

Pastor's Column

Three recent events are worthy of reflection

Mary Tyler Moore died January 25th. I did not see her that often on her "Mary Tyler Moore Show" for which she is best known. That show was on Saturday nights. I was in high school, college, and seminary those years and did other stuff on Saturday nights. Her character, Mary Richards, was news producer at WJM-TV in Minneapolis. I understand she inspired millions of American women to be strong and claim their career. The role for which I remember Mary Tyler Moore was the Dick Van Dyke Show. She played suburban wife Laura Petrie to comedy writer husband Rob Petrie (Van Dyke). That program was black and white. I had a HUGE grade school aged boy crush on Mary Tyler Moore in that role. I was in good company. Her character quickly became known as America's Sweetheart. In real life Mary Tyler Moore overcame major obstacles. Her parents were distant. Alcoholism was part of the family dynamic. She was the victim of sexual abuse. As a young adult she was diagnosed with Type One Diabetes. In spite of all that she applied herself to her craft. She danced, sang, and acted. She mastered the art of TV comedy. If what we hear from Hollywood is true, she created an atmosphere on the set that made fellow actors look forward to showing up for work. She was a consummate professional.



The Rev. Stephen Long, D.Min., died January 27th. This was such unwelcome news, especially considering there had been an all afternoon celebration of his retirement on January 22nd. Stephen served as pastor at the First Presbyterian Church for thirty years and two months. I still have in my file a welcome note he sent to me when I arrived here in 2008. Stephen had projects for which he was especially known: annual Lenten prayer breakfasts, National Day of Prayer, and Baccalaureate at LHS. In an unusual though appropriate turn of events, the local Ashtabula pastors gathered to plan and conduct his funeral. In one of my emails to them I observed, "We pastors in Ashtabula are brothers and sisters in the ministry; when Stephen died it was as if we lost our older brother." I've always maintained a life well lived brings people together at the funeral. That is the case with Pastor Stephen Long.

The third event was not about death but about health and life. Renee Spencer and Barb Lewis did a stellar job planning and leading the 1st ever health fair at Messiah. It was wonderful to see the parking lot jammed with vendors and clients on January 31st. Many remarkable and memorable conversations occurred throughout the day. I remember two. A gentleman who had received a free hair cut was effusive at how good it felt to have a haircut. I take those things for granted. For me a hair cut is something to schedule in. For many a hair cut is something they do not receive often enough. The other encounter I'll remember is an exchange from one of the groups who came upstairs to tour the church with me. A young woman became very still and silent. She said, "I've never been in a building like this before." I asked her, "What does this place make you feel like?" She responded, "I just feel at peace here." I encouraged her to return on Sunday.

What will February bring to our congregation, to our homes, to our church denomination, to our nation, to Washington DC, to the Middle East? Only God knows. Whatever befalls us, God calls us to reflect the light of love and hospitality. We trust God to put us in the right place at the right time to be so hospitable and loving.

Faithfully your pastor
Michael Meranda

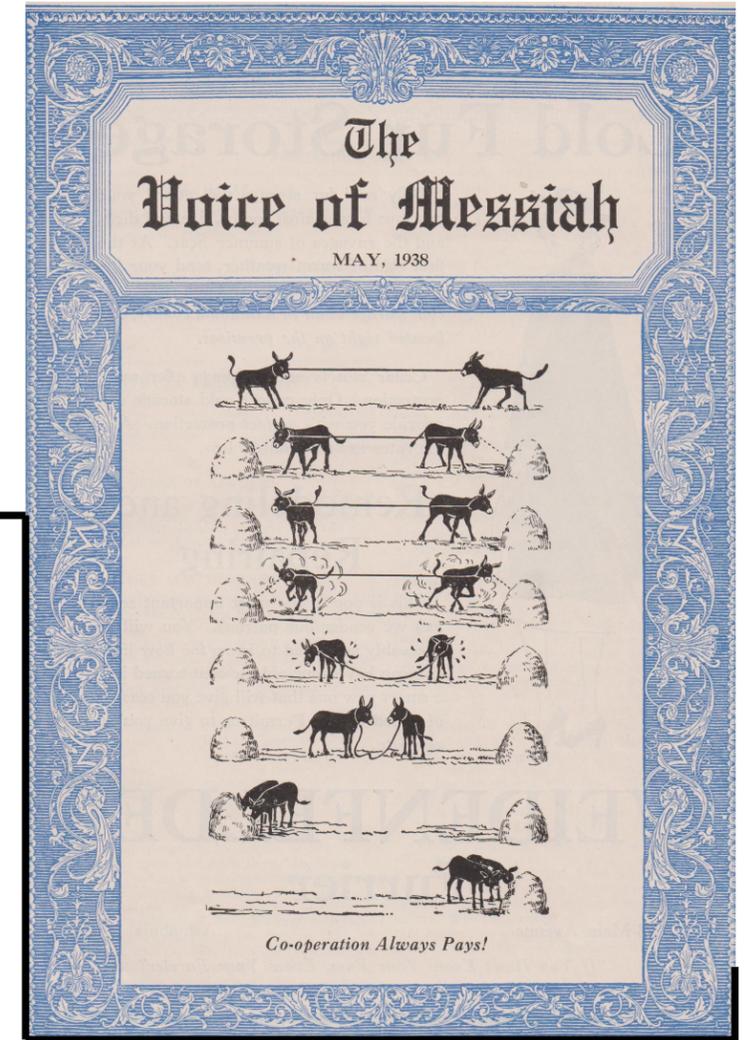
Voice of Messiah

By: Hal Cooper, Archives Committee

The Voice of Messiah was started and edited by Pastor Leonardson in about 1933. It was published monthly and a subscription cost 50 cents/year. In addition to parish news it was filled with advertising by local merchants.

