time and dedication.

About 65 members participated in the dinner and made many fine compliments about how delicious everything was.

Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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

Messiah Messenger

December 2018

Worship:

11:00 am Sunday

Adult Forum

9:45 am Sunday



**Welcome
Home To
Messiah**



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