

Pastor's Column

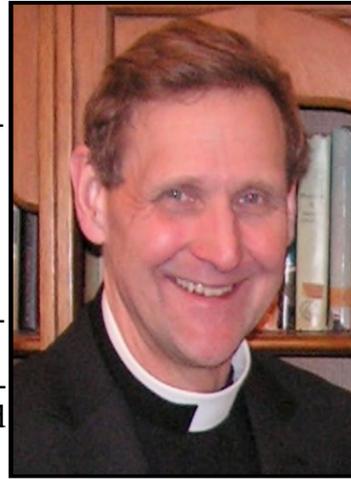
Another Covid-Christmas is coming up. News of this pandemic hit in January 2020. We soon got used to cancelling events. Covid tapered off a bit that summer then surged in the fall. December 2020 Messiah closed public worship services. Messiah slowly re-opened February 2021. Then there was the Delta strain. Now, in December, we are worried about the Omicron strain.

Those names are letters from the Greek alphabet. That alphabet has 24 characters; I hope we do not have to go thru all of them! My favorite would have been the Zeta strain, just because it is a fun letter to draw. There is a half circular sweep, a little tail trails off to the left, there is a curly-que on top. Anyway, we wait for this pandemic to run its course. The generation afflicted with Influenza in 1917 waited three years before they were in the clear. Americans waited two generations for the Polio inoculation. Waiting requires the gift of patient self-discipline.

But as we wait, we are not passive zombies. It's not like sitting in the dentist's chair, waiting for the Novocain to take effect. Advent teaches us to celebrate while we wait. The 12-Days of Christmas are not here yet, but these days bring songs, decorations, activities, & menus unique to Advent waiting. They make Advent blue a rich, joy-full, hope-full blue.

It's like the church waiting for the return of Christ: God bringing history to fulfillment and creation to consummation. We are not passive. We are vigorously active. We say healing prayers and inculcate healthful habits. We engage in justice in small, local ways. We extend hospitality to neighbor and stranger. We slow down freneticism by setting aside habits that rob us of peace. We pray as we watch. We breathe.

Actively waiting with you,
Pr. Michael Meranda



December Altar Flowers

December 19 - Herb Watts
- Gary & Norma Eble

Altar Flowers

Candy Rodgers, Treasurer, says the cost of altar flowers per vase is \$15.00. To sponsor both vases for a Sunday is \$30.00.

The sign up sheet for altar flowers is in the hallway near the elevator. Sign up for the Sunday you want and then put the money in the regular Sunday morning offering.

You can either use the blank line on your offering envelope or place your money in a plain envelope with the date you signed up for clearly marked on the outside of the envelope. Following these procedures will assure that the Finance Committee puts the money in the right account.

Staff Gift At Christmas

As has been the tradition at Christmas, we accept donations for an annual Staff Gift.

Messiah has seven hard working employees who give of their time in various ways to help make Messiah successful. All of the employees except Pastor are part time.

Finance Committee will receive your donations and then a Committee member will purchase the gifts.

Just like with Altar Flowers mentioned previously, use the blank line on your offering envelope and write "staff gift" on it or place your donation in a plain white envelope marking "staff gift" on the outside.

Finance Committee will take it from there.

Memorial Fund Contributions

In memory of Rick Reinker:
Joyce & Lanny Anderson
Carol Dey
Donald Moore

In memory of Ethan Williams
Joyce & Lanny Anderson

In memory of Connie Cooper

Steve & Sandy Simms	Marion & Laurence Hughes
Sally Smith	Joe Ward
Lucia Otto	Lawrence & Rosemary Arp
Steve Holl	John Simms
Erin & David Kingery	Larry & Cassie Korland
Wagners	Will & Kay Raymond
Carla Hague	Joyce & Lanny Anderson
Ronald & Janet Vettel	Gerald & Mariel Kujala
Keith & Patricia Reinker	

Church Mouse Heard Eleanor Roosevelt Say:

One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes...and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.



January Messenger

Art and Pastor will prepare a text only Messenger for January. We will return to a full Messenger for February.

