

Pastor’s Column

It’s the water. The Olympia Brewing Company had a great advertizing slogan, “It’s the water.” Olympia beer was brewed near Olympia, Washington, alongside Tumwater Creek. The advertisers said Olympia Beer drew its water from “rich, artesian wells”. Water from these wells, they said, is what gave Olympia Beer that crisp, refreshing taste. What made “Oly” so distinctive? Why, it’s the water!

One of my lasting memories of Olympia Beer came from a movie. It was a Clint Eastwood film, one of the “Dirty Harry” episodes. Detective Callahan went into his San Francisco apartment after a long day of cleaning up the crime-filled streets of San Francisco. He opened up his refrigerator as if he were thinking of what to cook for dinner. His refrigerator was stocked with only one item – stacks of Olympia Beer. I guess I remember that scene because the guy sitting in the row behind me leaned into his wife and commented, “He buys good beer; he buys Olympia.”

Where am I going with this? “It’s the water” is the phrase that first revealed my changing voice. I was heading into 7th Grade. I was in that gangly stage of life when boys turn into teenagers. I was sort of wondering when my voice would begin to change. Glenn Ehlers, a friend one year older than I, had gone thru that change. I wanted to sound more like Glenn. I had grown weary of answering the telephone and having the caller mistake my voice for my mom’s voice. Anyway, we were on family vacation, touring that Olympia Brewing facility. Someone said something and I responded with the joke, “It’s the water!” I laughed at my own joke. When I laughed my voice cracked. At last, the change was beginning! My voice would crack constantly for several months and then, before I knew it, the vocal chords had thickened and I had a lower teenager voice instead of a higher grade school voice. My voice finally began its change that bright summer day near the famed artesian wells of Olympia Brewing Company. It’s the water.

Time passes. Events occur in the passage of time. There are those interruptive events that stand out from time. Those stand-out events are remembered because things are different after they occurred. The bible tells those epic stories when something interrupted time, and after that interruption, the times were different. Abraham migrated and people learned we could talk to and listen to God, not placate or manipulate God. Moses hiked up a mountain and returned with two tablets of law; we understood people who claim to follow God are people who protect and care for community. Isaiah dared to anticipate a day when the lamb shall lay down with the lion; we knew if we are people of faith that means we are called to live as people of hope.

Our church year centers on three events in time after which nothing is the same. At Christmas God became incarnate. Grace and truth dwelt and dwell among us. We are never alone. Christmas event led to another event in time, cross and resurrection. On that weekend death and evil saw they had been defeated; they just haven’t fully acknowledged it yet. Fifty days after cross and resurrection another event changed us. On Pentecost Day the Holy Spirit became present in flame and language. After that day we understood we are empowered to live in the justice and mercy of God all our days. God is constantly entering, fashioning and forming us in the times of our lives. And we are gratefully, gracefully different.

Faithfully your pastor
Michael Meranda



Giving Tree

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

Please return your presents no later than December 17, 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 is a long standing and important project at Messiah. Pastor says the children from three families selected to receive our gifts this year are really in need.

Working together we can make their Christmas a little brighter.

Food Pantry Gets A Facelift

By: Rick Ranta & Manette Nelson, Leaders

Big thanks to Dave Anderson and Bryan Gobel for the great help they gave in cleaning and painting the food pantry room. It looks great, plus all of the walls are now the same color. A second thanks goes to Jan Anderson for making the new curtains for the pantry, even the guys noticed the change .

A special thank you goes to all of the pantry volunteers: Pam Lindberg, Dorothy Toth-Cunningham, Herb Watts, Bryan Gobel, Mike Riley, Kurt Nordquest, Niles Carey, Dave Anderson and Bill Lovas. And a very special thanks to the members of Messiah. Without your support we could not function as well as we do. Thanks to all.

Follow the Star

Follow the Star to Bethlehem comes to Ashtabula’s Mall on Dec. 8 and 9 from 5:30 pm until 8:30 pm. You may walk through scenes from the Bible depicting the birth of Jesus. Admission is free. Location is the former Dillards building.

T. Jefferson Told Church Mouse



Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.

Bach Cantata

There are two opportunities to hear Bach Cantata 140 (A Holiday Music Performance). The first is December 9 at 7:00 pm and the second is December 10 at 4:00 pm. Both performances are at Lakeside High School and feature the Ashtabula Choral Music Society and the Ashtabula Orchestra.

Tickets are available at Carlisle’s Home in the Harbor or at the door. They are \$12.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors and \$6.00 for students.

This is a neat opportunity to hear local musicians performing one of the world’s great compositions.

Date	Event	Time
Dec. 17	Holy Communion	11:00 am
Dec. 24	Holy Communion & Candlelight	11:00 am
Dec. 24	Holy Communion & Candlelight	4:00 pm
Dec. 24	Holy Communion & Candlelight	11:00 pm

Pie & Coffee Event

The Hospitality Committee sponsored “Pie and Coffee Event” was a smashing success. This one year substitution for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner proved to be a great time together and a great replacement for the dinner.



Jeff Burkholder was guest speaker for the event. He shared with us his memories of Ashtabula 50 or 60 years ago. Jeff is a great story teller.

We were really entertained by his memories of downtown Ashtabula at this point in time. He is shown above in his summer lounge chair while speaking to us.

In the pictures below members are seen visiting with each other and enjoying their pie and coffee.

Ask Pastor about the “Pie Eating Rules” he introduced to us at the event.



Book Station

Books are needed for the Messiah book station. Any questions or for more information contact Barb Lewis at 228-0872.

Special Music Needed

Anyone who wants to be involved in special music for Christmas Eve. Please see or call Julie Hunt. Her phone number is 440-223-3186.

Special music will be heard starting at about 10:30 pm on Christmas Eve.



Decorating A Sunday School Room

Shyanna Lindberg, L, and Meadow Gray,R, put hand prints on the wall of one of the basement Sunday School rooms. They and Emelia Lindberg also painted the whole room. The room looks very nice now.

The “crew” plans to do additional rooms as they have the time and resources to accomplish this.

We thank them for their efforts and wish them well!

Staff 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 hardworking staff members who serve us.



Stewardship

Mark Anderson is Stewardship Chair this year and he and the committee planned and conducted a very nice “Stewardship Dinner” in early November.



Rebecca Ollikainen, L and Norma Eble, R, are seen here eating during the dinner.

In the middle picture, Mark is conducting the brief meeting during dinner.

In the bottom picture, Mark’s wife, Beth, is serving stuffed shells. Beth was the chief cook and bottle washer for the event and we all enjoyed her culinary skills.

Mark encouraged everyone present to return their pledge cards as soon as possible.



Messiah Lutheran Church
615 Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
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Welcome
Home To
Messiah



Messiah Messenger

December 2017

Worship:
11:00 am - Sunday
Adult Sunday 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: messiahlutheranbulao6@windstream.net

The Rev. Dr. Michael Meranda, Pastor
Phone: 440-998-7321