

## Pastor's Column

I recall being a bit surprised at Halloween costuming this year. It was a cold evening in October. There was a huge line up of people on Main Ave. along the city hall block. The line-up extended for a block on Center Street. There was an outdoor Halloween pageant in that public space along 48<sup>th</sup> Street. Whole family units gathered, adults and children. The civic spirit was great. But the costumes were not all that fun. There seemed to be a preponderance of ghoulish characters. They sported fangs and weapons, wounds and blood.

That caused me to remember the generation of my own children trick or treating. Costumes were clever. A neighborhood brother and sister went as an Apple Computer and Word Processor. Another child dressed up as the TV character Urkel. There were princesses and super-heroes, fairies and cowboys. I don't see why our culture had to grow so dark in a generation, but it did.

Soon we'll be admiring another set of costuming. In addition to The Nutcracker, December will bring Christmas pageants. We'll see angels and shepherds, wise men and gentle livestock, Mary and Joseph. Christmas costumes will be filled with sparkle and light. They will evoke peace and hope. They will remind us of that gentle side God created in us (we just bury it and don't let it out enough). We'll smile and our eyes will twinkle.

Nothing is as light as Christmas. Halloween costumes, the way they have evolved, remind us life has a dark, dangerous, and deathly side. The Jesus who came to us in Christmas light came specifically to address the dark and deathly. He confronted and conquered the dark and deathly by the sheer power of self-giving love. We do the same. We do not hide from what is dark and frightening. We cannot not avoid it. Yes, we have to be watchful and aware. But no, we do not have to be fearful. Christ is light, and so are we. Merry Christmas trumps "scary Halloween" any day.

Welcome Home to Messiah,  
Pastor Michael Meranda



## Thanksgiving Dinner

Our thanks to Ruth Hlinovsky and the Hospitality Committee for hosting this years Thanksgiving Dinner. As always, it was a smashing success.

Eight turkeys were purchased and baked at home by the following members; Mary and Pastor Meranda, Dawn and Fred Grimm, Sue Riley, Mary and Ed Schroeder, Kathy and Kurt Nordquest, Marilyn and Jim Brown and Beth and Mark Anderson who did two turkeys. We extend our appreciation to these "turkey cookers". Ruth says that all other food for the dinner was prepared at the Church except the desserts which were contributed by members.

In the pictures here, bottom left, L to R, Jim Brown and Sue Riley are seen carving turkeys. And in the bottom right picture, Mike Shaffer, Kurt Nordquest and Keith Reinker are on the right side of the table serving members going through the buffet line.



## Join Us!

### Boxing Day Tea Messiah Lutheran Church December 26, 2019 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Bring your leftover Christmas sweets to share with the ladies and friends of Messiah for a relaxful tea filled with laughter, stories, and treats! Boxing Day is a traditional English holiday that extends the celebrations and goodwill of the season!

Please call the Church office so we can plan for you!  
992-9392

Your hostesses: Joan Malkie and Mary Meranda



*By: Mary, left and Joan, right, your hostesses for this event.*



## Letters & Emails

My Dear Messiah Friends,

I want to thank all of you with my whole heart for all of your loving prayers, visits, & cards while I was in the hospital and rehab. All of you tugged at my heart strings and reminded of what a wonderful Christian family we are at Messiah.

You were all an inspiration and reminded me of how important it is to "Pay it Forward". I am still recuperating at home and have a ways to go. I hope to walk in and see u soon at Messiah.

Blessings and love,  
Sherri Hurst

## New Members

Penny and John Endruschat officially joined Messiah in November.

They are seen here with Pastor Meranda at November's coffee hour.

We welcome them to our Christian family and look forward to working and worshipping with them.



## Christmas Caroling Dec. 8

*By: Tina Tallbacka*

Messiah's annual Christmas caroling after Church to our shut-ins. We hope many adults and children will join us for this festive event to bring love and cheer to our "house bound members".

