

## Pastor's Column

I was randomly reading a Swedish Lutheran Bishop, Gustaf Wingren. He was commenting on another Swedish Lutheran Bishop, Einar Billing. "Billing conceived of the parish church (congregation) itself as an *act*, as a *divine act* directed to *all residents in the area*. It is directed to all these people irrespective of any religious qualifications they may possess. By this approach he placed emphasis on the "gospel" which in Luther's theology governed the church."

Messiah's original heritage is Swedish Lutheran. For a century Messiah has typified the Wingren-Billing notion of congregation as divine act for all residents. Your outreach has been constant. Your food bank feeds the hungry. Your parsonage houses the homeless. You've connected with Ashtabula Area Schools. Your current project is to provide feminine hygiene products. You have encouraged your pastors to serve the community in many ways thru the years. I've been on several boards and have connected with many people in the care of this or that agency. I still recall reaching out to the neighborhood family who lost a toddler in their apartment unit fire. When the phone rings or door knocks at Messiah, you always respond.

Back to Wingren on Billing. "The parish church itself is an act, a divine act." What a status God has given to congregations. We are not a mere organization. We are not a mere state recognized incorporation. We are divine action. The Word is spoken and heard here. When that happens, faith is created. The sacraments are celebrated here. When that happens, faith is strengthened. Forgiveness is practiced here. When that happens, lives are renewed. Messiah has been part of God's acting in this corner of the world for over a century. You have been consistently creative and compassionate. It is my privilege to share this part of your amazing journey with God.

Thankfully your pastor  
Michael Meranda



## Letters & Emails

Pastor Meranda,

Thank you so much for baptizing Margot. It means a lot to us that you have been a part of another important milestone for our growing family.

Sincerely,  
Aristi, Josh and Margot Ozbolt

## Altar Flowers

August: 8 Herb Watts (Norma)  
15 Dee and Frank Maenpa (Loved ones)  
22 Rebecca Ollikainen (Allan)

September: 12 Nancy Krajec (Rich)

## Worship Times

September Worship times remain the same: 9:30 am Saturday, and 10:00 am Sunday.

## Outreach Project



The Outreach Committee's "Feminine Hygiene Products" effort is continuing. Donations of pads, tampons and liners are gladly accepted by placing them in one of the collection boxes in the Church. Dawn Grimm, left and Renee Spencer, right are seen in the picture above at one of the boxes.

## Hear ye, hear ye!

By: Russ Jepson, Stewardship Chairperson

Calling all parishioners, Messiah Lutheran Church is open for worship. We are averaging 21 to 25 persons per Sunday, up from 14 to 15 after the Church reopened after the complete cleaning due to Covid 19 virus 1 1/2 years ago.



Per the attendance count prior to the Church closing posted on the bulletin board in the hallway by the atrium, we closed with a count of 45 persons in attendance for worship.

It would be great to see and greet those of you we have been missing. I'm afraid we're going to have to resort to looking in the Church pictorial directory to remember you. All this due to the restraints placed on us by the viruses.

We have the space and means for safe worship. See you Sunday?

Hebrews 10:25 "And let us not neglect our meeting together....."

## Church Mouse Heard:

A Sunday School teacher said to her children, "we have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?"



One child blurted out, aces!

**October Messenger  
Copy Deadline  
Noon, Tuesday  
September 28**

## Welcome Home to Messiah – 2021 August 29 thru September 5

Events have two holds on us. They are concerns for prayer. They are backdrop for our day to day.

Here is what we are praying for these dangerous days. As of this writing, the withdrawal of US Citizens from Kabul is still under way. No telling what the terrorists may try before the August 31 deadline. We pray for safety. Hurricane Ida has done her damage in Louisiana and elsewhere. Images of Katrina sixteen years ago are still fresh in our minds. We pray for their recovery. School buses have been running for a week. We pray our classrooms will be places of joyful learning. The Delta Variant is making significant gains in various places. Our own county is elevated to level orange. I heard on a late-night news program there is yet another variant emerging, the Lambda variant. (The Greek alphabet has 24 letters; I hope we will not have to go thru 24 strains of Covid) We pray for cure.

