

Pastor’s Column

How was your Thanksgiving 2016? Mary and I drove to Louisville, KY to be with our daughter. When you travel, the journey brings as much benefit as the destination.

I was impressed at how sane the Thanksgiving weekend traffic was, going and coming. It was as if all the drivers respected the potential tie ups of this weekend bringing The Game. No tail gating. No weaving in and out of traffic (well, maybe once by that guy in the Cadillac Esplanade). I can’t vouch for what the mall parking lots were like, but I-71 was a breeze.

Traffic was sane; Starbucks was insane. We usually stop there to order a mid-sized iced latte’ with an extra shot of espresso. We never came close. All Starbucks’ drive- thru lines ran fifteen cars deep. The lobbies had people lined up from counter to entry doors. A Black Friday shopping guide had cautioned, “Do not stop at Starbucks this weekend as they are jammed with tired bargain hunters.”

It was the people we encountered who made this trip so memorable. Thanksgiving Day brought an array of conversations. I met a man who worked for Hamline University in the years just before I arrived in that Minnesota neighborhood. There was a M.A. student in Lit at Bowling Green University. One woman was a doctor of pharmacology; another was a Notre Dame grad. A young man there had his degree in avionics but works at marketing educational software.

There were the good folk at the Mexican restaurant in Mansfield. The restaurant had cheap, plastic decorations on the wall. In the corner was the artificial Christmas tree. But as I sat, awaiting two taco salads, I was awed by local business enterprise. The restaurant seemed to be run by a matriarch, assisted by son and daughter. I was moved by their family commitment, know-how, and work ethic. There they were, in a family business, putting out a good product at a good price.

In Louisville a man walked out of a coffee shop sporting a Wisconsin Badger cap. I recognized right away the red and white colors and that neat “Flying W” Wisconsin Logo. I called out to him, “On, Wisconsin!” He politely nodded, “thank you, sir.” Badger fans don’t have that cool “O-H / I-O” greeting Buckeye fans have.

At one stop I had to wait behind one man for the restroom. When he came out he playfully shouted, “Next!” Passing by him I said, “O –H.” He responded, “I-O.”

At another stop an impeccably dressed man with neatly trimmed beard held the door for Mary and me as we entered. Passing by him I said, “Go, Buckeyes.” He muttered, “You got that right.”

We are all so different: a couple in their 60’s driving from Ashtabula; a young daughter; the Mexican restaurant owners; polite drivers; the array of guests at Thanksgiving Table; a demure man wearing a Badger cap; a sophisticated man holding the door; a jovial man shouting, “next!”

We are all so different. Yet we are all the same. We are all created in the image of God. We all sin and need redemption. We all hope for the peace of God to overcome this war weary world. We all welcome that peace when it comes into our hearts. We travel under God’s loving gaze. We grow into the love of the One who gave Himself for us.

Faithfully your pastor,
Michael Meranda



From The Archives

By: Hal Cooper

This picture is from Messiah’s 50th Anniversary Celebration in 1971.

Shown here are L to R, Rev. Carl Gronquist, former Messiah member; Rev. Oscar Leonardson, Pastor 1932 to 1938; Rev. Carl Moberg, Pastor 1938 to 1944; Rev. Wallace Johnson, Pastor 1944 to 1951; Rev. Howard Pettersen, Pastor 1952 to 1979.

We thank Hal for providing these photos and for this archival information.

If we understand the history of Messiah properly, it was during Pastor Moberg’s tenure that the tradition of two Sunday Schools, one using the Swedish language and one using English, was discontinued. Swedish Sunday School was dropped in favor of an all English School.



Christmas Schedule

Date	Time	Event
December 24	4:00 pm	Holy Communion & Candlelight Service
December 24	10:30 pm	Christmas Music
December 24	11:00 pm	Holy Communion & Candlelight Service
December 25	11:00 am	Holy Communion

Thanksgiving Dinner A Success



Our November 20 Thanksgiving (or Thanks-for-giving) dinner sponsored by the Hospitality Committee was again a resounding success.

