

Pastor's Column

The year 2020 brought the Easter that wasn't. America was just getting used to sheltering at home. There were no Holy Week and Easter services in most responsible churches. We were not celebrating the resurrection collectively, but Christ was still raised in our midst. Christ is risen today.

The year 2021 brings a tentative return to Easter celebration. At Messiah we have our Saturday 9:30 a.m. service and our Sunday 10:00 a.m. service. Communion is safely distributed. We are masked and distanced. We do not sing. But unlike 2020, at least we are gathering in 2021.

I was ordained in May of 1980. So, the first Easter cycle I led as a pastor was Easter 1981. Our inner-city congregation in Seattle was very liturgically aware, thanks to good previous pastoral leadership. I recall carefully implementing the rubrics for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter as specified in Lutheran Book of Worship, the "green book". The members of that primarily African American congregation really knew how to dress for Easter Sunday. I still remember that all white suit Liborio Bacalzo wore. The organ was a little Conn electric. But we still sang, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" with all the confidence in the world. Easter in Seattle brought unique advantages. Springtime came early in Puget Sound. Daffodils were plentiful. The tulip festival in Mt. Vernon was legendary. Fresh sea food was available at Pike Place Market.

Where have you celebrated Easter Sundays in your life? Have you been in places far away from Ashtabula? Were you ever overseas for an Easter? Have most of your Easters been here in Northeast Ohio? Was Easter a big day for you in your childhood? In your earlier years, was an Easter egg hunt a big deal? Did you get sick after eating too many chocolate Easter eggs? Remember when network TV always showed a Jesus movie Easter Sunday afternoon?

Our locations, cultural traditions, and family patterns vary constantly. But the reality of resurrection remains consistent. No matter who we are or where we are, God grabs us to pull us thru death and gift us with new life. St. Paul reminds us that Christ was raised ahead of us. His resurrection is pattern for our resurrection. We are not afraid of dying to self, because we know that is God's way for new life. We are not afraid of the hour of our physical death, because we know what Christ has won for us. We live bravely because life with God is here now and will be forever.

Welcome Home to Messiah
Pastor M

Thank You - \$17,269.95

To the members of Messiah Lutheran Church from the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in grateful appreciation for giving \$17,269.95 for Mission Support beyond the congregation for synod and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I join with you in celebrating, the opportunity to give to others with such joy. Being a partner in movements that change lives and enrich us all is so satisfying. Your gifts, along with those of all our synod's congregations' gifts, do remarkable things when they are transformed into ministry and mission. For example, we are able to support candidates for rostered ministry, provide for campus ministries, partner with our colleges and seminaries, and share in churchwide ministries.

Thank you for your nearly 30% increase over last year in Mission Support. Your generosity is a gift.

Rev. Dr. Laura L.H. Barbins, Bishop



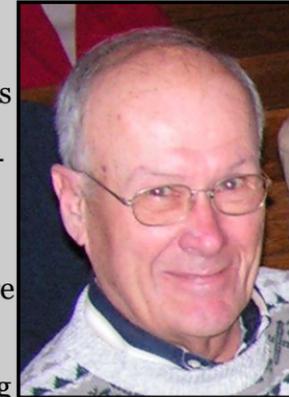
Stewardship Corner

By: Russ Jepson, Stewardship Chairperson

Here we are headed into the second year dealing with the Covid19 virus. As I reported in last months Stewardship Corner message things were looking up, cases, hospitalizations, deaths were on a steep decline. People were taking responsibility for their actions, wearing masks, distancing, getting vaccinated, and practicing stewardship on behalf of their neighbor. Good news while it lasted.

Here we are a month later and we're now headed in the negative direction, apparently because there are those in society who's only goal in the short term is to have fun regardless of the consequences to their or others health. "Love your neighbor as yourself," to me means "do no harm". We can do no less.

On a lighter and happier note, I would like to thank you all for continuing your financial support for Messiah's ministry.



Lend A Hand Receives \$500



Rick Ranta, food pantry director, is seen here receiving the check from Mollia Zizzo, owner of "Follow The Son" on line apparel company located in North Kingsville.

Zizzo, who attends the Ohio University e-campus studying applied management, runs her company out of her basement.

While a senior in high school, she started planning the business. She launched it's website on January 1, 2019. So far she has donated \$3,250 to seven area food pantries.

In addition to Messiah's, she has donated to St. Peter's Food Pantry, Eagleville Bible Church's The Vine, Faith Lutheran Church, Manna Food Pantry in Jefferson, Conneaut Human Resources Center and Ashtabula Dream Center.

