

Pastor's Column

Messiah's altar is particularly beautiful. In its original format, it was set against the wall. A shelf rested on top of it, to hold candelabra and cross. This format was the Swedish Lutheran style. The altar against the wall symbolized God's footstool. God's throne in heaven had a footstool here on earth, the altar. Messiah's original communion rail was a semi-circle. Congregants gathered for communion around one half a circle. They formed the communion of saints now, the "church militant". The seen semi-circle around which they gathered inferred another semi-circle, unseen. The unseen half circle reminded them of the communion of saints directly with God, the "church triumphant."

At some point in Messiah's history, the decision was made to remove the semi-circle communion rail. A straight rail with perpendicular angles was installed, where we gather now. In 2008 we moved the altar away from the wall. The shelf is still there for candelabra & cross. But with the altar moved out from under the shelf, the top ("mensa") is broader. Now presiding and assisting ministers stand behind the altar, facing the people.

Also, since 2008, several altar-cloth ("parament") sets have been purchased. These are rather expensive, they but they are great pieces of workmanship that serve decades. New whites were bought to express Easter, Christ the King, and All Saints Sundays. New green sets were purchased to adorn the altar thru the many Sundays after Epiphany and Pentecost. Three existing sets continue to serve: blue signals Advent hope; white announces joy of Christmas, and red proclaims the Spirit's fire on Reformation and Pentecost.

My favorite of all the paraments is the purple Lent set. It's a full frontal – that is to say it covers the entire front of the altar from top to floor. (That's 39 inches to remind us there are 39 books in the Old Testament). The deep purple parament has no overt image, no "lamb" or "cross" or "nail" or something. But it is elegantly streaked with simple lines. This effect lends richness and depth; this expresses the richness and depth of Lent. This season often brings about the deepest growth in our personalities and relationship with God. There is something about the focus, fasting, and prayers of Lent that invite growth and transformation. We don't "self-improve" as much as we learn to self-surrender and rely more and more on God.

The image of our altar during Lent 2020 has been striking. The altar is fully vested ("dressed") as usual. But on top of the altar is the communion ware. It is also vested in a purple veil with matching burse ("purse" that holds the corporal cloth). The communion vessels that rest on the altar are empty. There is no bread, no wine. The vessels are waiting for us. When we, the body of Christ return from Covid-19 exile, bread and wine will return to that communion ware. Jesus, who promises to be among us in the bread and wine, will keep His promise. He will be in the bread and wine in those communion vessels, just as He is in our hearts and minds thru this pandemic. It's a stirring image I get to see daily. Vested communion ware atop the altar awaits this community to return. Whenever that day will be, we are so ready.

Welcome home to Messiah
Pastor Michael Meranda



Awaiting The Return of Messiah Members

For the significance of this photograph, read the final paragraph in Pastor's column above.

This newsletter is being written with the assumption that we will be back in Worship on May 3. That is not known for sure. It is just an assumption at this point.

Watch Gov. DeWine's daily Corona Virus updates for his "take" on when things will return to normal.

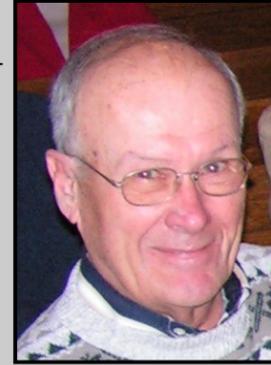
Pastor will update all of us through email or some other means as the situation clarifies itself.

Return To Worship
May 3
11:00 AM

Stewardship Message

By: Russ Jepson, Stewardship Chair

A few years ago, there was a popular reality show called "The Apprentice", hosted by our now President of the United States, Donald Trump. The theme song was "Money, Money, Money." The goal was to have teams develop a promotional advertisement that the represented company could use to promote their company and make Money, Money, Money. The failing team would be judged and someone would be fired for not producing.



Here at Messiah we have our own reality program called, "The Church". Our theme song is Giving, Giving, Giving. Our goal: Preach the Good News, Baptize, and Teach. We serve internally and externally. We are "God's Good in a World of Not so Good." Rather than make money, we give money for achieving our goal.

At the March Finance Committee Meeting, our statistician Lanny Anderson, presented statistics of our congregational giving covering the past ten years, 2010 thru 2019. Our Giving, Giving, Giving totaled \$1,737,199.00. To that we say, "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You." Luke 6:38

Letters & Emails

Bishop Abraham Allende and the staff of the Lutheran Center of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, ELCA lifted your congregation up in prayer.

May God bless your ministry with wisdom, vision, courage, understanding and joy.

(This note was personally signed by all eight members of the Synod staff)

Thanks to this Church for letting our group meet here. You don't know how much it means to us. You are a big part of our recovery.