Ruth Hlinovsky, Hospitality Committee Chair, reports that about 90 people were served.

In the pictures at the left, upper left, L to R, Renee Spencer, Beckey Young and Shelly Lumadue visit while enjoying their dinner. In the above picture, one of two serving lines dish out dinners for guests. In the lower left picture, L to R, Bella, Sophia and Marcel Fleming enjoy their dinners.



Our sincere thanks to the Hospitality Committee for working hard to make certain this annual Thanksgiving event is successful.

Christmas Services December 24 & 25

Cookies For Caroling

By: Tina Tallbacka

Many dozens of cookies are needed on Sunday morning, December 11, 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 if you plan to make cookies, so I will know we have enough. Thank you in advance!

Christmas Caroling

By: Tina Tallbacka

Messiah’s Annual Christmas Caroling is December 11 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 pm or before. Talk to or call Tina Tallbacka for more information. Phone 440-812-1947.

Letters & Emails

Dear Members of Messiah Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your doanations to the teachers of Superior Intermediate School. The staff is always making use of these supplies to help provide our students with items they may not have.

Again, thank you for your donation.

Sincerely,
Christine Rutz, Principal

Dear Friends of Messiah and family,

Thank you so much for the birthday cards and greetings. I appreciate them all so much and think of you all so often. You have no idea how much they mean to me.

I am well and taking one day at a time..

Love to all,
Nancy Johnson

Pastor,

Finally made it to Georgia after the hurricane. No damage from the storm on my property. Been very busy mowing and clearing many branches from the high winds. Weather is very warm, lots of sunshine and lots of mosquitoes.

Want to thank you for your prayers and support. Hope to be back to Ashtabula in April.

God Bless,
Dorothy Toth Cunningham

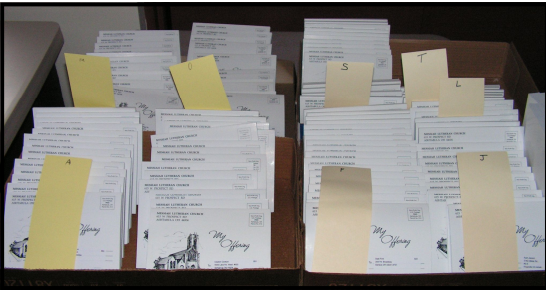
Thank you to the Art Club of St. John School and their advisor, ~~Rebecca Ollikainen~~. Thank you for the many boxes of baby and children clothes that were donated to the Messiah Clothing Bank and Thrift Shop.

The Thrift Shop Crew

2017 Offering Envelopes Available

Your 2017 Offering Envelopes are now available for pick-up in the hallway by the elevator.

Don't forget to return your "Make it Simple" cards to the office.



Sunday School In November



Mary Schroeder led a special November Sunday School where students worked on being thankful and made table decorations for the Thanksgiving Dinner. Shown here clock-wise from lower left, Nathan Schroeder, Sofia Granadas, Mary, Macy Seymour, Maxi Seymour and Luciana Granadas.

Church Mouse Says:

If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!



Giving Tree Is Up

The Giving Tree is up in the Luther Room. Please select an ornament, purchase and wrap the gift and return it with the ornament on top. Please return your presents no later than Noon on Sunday, December 18. The gifts will be delivered that afternoon.

If you cannot shop, but would like to give extra help this Christmas, you may put a donation of any amount in an envelope marked "Giving Tree" and place it in the Sunday morning offering plate or return it to the Church office.



Staff Christmas Gift

We are once again accepting donations for the Staff Christmas Gift. Members wishing to donate can place the gift in a regular Sunday morning offering envelope, mark "Staff Gift" on the extra line, and place it in the Sunday morning offering plate.

Messiah has eight hard working, dedicated staff members who serve us.

Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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An ELCA
Congregation
In Mission to
Ashtabula



Messiah Messenger

December 2016

Worship:
11:00 am - Sunday

Sunday School:
Adult Forum - 9:45 am Sunday

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