

Pastor's Column

It's all about syntax. Syntax refers to the arrangement, structure, mechanics, & components of any language. Here is what I mean. Way back at college, for the Interim Term, several of us registered to learn Latin. In one month, the professor brought us from zero knowledge of Latin to the point where we could translate Lutheranism's Augsburg Confession. We learned a new language so rapidly because we understood the basic syntax involved with language. We had already studied German and Greek. We knew that nouns are declined and verbs are conjugated. Clauses are adverbial or adjectival. Gerundives were a snap; the professor told us Latin gerundives operate similarly as Greek participles. So, learning Latin was a matter of applying principles we had already learned about the syntax, foundational structure, for a language. Most of our energy went into memorizing huge chunks of words. At the end of the month, we did translate from the Augsburg Confession. Some continued on with Augustine's "Confessions" and Luther's "Galatians."



Messiah has syntax. Messiah has had a good foundational structure that has brought cohesiveness and meaningfulness here for 101 years. There is a structure here that enables your way of being and way of doing. There are patterns that provide predictability. There are habits that govern your going out into ministry and your coming in for replenishment.

Here is some of the syntax of life at Messiah that I have come to love these recent 14 years. 1. You are open. You will try anything once. If it works for you, it sticks. If not, you move on. Back in the Summer of 2008, I had no idea how popular Red Brook Vespers would become. You tried it; you liked it. It is who you are – gathering near the lake, singing outdoors, enjoying food and fellowship. 2. You are serious about ministry. In my short time here, you hosted a health fair, gathered supplies for schools, are currently gathering feminine hygiene products. Your service projects thru the years are too numerous to list. You are very serious about outreach ministry. 3. Serious about ministry as you are, you have so much fun doing it. I've never known a congregation that enjoys laughter so much. You have a great sense of humor; smiles come quickly. You are serious about ministry yet do not take yourselves so seriously. 4. You rest securely on the Word of God. By Word here I mean the living word, the gospel of Christ, the very person of Christ. His mercy took hold of you and flows naturally thru you. He is slow to condemn, so are you. He is quick to feel compassion, so are you. He was always ready for the joy of fellowship. So are you.

Openness, Seriousness, Joyfulness, Anchored– they form the basic syntax, underlying structure, of your amazing life together. I'm so grateful to you and to God I got to be part of your storied life together in this good place. Thank you. And stay with those basic ways of being. They have served you well and because of them you have served so many. God truly is good in this good place.

Faithfully your pastor (until 4.30.2022)
Michael Meranda

Memorial Fund Contributions

In memory of Rick Reinker by Margaret Huggins

**April Messenger Copy
Deadline 12 Noon
March 29**

Harbor Print Center LLC

Starting with the February Messenger we have a new printer for our newsletter. Lisa Haytcher, formerly in charge of the OfficeMax print center, opened her new business in January.

She is giving us a real good price on printing the Messenger. The quality of her work is outstanding! We thank her for it. She is located in the Save A Lot plaza in the Harbor.

Letters & Emails,

Dear Michael,

I want to thank you so much for sharing your kind words about Bud in the Messenger! He enjoyed your friendship and we appreciated your many volunteer hours you gave us for the memorial organ festival.

It was a grand event! Hope to see you again soon.

Alix Hill

Dear Pastor Meranda,

Thank you for allowing our Nar Anon group to return to your Church. We appreciate it. The note was signed by seven members of the group

Pastor notes that the group periodically gives a free will offering to Messiah.

Pastor,

Thank you for the gift. I enjoy working with you very much.

God bless,

Arthur

Pastor notes that this was a note from Arthur expressing thanks for the Christmas Staff Gift from the congregation.

Council Officers Elected

Church Council elected officers recently. Those elected were, pictured below L to R, Candace



Rodgers, Treasurer; Jill Carle, Vice President; and in the back row, Mark Anderson, President.

Not in the picture is Secretary, Renee Spencer.

We appreciate the willingness of these members to serve and we wish them well!

Worship Messiah Lutheran Church

Worship in Lent

By: Joanna Pretz-Anderson, Worship & Music Chair

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The holy time of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2. Come to begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of repentance and worship service in our sanctuary at 7:00 pm. We mark our foreheads with dust, acknowledge our mortality, and wear the smudged mark of the life-giving cross. On Ash Wednesday and throughout the season of Lent the lessons remind us of how we have missed the mark, strayed from God's instructions, and done harm to ourselves and others. We are urged to "return to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful" and so, we repent, renew our baptism, and receive new life in Christ. Although there will be no mid-week services during Lent at Messiah until Holy Week, you may want to look on-line for devotion or study.