First, a little Christmas cheer for us, with sloppy joes, pizza and cookies for lunch downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. Then we'll process in a caravan to homes and nursing homes. Done by 3:00 or before.

Talk to, or call Tina Tallbacka for more information. 440-812-1947



## Church Mouse Heard Billy Graham Say:

Only God himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children.



**Christmas Eve Service**  
**10:30 pm**  
**December 24**

## Christmas Schedule

Date	Event	Time
Dec. 8	Christmas Caroling to our Shut Inns	12:00 noon
Dec. 10	Clothing Bank Christmas	10:00 am
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve. Candlelight Service and Holy Communion	4:00 pm
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve. Songs of the Season	10:30 pm
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve. Candlelight Service and Holy Communion	11:00 pm
Dec. 26	Boxing Day	2:00 pm
Feb. 2	Festival Of Candlemass	11:00 am

**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
**615 Prospect Road**  
**Ashtabula, OH 44004**

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

## 2020 Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

*By: Ruth Hlinovsky*

Hospitality is looking for coffee hour hosts, starting with January 2020, and all months in 2020. A sign up sheet is on a table outside the Sanctuary.



Thanks you for your help. Hospitality is happy to assist if you have never hosted a coffee hour.

Call me 812-2806 for more information.

Pictured here are Gary and Sandy Matheny, hosts in November 2019.

## North Park Christmas Tree

*By: Mary Meranda*



Two boxes of hygiene products were contributed by the Hampton Inn of Ashtabula! The lady with Pastor is Brandy, Manager of the Hampton Inn.



Many thanks to members of Messiah Lutheran Church for supporting the Messiah Giving Tree entered in the ADDA annual competition in North Park! The theme this year was Charlie Brown Christmas, and our tree was topped with the bright red ball!

Shyanna and Emelia Lindberg, assisted by Homer Young, led the effort dressing the tree in more than 1,150 sparkly lights, creating glittery Charlie Brown Bottle Cap ornaments and filling and hanging over 150 gift bags of hygiene products as giveaways to our neighbors in need. We are so thankful for all the items contributed by members. Their generosity truly made this a community giving tree!

Stop by North Park and vote for the Messiah Tree by December 4<sup>th</sup>. Ballots and the ballot box are in the gazebo, and all votes go toward the "People Choice" Award!

Were told Homer Young straightened up the tree right after this picture was taken.

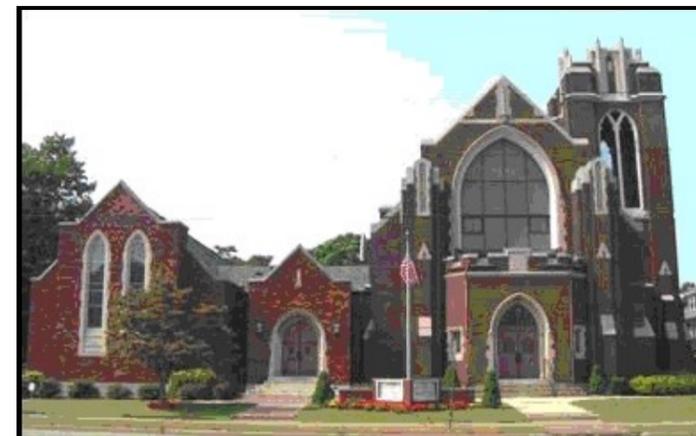
## Cookies For Caroling

*By: Tina Tallbacka*

Many dozens of cookies are needed on Sunday morning, December 8, 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.

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

**Christmas Eve Service**  
**10:30 pm**  
**December 24**



**Welcome**  
**Home To**  
**Messiah**



## Messiah Messenger

**December 2019**

**Worship:**  
 11:00 am Sunday  
**Sunday School:**  
 11:00 am Sunday  
**Adult Forum:**  
 9:45 am Sunday

*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: messiahlutheranbula06@windstream.net*

*The Rev. Dr. Michael Meranda, Pastor*

*Phone: 440-998-7321*

*Cell: 440-645-2586*