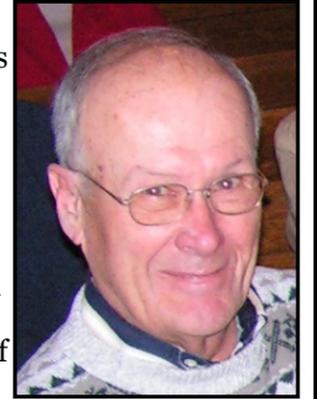
December Worship

Worship in December will remain the same. Saturday at 9:30 am and Sunday at 10:00 am. A special YouTube Christmas Eve with Holy Communion is at 7:00 pm December 24.

Stewardship Corner

By: Russ Jepson, Stewardship Chair

As 2021 begins to fade into the night, we ready ourselves for a new year, with prayers that with the dawn it will be better than 2021.



For 2022 we begin making decisions about such things as what medical plan we will go with, what will be our financial priority as the cost of living continues to rise and maybe, whether to vaccinate or not to vaccinate.

Another decision we will be making for 2022 is our financial response to god's work through Messiah.

Pastor Meranda presented a sermon at a synod gathering on Stewardship. Its focus was on giving. I wish I could attach the video presentation to this message. It was pointed, it was informative, it had rhythm.

Our giving is in response to our relationship with God. Our giving is percentage giving as we tally up all our obligations and determine what percent we can return to god. As Pastor Meranda said in his sermon, "we live life in rhythm." True. We arise; we go through the same routine getting ready for the day and going through the day. Our giving should be part of that rhythm.

As we approach the new year 2022, may our financial response to God through Messiah be one of joy and thanksgiving for all the blessings he has bestowed on us and part of our rhythm.

Parish Register

Ethan Williams service on 11-05-2021
Connie Cooper died in Christ 11-08-2021
Julie Loucks died in Christ 11-14-2021

**January Messenger
Copy Deadline
12 Noon December 28**

Letters & Emails

To The Faithful at Messiah,

Thank you for your gifts so far this year. Your generosity of spirit, faith, and purse is notable! Thank you for your partnership and the ways that, together, we are making Christ known.

Peace,

Bishop Barbins

(March 2021 thru October 2021 Messiah has given \$10,847.)

Our use of Mission Support this year:

- Through Candidacy and First Call we supported and welcomed 5 first call Pastors into our Synod. We helped 12 congregations find settled pastors, 5 of those congregations had not had a settled pastor in over 2.5 years.
- Along with the Disciplining and Evangelizing Table, we developed the Dandelion Project where 11 congregations are learning and growing into vibrant, vital congregations.
- We mobilized your Deans who attended ordinations and funerals and presided at installations.
- We supported our pastors and deacons with spiritual direction and coaching subsidies helping them to be stronger leaders among you.
- We thank you for your generous support!

Laura Barbins, NEO Synod Bishop

Note of thanks:

The Cooper family want to thank Pastor Meranda and the Messiah congregation who have provided so much support both for us but especially for Connie as she struggled with her health over these past many months. Pastor's visits with Connie and your cards and expressions of concern have meant a lot to us. A special Thank You goes to the women of Messiah who provided the wonderful luncheon after the funeral service. You all are the greatest.

The family of Connie Cooper: Hal, Shannon, Chad and Ellen

ATM Pay Off !

By: Pastor Meranda

In 2003, Messiah took out a \$300,000 loan from Andover Bank to fund a comprehensive set of projects to "Abate-The-Moisture" (ATM) in Messiah's historic building. In 2013 a chimney project was added and Messiah's Foundation re-financed the loan. Because of your generous giving and Messiah's careful stewardship, that loan is scheduled to be paid in full on December 15, 2021. Way to go, Messiah!

Alex Restoration Work Done

Emelia Lindberg, Chair of the Property Committee, reports that Alex Restoration is finished with their work. Major tasks included tuck pointing masonry, replacing copper flashing and painting the wood around the balcony window. There was a tree growing in the tower that they will return next Spring to remove. Emelia wanted to thank the congregation for their support and understanding as we worked through the pandemic protocols this past couple of years.

In the pictures below, top, a worker prepares material for the fellow in the lift in bottom photo. The fellow in the lift is tuck pointing masonry.



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615 West Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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Permit No. 313

Messiah Messenger

December 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

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**Welcome
Home To
Messiah**