In keeping the solemn focus of confession during Lent, the Chancel is bare – no greens or appointments other than what is needed. You won't see flowers on the altar; our Easter garden will be all the more beautiful on Resurrection Sunday. More details are coming next month on where and when to bring in plants for this garden, as well as details about services during Holy Week.

You will notice we have added more Worship Volunteers to our Sunday worship. Thank you to everyone who responded to my call for action! A BIG thank you to our very efficient schedulers, Faythe Jerome (readers), Pastor (temporarily assigning Assisting Ministers/Deacons), and Joan Malkie (Altar Guild) for faithfully serving our church! Council has approved having the Choir resume worship leadership, and the church will buy masks made especially for singing for choir members to use. We still ask everyone to wear masks while at worship to keep ourselves, and especially others, safe from infections and viruses.

See you in church!

Tapestry Has Resumed

Tapestry has resumed their weekly meetings. Under the capable leadership of Barb Ranta, this non-denominational Bible study group meets every Tuesday at 10:00 am.



Lend A Hand Clients

Lend A Hand clients are shown here waiting for their groceries in the back hallway. This picture was taken in January of 2009. The need was great then and the need is still great now.

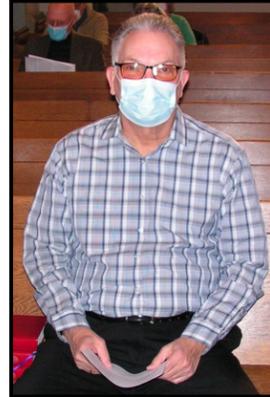


We appreciate the volunteers who work to keep this outreach viable.

Lectors & Deacons Have Returned

As we transition to a more normal Worship pattern, it's nice to see volunteers return to our service. Pictured here, on the left, is a lector from a recent service, Keith Reinker. Pictured on the right is Rick Ranta, a Deacon one recent Sunday.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these positions, contact Joanna Pretz-Anderson to get involved. Her contact information is listed in her article on the other side of this Messenger.



Church Mouse Heard

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My mommy looked back once while she was driving and she turned into a telephone pole!"



Messiah Lutheran Church
615 West Prospect Road
Ashtabula, OH 44004

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Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Permit No. 313

Messiah Messenger

March 2022

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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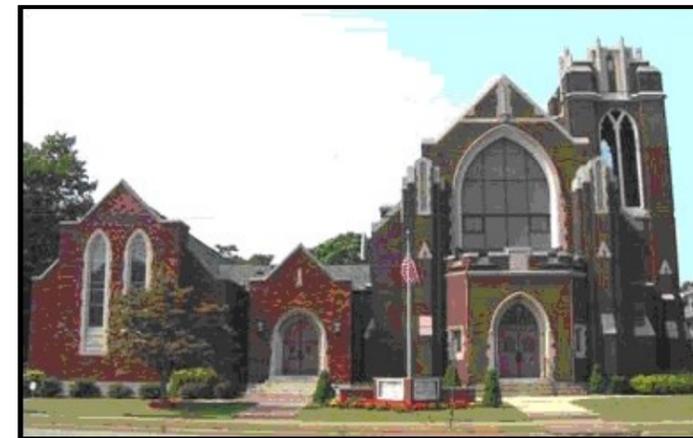
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The Rev. Dr. Michael Meranda, Pastor

Phone: 440-998-7321

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**Welcome
Home To
Messiah**



March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Tapestry	2 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00	3	4	5 Holy Communion 9:30
6 Holy Communion 10 Kathy Nordquest	7 Lend A Hand 10:30 Finance Committee 7:00	8 Tapestry	9	10	11	12 Holy Communion 9:30
13 Holy Communion 10 Sue Riley	14 Lend A Hand 10:30 Council 7:00	15 Tapestry	16	17	18	19 Holy Communion 9:30
20 Holy Communion 10 Faythe Jerome	21 Lend A Hand 10:30	22 Tapestry	23	24	25	26 Holy Communion 9:30
27 Holy Communion 10 Joanna Pretz-Anderson	28 Lend A Hand 10:30	29 Tapestry Messenger Deadline Noon	30	31		