Mollia donates all of the proceeds from the business to area food pantries.

**May Messenger Copy
Deadline, 12:00 Noon
April 27**

Church Mouse Said:

"You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving".



These pictures accompany Dick Blood's article on the back page of this Messenger.

The picture on the left is of their wedding day in 1965. On the right is Marie's head and shoulders picture that Dick mentions in the article.

A Great Note From Dick Blood

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank all the members of Messiah for the countless cards and letters urging Marie to get well after her fall at home. Believe me, Marie is counting the days till she can return home. She is currently in rehab at the Ashtabula County Home.

I have asked Lanny to run the head and shoulders picture of the girl I fell in love with 5 1/2 decades ago.

Our first date was at Thanksgiving and I proposed at Messiah's candlelight Christmas eve service. Imagine my joy upon hearing Marie's "yes" that night.

Marie's mother, however, asked that we postpone the wedding for six months. Just to make sure we still wanted to go ahead. In retrospect I think Winnie Mongenel's hesitancy stemmed in part from advice from the minister who was to conduct the ceremony. He gave our marriage zero chance of lasting, based on 1) our whirlwind courtship, 2) the difference in our age (almost 10 years) and 3) difference in education. About the only thing we shared was overseas, I hold a bachelor degree in English Literature, Marie was born in England (she shares a hometown with actor Cary Grant.)

I used my degree to land a reporter's job with Rowley Publications of northeast Ohio. Marie was the switchboard operator for the Star Beacon in Ashtabula. Marie still chuckles remembering how my new boss, Ross Smith, described the new reporter joining the Beacon from it's sister paper in Conneaut, The News Herald.

"His name is Blood - Dick Blood" Ross told her.

Marie burst out laughing. "Your kidding, Ross. No one has a name like Blood. In England, it's like a swear word - bloody this or bloody that"

Later, when I asked Marie for a date, I forgot to ask where she lived. When I phoned Ross, he said he didn't have her address. I started looking up Mongenels in the phone book. I dialed, and the guy who answered said he was Marie's uncle. He gave me her address on Madison Ave.

I showed up late for the date-a date which Marie's mother told her no college-educated reporter would keep. We had fun, dinner at Pizzis Pizza in Conneaut. But Marie said she gulped hard when I started down a dark gravel road. The drive ended at my folks place where I introduced Marie.

When Marie's mom asked us to delay the wedding, we didn't object. By then we knew we loved each other, and we were glad to prove it for six months. There were countless long good night kisses and every night I drove home alone singing that song from West Side Story, "I just met a girl called Marie-aaa!"

So it was on a June day in 1965 we emerged as man and wife through the front door of Messiah Lutheran Church.

That was more than 55 years ago, and each and every day, we tell each other "I love you".

Marie would give birth to three wonderful sons, the eldest of whom we gave a wedding gift of 5 acres right next door, where Michael and Kristi put up a house and south of that, the busiest and most successful car-truck transmission shop in Ashtabula County.

When Marie became crippled and unable to walk, Mike and our youngest son, Bryan John, made it their mission to help care for their mother. Though our other son, Steven, has his family in Austin, Texas, he comes north using vacation time from Dell Computer, when needed. For example, Steve erected the ramp for Mom's wheelchair, and he is flying up to help continue Marie's rehab. Each of our sons and their wives have blessed us with a boy and a girl grandchildren. Four attend Jefferson Schools.

Those of you from Messiah who know Marie realize she is one of the most unselfish persons on this planet. Despite her handicap, she is still a terrific cook. She still loves to laugh, but it is hard during the pandemic.

All of the wonderful people I have met at Messiah through the years I count as a legacy of meeting and falling in love with Marie.

I will treasure it when card games are no longer taboo, and roars of laughter in the dining room make their way to the most distant corners of our home. What a healthy form of rehab!

God bless you all, including Pastor Meranda.

Messiah Lutheran Church
615 West Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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**Welcome
Home To
Messiah**



Messiah Messenger

April 2021

Worship:

Saturday 9:30 am
Sunday 10:00 am

Sunday School:

Will Resume Later

Adult Forum:

Will Resume Later

*For The Members and Friends of Messiah Lutheran Church,
615 West Prospect Road, Ashtabula, OH 44004
Phone 440-992-9392
Fax 440-992-1348
Email: messiahlutheranbulao6@windstream.net
Web: www.messiahashtabula.com*

*The Rev. Dr. Michael Meranda, Pastor
Phone: 440-998-7321
Cell: 440-645-2586*