Pictured is the cover of the May, 1938 issue which appears appropriate given our current political climate. Back then it was designed to promote cooperation from the congregation to pay off a note for \$5,000 that was coming due on June 1.

The Archives' collection of the Voice of Messiah is incomplete. If anyone has copies that they would be willing to donate to the Archives, it would be appreciated.



Daytimers Meet



The Daytimers continue their regular meetings with about 20 people in attendance most Wednesdays. Daytimers meet the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 am. A typical agenda includes playing cards and sharing a buffet lunch. Everyone brings a dish to share and a "feast" is enjoyed by all! Pictured here are two tables of Daytimers at lunch one recent Wednesday.



Staff Christmas Gift

Messiah members contributed \$765 to the staff this Christmas. That was just under \$100 per staff member.

That was a significant gift for each of our hard working staff members. Many thanks, members!

Foundation New Members

The Messiah Lutheran Church Foundation recently welcomed new members. The Foundation prepares a list of possible new members that is then presented to Church Council. Church Council then appoints the new members to the Board of Supervisors.

Appointed recently were Keith Reinker, Debra Fleming and Jill Carle.

Current Foundation president is Ed Spencer. Marilyn Brown is vice president/treasurer and Jill Carle is secretary.

Benevolence Giving Increases

Our Church giving to benevolence increased for the second year in a row! In 2016 we contributed \$13,233.70 to the NEO Synod. In 2015 we contributed \$12,799.50. That was a 3.4% increase!

Let's work hard to try to make it "three in a row"!

The Synod provides us with many services that are invaluable. Chief among them is overseeing the calling of a new pastor and the providing of Interim pastors when a congregation has a vacancy. They will also recommend supply Pastors for Churches to consider for filling a pulpit when their regular pastor is on vacation or away on sabbatical. The Synod provides many other services that are provided at no charge to the local congregation.

Nation Fest Is February 26

By: Ruth Hlinovsky, For Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality team is happy to announce that Nation Fest will be celebrated on Sunday, February 26 starting at 5:00 pm. We hope for lots of participants so that we may indulge ourselves with the flavors of many ethnic gustatory delights.

Helpers will be in the Fellowship Hall all afternoon to receive dishes as they arrive. We also appreciate you to fill the sign-up sheets in the love, care and concern folders.

Hospitality also needs helping hands for setting up and decorating the hall on Saturday, February 25 starting at 10:00 am.

Thank you to all who can help to make this event a success.

Church Mouse Heard

A Sunday School student say when asked is it better to be single or married? "It's better for girls to be single, but not for boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them."



2016 Statements Available

Our 2016 statements of giving to the Church are now available to be picked up. They are on a table in the narthex of the Church.

Many members use these statements in completing their income tax for the year.

If you secure your statement and find that there is an error, please contact Assistant Treasurer Candy Rodgers (992-5054) or Treasurer Becky Young (645-7795). These are the people who can and will correct the report for you.

Thanks For Your Support

By: Robin Wells

Thank you to all who filled the Mya Bear Bottles, and thank you to Keith Reinker, Brian Wells and Homer Young who helped roll coins. We delivered \$266 to Mya Women's Center, and there are some bottles that have been returned since that still need to be counted. This, in addition to the free will offering from the Thanks-For-Giving dinner, brings the total donated in 2016 to Mta House to \$544!! What a giving congregation we have at Messiah!!

We will continue the Mya Bear project and count them as they are filled and returned. So, please feel free to take another bottle and toss your spare change into it. Again, thank you to all for your great support of this very important mission!!

**Nation Fest February 26
5:00 pm - Fellowship Hall**

1942 Confirmation

Seventy five years ago Messiah confirmed 10 members. They are pictured on the right, front row L to R, Walter Nelson, Donna Redmond, Pastor Carl Moberg, Mary Hogan and Wallace Patton.

Back row, Clayton Carlson, Edward Leonard, Shirley Hodges, Jack Hogan, Richard C. Johnson and Robert Johnson.

Our thanks to Cathy Carle for securing and coping this photo for us.



We Had A Meeting



Our congregation has two "Annual Meetings" per year. One in October and the other in January. At the October meeting we elect members who will serve on Church Council and to several other positions.

At the January meeting we hear a report on our finances for the previous year and we adopt a budget for the coming year.

In the pictures above, on the left, Candy Rodgers reviews our 2016 financial report and presents the 2017 budget. Candace Daniels, on the right, signs in for the meeting.

Candy Rodgers report showed that we received \$177,915 in 2016. Our budget called for us to receive 178,024. We were just short of our budget by \$109. The budget the Finance Committee prepared and the Church Council recommended that we adopt calls for us to receive in contributions in 2017 \$181,695. All employees and the Pastor received a two percent salary increase for 2017.

Both reports were unanimously approved by the Congregation.

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

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Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Permit No. 313

Messiah Messenger

February 2017

Worship:

11:00 am - Sunday

Sunday School:

Adult Forum - 9:45 am Sunday



**An ELCA
Congregation
In Mission to
Ashtabula**



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