Those events that are uppermost in the news and in our prayers do not necessarily affect us directly. (Well, Covid does, in that I know the few of us who have tested positive.) But for the most part those events are backdrop. We go on with our days. We go to work. We volunteer. We tend to family members. We socialize with friends. We address our health and wellness. We make offerings. We attend socially distanced church. We keep up our routines. Against a very dangerous backdrop of international events, local lives go on.

God is in the extreme and God is in the normal. God is in the dangerous and God is in the placid. God is in the tragic and God is in the triumph. God just is, no matter what. And as people of God, God calls us to reflect the ways of God no matter what. No matter where we are, be lightful. No matter what we are doing, be peaceful. No matter what we are considering, be intent-full. No matter what is happening, be prayerful. No matter who is speaking, be attentive. No matter what is happening, be loving.

Current events are very unsteady these days. Creation especially needs us to be the steady people God has called us to be. We will do this. The steady rhythm of God's love pulses thru us like the steady beat of a bass drum.

Pastor M

## Property Committee is Still Busy

The Property Committee is still busy during the pandemic. These pictures portray some of their activity. Clockwise from the lower left, Custodian Homer Young dusts the sanctuary.

In the next picture he vacuums the sanctuary.

Finally, Custodian Ed Spencer mows the lawn.

Emelia Lindberg is Chairman of the Committee. Serving with Emelia is Ed Spencer, Beckey Young, Sue Leitert, Frank Maenpa, Pastor and Homer Young.

The Committee meets on the first Monday of the Month, usually in the Luther Room, at 6:00 pm.

We have a large and complex physical facility that takes a lot of “doing” to keep looking nice. There are always major projects that they have to manage, too.

For example, the congregation just recently voted unanimously to make \$11,000 worth of repairs to the bell tower. They have hired Alex Restoration of Erie, PA to conduct the repairs.

They will be starting work soon.

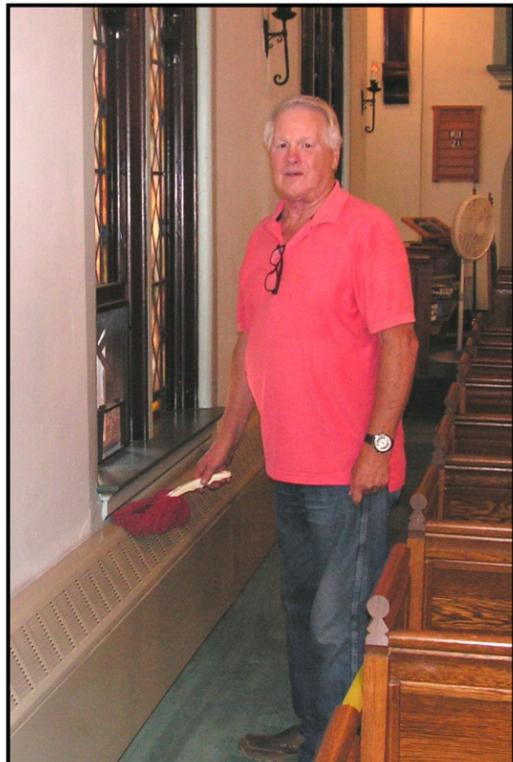
## Dick Blood Memorials

At the time of printing of this newsletter, memorials for Dick Blood were still trickling in. We will print a complete list of donors in the October newsletter.



**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
615 West Prospect Road  
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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## Messiah Messenger

September 2021

**Worship:**  
Saturday 9:30 am  
Sunday 10:00 am  
**Sunday School:**  
Will Resume Later  
**Adult Forum:**  
Will Resume Later

**Welcome  
Home To  
Messiah**



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