

Pastor’s Column

We’ve entered that season when the weather is eminently observable.

Wisconsin has really interesting weather. Spring arrives late. Summers are mild, cumulus clouds glide across blue skies. Fall begins in August; early morning fog forms on the lowlands. Winters are pristinely beautiful and insanely cold. Weeks become months when the mercury does not rise above freezing. One year winter temps dropped so low that people heard nails popping out of the joists in their attics. When temps rise the snow falls. The entire state could be enshrouded in a blizzard. I recall one trip from Wausau to Madison when I counted 17 cars had slid off Interstate 39. Because of the prolonged winters, trees do not grow very quickly in Wisconsin. Indigenous White Pine were 6’ in diameter and 120’ high. In that climate it took eons to grow so large. Wisconsin winter people learn the art of “layering”. Food is seasonal. Summers beckon grilling beer-boiled-bratwurst outdoors and winters invite sipping Tom & Jerry’s indoors.

Oregon had perfectly predictable weather. Rains arrived around October and lasted thru April. But Oregon had a different rain. You didn’t really get wet. It was misty; it rarely poured (what Minnesotans call a “gully washer”). Rain was so light in Oregon, many days I elected to NOT put the top up on my little MG. I’d drive with the top down holding my dad’s golfing umbrella over my head. Of course that was an unsafe way to drive, but I was only 18 years old and immortal. I can still see myself holding the umbrella with one hand, holding the steering wheel with the other, then holding the steering wheel with my knees as I shifted the gears. Oregon summers were paradise. Temps stayed in the 70’s and there was little humidity. I recall driving state highway 43 home from summer construction job (yup, I loved digging ditches) and passing a bank in West Linn. They had a sign that flashed time and temperature. Every day around 4:30 p.m. temperature was a delightful 74 degrees. You didn’t need air conditioners in Oregon.

Northeast Ohio weather is beyond description, in a beautiful, dramatic sort of way. I had no idea when moving here that this is the cloud capital of the USA. That first year I realized I had not seen night stars or moon in six weeks. I still recall driving into the NEO Synod office for new pastor orientation. That February day the sun FINALLY came out. I wanted to pull over onto the I-90 shoulder and sing the *Te Deum*. After I grew accustomed to the clouds I learned a new phrase here, “Lake Effect Snow.” I’ve learned that winter temperatures are warmer here than Wisconsin but it feels much colder here than Wisconsin. That’s because it’s a wet cold in Ohio but a dry cold in Wisconsin. Because winter is wet here, walking and driving are slippery. When I drive across the Sam Wells viaduct I enjoy looking to the right to take in the sweeping view of clouds boiling over Lake Erie and moving landward. As gray and dramatic as the winters are, the summers here are light and bright. Sunshine lasts long from sunrise to sunset. You just want to be outside, sweating in the yard. Wineries open up porches and patios. It never gets boring watching the lift bridge go up and then watching all manner of craft slip thru the gap.

Weather reminds us there is always something in God’s good creation that is bigger than we are. We like to think we are in control, but any number of things could shift and affect a whole lifetime. Weather touching our skin may be a reminder of God’s embrace. We may rest in God in prayer as we rest in sunset over Lake Erie. We may draw to God in prayer as we draw warm blankets over ourselves in cold winter. Weather’s beauty and power salutes its Creator, the God of beauty, power, and above all, grace.

Faithfully your pastor,
Michael Meranda



Thanksgiving Dinner Change

By: Ruth Hlinovsky

Thanksgiving dinner at Messiah has a great history. The first dinner was in 1998. That dinner was the climax event for Messiah’s 75th Anniversary year. Thanks For Giving grew and took on many volunteers. A new emphasis emerged—providing Thanksgiving meal for the needy, especially residents in Samaritan House. Some years the annual stewardship campaign was dove tailed into the Thanksgiving dinner. The times, the energies, the availabilities of volunteers change. For 2017 leaders from Messiah are unable to plan, prepare, and conduct Thanksgiving dinner on November 19. The Church Council agreed we shall still gather as a congregation on November 19. But the format will be much simpler. We’ll gather downstairs for pie and coffee. We are formatting a nice fellowship event to begin our holiday season together.

Beckey & Homer Thank All

On November 17, 1998 we served our 1st Thanksgiving Dinner at Messiah. We were giving thanks for the 75 years Messiah Lutheran Church had been serving the Lord. This year there will be no Thanksgiving Dinner at Messiah. The kitchen crew is retiring. Homer and I would like to thank all that have helped us prepare the meal over the last 20 years. You all know who your are, past and present. We could not have done it without you. Also, the Hospitality Committee setting up the dining room, serving the dinner, and serving the desserts and Youth groups for cleanup help. We have had lots of great memories and good food. Thanks all
Beckey and Homer

Ashtabula Brass Band Entertains

About 30 members of the Ashtabula Brass Band entertained about 70 people at Messiah on October 24. Their concert was entitled “A Halloween Spooktacular”. They played ten numbers for us including Mack the Knife and Ding Dong the Witch is Dead. It was a very entertaining show that the audi-


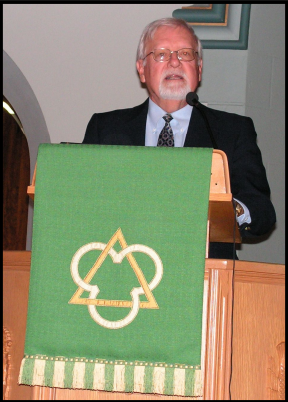


ence seemed to enjoy. The director is Robert Bo Violette, pictured above with the baton.