From the Wednesday night Nar-Anon 12 Step Group.

The note was signed by nine members of the group.

Messiah Foundation Contributions

In memory of Hans Miggo
By Edward and Renee Spencer

Church Mouse Heard:

A Sunday school teacher asked, Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark? "No" replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."



May 2020 – Worship Assistants

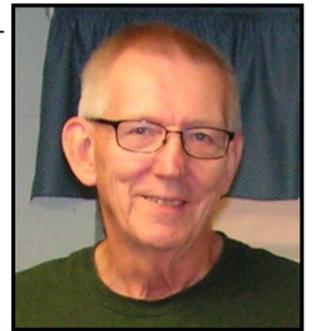
Date	Usher Team	Counting Team
May 3	# 5 Sue Burkholder	# 3 Bill Lovas
May 10	# 1 John Higgins	# 4 Candy Rodgers
May 17	# 2 Gary Eble	# 1 Beckey Young
May 24	# 3 Carl Malkie	# 2 Barb Lewis
May 31	# 4 Keith Reinker	# 3 Bill Lovas

May Messiah Messenger Copy Deadline Noon Tue, April 26

Lend-A-Hand Update

By: Rick Ranta

I'm very pleased to say that at the time I'm writing this, our food pantry is still in operation. This may have changed by the time that you read this but I hope not. We have a very dedicated, though aging, staff which has had a lot of changes dumped on them in the past months. Starting last November they continued in a normal fashion while I was recovering from my heart attack, special thanks to Kurt Nordquest for making the Aldi trip for some of the essentials. I really appreciate all they did.



Now that we have COVID-19 to deal with, the staff is rallying with all the changes we've had to implement. We are working with a skeleton crew of four. Our clients no longer enter the building. We have one person packing dry goods, one packing frozen items, a person transferring repacked boxes on to the client, and one person handling the computer registration of our clients. All of this while we are keeping social distancing. As of this writing that crew is Dave Anderson, Becky Olikainen, Mike Wagner and myself. I really thank Dave, Becky and Mike for their dedication. I also appreciate the rest of the volunteers that have chosen to isolate themselves at home and not risk chances of transferring or contracting the virus, thank you Niles Carey, Herb Watts, Bill Lovas, Pam Lindberg and Manette Nelson. In addition to the changes in pantry procedures, the Thrift Shop has suspended operation until conditions improve.

In an unrelated area, I want to thank you for all the prayers that came my way when I had my heart attack and while I went through recovery.

I know eventually we'll adjust to this new normal as well as arrive at the next new normal after the virus threat ends. Until that time, thank you for all your support. Stay safe. Stay well.

A Note From Cathy Koschik To Cathy Carle

Cathy,

I wanted to write and thank you for Mom's lovely musical scarf. She really liked it and wore it all day while we celebrated her birthday. That was very thoughtful of you, and so appropriate for her!

All of you at Messiah are kind and generous to Mom and I want you to know how much we appreciate it. When we needed to move to a memory care facility, we could have chosen one close to John in Kirtland. That would have been easier. But her entire social life revolved around Church and we could not take that away from her. We will continue to take her to services as long as she is able.

Thank you again!

Cathy Koschik

The Koschik family posed for a picture on Jan's birthday recently.



L to R, Cathy, John and David with Jan sitting in front.

The Senior Choir misses having Jan in the alto section. She was a long time, dedicated and faithful member of the choir.



Cancellations

----Cathy Carle's retirement party is cancelled. Will be re-scheduled later.

----Pastor Meranda's 40th anniversary of his ordination celebration is cancelled and will be rescheduled later.

----Due to, the Redbrook Boat Club being closed for the summer, the vesper service is cancelled and will not be re-scheduled.

----Keep watching the Messenger for further details on these and other events.

Parish Registry

Hans Miggo died 2/20/2020
Fredia Benton (non member) died 2/21/2020

New members by transfer:
Fred and Dawn Grimm 3/10/2020

Soup Suppers Were Going Well!

Soup Suppers held on Wednesday evenings during Lent were going well until the Corona Virus brought them to a screeching halt. About 20 to 30 people attended each of the events. We only had two events until Corona Virus brought them to an end.

In the pictures below L to R, Pastor David Anderson conducts one of the services. Lutheran Pastors in Ashtabula County conducted services on a rotating Church basis. They included two retired Pastors in the rotation, David Anderson and Fred Grimm.

Brenda Greenawalt and Beckey Young were the cooks for the evening and made delicious soup.

Part of the group at this evenings service going through the buffet line.

We'll all have to wait until next Lenten season to enjoy soup suppers again!!



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**Welcome
Home To
Messiah**



Messiah Messenger

April 2020

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

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