Messiah members served cookies and coffee for the audience after the concert.

Semi Annual Meeting

We had the semi annual meeting of the congregation on October 22. The purpose of this meeting was to approve a new constitution that will be submitted to the NE Ohio Synod for their approval. The constitution was revised by a committee composed of Frank Maenpa, Mark Anderson and Pastor Meranda. Mike Shaffer, pictured above, conducted the meeting. Pastor, pictured left above, explained the process the committee followed. After discussion, the congregation approved the new constitution unanimously.



There was one other item of business to come before the congregation. That was election of a new council member. Candace Rodgers was elected to a three year term.

Maggie Moore Sets Lifting Record

Our own Maggie Moore set the world record for squat, bench and deadlift for her age group, 16-17. This was at the United States Powerlifting Association meet in Charleston, WV.

Maggie also won the award for Best Female Lifter ages 11—23. Congratulations, Maggie. This is a great honor for you and for your family.

Letters and Emails

Thank you Messiah for the cards, flowers, telephone calls, food and visits you showered me with during my recent problems. They were much appreciated. God bless you.

Connie Cooper

Dear Messiah Lutheran Church,

Thank you for supporting our students as they start off this exciting 2017-2018 school year. Your kindness and generosity of collecting and donating glue sticks is very much appreciated; it will truly make a difference in the development of a child this school year as they learn and grow. Having all necessary and new supplies at the beginning of the year not only supports the child with what they need to learn, but also the confidence that comes from your caring about them and their educational needs.

Yours in Education,
Mrs. Julie Fulton
Principal, Erie Intermediate

I would like to thank everyone for all the calls. Cards, prayers and thoughts during my recent illness. Also a big thank you to pastor for the hospital and home visits. We are truly blessed with GREAT Messiah family. So thankful!

Denver Haught

Hello Michael,

Thank you for your wonderful hospitality. I was also overjoyed with the use of my hymn text. I’m always interested in how it’s interpreted. Debra’s interpretation was great.

Thanks also for our time of conversation. I appreciate your ministry.

Sometime I’ll send my evaluation of Ashtabula now and 30 years ago. It’s so much more positive now!

Pastor John Lekander

Church Mouse Heard:

Toni Morrison say “grown don’t mean nothing to a mother. A child is a child. They get bigger, older, but grown? What’s that supposed to mean? In my heart it don’t mean a thing.”



Thanksgiving Pie Event

Nov. 19

Giving Tree Will Be Up!

By: Cathy Carle

The Giving Tree will be up in the Luther Room, Sunday, November 19. This enables us to shop for bargains on Black Friday, November 24. Please select an ornament, purchase and wrap the gift and return it with the ornament on top. 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.

Athena Played For Us



Athena Pantoja played her violin for us during the offering one recent Sunday.

Athena was a busy girl that Sunday. She carried the cross as crucifer for the procession. She sang in the choir and she played her violin during the offering.

The only person that had more duties than Athena was Pastor!

Athena lives with her grandparents, Kathleen and Michael Shaffer. She also is a swimmer.

We're delighted to have her as a member of Messiah. She is a real delight to be around and an asset to our membership.



perspective of Messiah, Ashtabula and St. Paul's, Jefferson. He has promised to send us a copy of it when it is done.

We look forward to receiving it. It should make for very interesting reading.

Messiah was happy to welcome John, his wife and daughter to Ashtabula.

Messiah Finances

By: Beckey Young, Treasurer, & Finance Committee

We are at 83% into fiscal year 2017 at Messiah. We are at 3% under plan for collections and 3% under plan for spending. We need your help to finish 2017 in the black. Thanks Messiah.

Adult Forum Underway



Sunday morning Adult Forum is underway for another year. Class members have been studying the psalms. They have very interesting discussions. About 10 to 20 people attend each Sunday. The class is held in the Luther Room. There is plenty of additional space available for anyone else that would like to join them. No reservations are necessary! Just be there at 9:45 am Sunday morning. Pastor Meranda leads the class.

Pastor John Lekander Visits

Pastor John Lekander, a retired ELCA Pastor from Tennessee, visited Messiah one recent Sunday. Below right, John is seen posing with Pastor Meranda. Below left he is seen enjoying coffee and treats with Mariel and Jerry Kujala. John was confirmed at St. Paul's in Jefferson. His father was confirmed at the old Capernaum Lutheran Church (now Faith) in the Harbor in 1913.

John is preparing a history from his



Welcome Home To Messiah



Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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Messiah Messenger

November 2017

Worship:

11:00 am - Sunday

Adult Sunday Forum

9:45 am—Sunday

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