
Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Pastor Ben Cherland



Holy Week

March, 2024

Dear Messiah,

March is here, and with it, on its very last day, comes Easter. We have a ways to go until then - Lent continues with Sunday services and our Lenten midweek gatherings. And then of course, there's Holy Week. It begins on March 24 with Palm/Passion Sunday. It's to this last week before we celebrate the resurrection that I want to speak about here, and I want to do so with a word of invitation.

Palm/Passion Sunday begins with celebration - a joyful procession outside, then into the church with singing and the waving palms. But soon after gathering inside, we turn to the last week before Jesus' death on the cross. We tell the story of that last week and the service ends on a somber note, looking into the week ahead.

Maundy Thursday begins what is known in church tradition as the Triduum - a single worship service that extends over three nights: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Maundy Thursday takes place in the story of Jesus' last night with the disciples as they observe the Passover together. This is the scene of the Last Supper where Jesus institutes the Eucharist (Communion) and washes the feet of his disciples. *Maundy* comes from the latin word for Mandate - Jesus tells us to love each other as he has loved us. This service ends with the stripping of the altar and silence.

Good Friday begins where Maundy Thursday ends, carrying us through the arrest, trial and death of Jesus. This service centers on the cross. There is no sermon as this service speaks more clearly than this pastor could. With the Bidding Prayers, the procession of the cross, and candle lit devotion, we see Jesus' death clearly, as at once unique and as an echo of the death that floods the world still. It is this service more than any other that points us fully to our hope in the resurrection. Without Good Friday, there is no Easter Sunday.

The Vigil of Easter, Saturday night, is a different service altogether. It takes place in four parts. With the New Fire outside, we will bless a new Paschal Candle and open the service with words of expectant hope. Inside, we'll gather as communities have for generations to hear the story of God's great love for the world, the world that God enters in the flesh, in Jesus. We will then celebrate baptism, God's welcome to us into this story, back outside to baptize a number of new members. From those waters we process finally into the sanctuary to share the Eucharist and celebration of the resurrection.

It takes many people to pull together the Great Three Days, the Triduum. I will be inviting your participation in helping in the effort, of course. But if nothing else, simply come - be present to the journey of Holy Week in community with each other in these services. They open our eyes and hearts to the fullness of joy and celebration that is Easter - the fullness of what God in Christ has done and promises yet to do.



Pastor Ben

Total Welcoming and Inclusion at Messiah ELCA

Thank you, Messiah ELCA, for welcoming me as a member and brother in Christ. It is a joy to worship and fellowship with you. What makes the church special is how you welcome everybody without discrimination. I experienced inclusion at Messiah ELCA when you provided me access to worship and fellowship. I pray that other people like me who are excluded or marginalized for having a physical disability and being part of a minority group, will find a church home like Messiah ELCA.

I will always be grateful for the accommodations Messiah ELCA provided me – a place to sit close to the altar, a parking space, a large print bulletin and hymnal. I would love other aging and disabled individuals to enjoy all these benefits. By loving me as your neighbor, you complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a very complex piece of legislation which states that persons with disabilities must have equal access to everything including church worship and services.

I have no doubt that the practices I briefly described above are intentional and would like to invite Messiah ELCA to consider incorporating them in a formal welcoming statement popularly known as IDEA Statement. I would be honored to work with Messiah ELCA leadership to write the church's IDEA statement and officially embrace the principles and values enumerated above. Such a statement would inform the aging and disabled population of our area that Messiah ELCA understands that as we age and mature, our bodies change, and we become disabled. However, this process is part of living life to the fullest. Once written and adopted, these documents would show that Messiah ELCA values and promotes system change, and that the church stands up in the Montana ELCA ecclesiastical structure as a community that prioritizes measurable inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) to all.

Messiah ELCA will be in harmony with the ELCA Future Directions 2025, under which intentional welcome and inclusion is a national priority. This strategic framework expects all ELCA churches to confront and overcome racism, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, and other divisions, provide an authentic welcome to all, and embrace differences as opportunities to learn about and appreciate God's beloved and diverse creation. This is a great opportunity, and I am looking forward to working with you on this project.

Carlos Ramalho.



Showing up for church when I don't want to

When I show up, God shows up—although not always in the sermon.

by Yolanda Pierce



Yolanda Pierce is dean and professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School and author of In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit.

I often attend church when I would rather be somewhere else. There are Sundays when the weather seems too perfect to be inside, when I'd rather sit outdoors at my local pancake house and read the paper. There are Sundays when my mind is racing or there are too many things on my to-do list. And there are Sundays when I'm just tired of church, of the hypocrisy of religion. I confess that there are plenty of Sundays when my doubts outweigh my beliefs. But I show up.

Sometimes I attend church out of duty and obligation. As a minister and a dean of a theological institution, I'm expected to go to church. Church is an extension of my workplace. As a Christian parent, I felt obligated to raise a child "in the way she should go." There are plenty of Sundays when the service is boring, the minister preaches for way too long, and the ushers act confused. There are Sundays when the announcements, which are broadcast on a screen, are repeated ten more times anyway simply because people like to hear themselves talk on the mic. But I show up.

I show up because God always meets me when I am faithful. God always shows up. Sometimes God shows up in the parking lot, in the person who greets me with a firm handshake or a hug. Sometimes God shows up in laughter over bagels during coffee hour. Sometimes God shows up in the face of the impossibly cute toddler who wants to play peekaboo with me all service long. I show up and God shows up, and not necessarily in the sermon. I often encounter the holy presence of God before the pastor has spoken a single word.

Our churches are far too pastor-centric. We are so busy expecting the word of God to come from the

pastor that we miss how God's presence arrives in other forms. Sometimes the word shows up in the person sitting next to you who hands you a peppermint. Sometimes the word comes from seeing the person who was in the hospital last month, now sitting in the pew in front of you. Sometimes the word comes from the audacious hat that one of the church mothers is wearing. God's powerful presence is all around us, not just streaming from the words spoken in the pulpit. Before the creation of an ecclesial organizational structure that includes pastor and laity, or pulpit and pew, God regularly showed up during a simple meal being shared in someone's home, where believers gathered in expectation of God's holy presence.

One Sunday, God showed up in the comments of a woman whose name I didn't even know. A creature of habit, I often sit in the same pew, as do many others in my church. I had seen her many times before; we had shared a hug and passed the peace on multiple occasions. As I arrived at my familiar pew after a few Sundays of being on the road for work, this woman leans over to me and says, "I missed your smile for the past few weeks. I want you to know I'm praying for you and miss you when you're gone." Tears welled in my eyes. The service hadn't started. The praise and worship team hadn't sung a single note, nor had the pastor even arrived at the pulpit. But surely God was present in that moment of deep human connection. She saw me, and she reminded me that God sees me.

In the sights and sounds and colors and textures of the church, God speaks to me. In the cacophony of crying babies and gospel music, God shows up for me. And yes, sometimes even the sermon blesses my soul, for which I am grateful. Sometimes the preacher has a word that was meant exactly for me and my current circumstances.

But not every Sunday brings some new insight or revelation. Not every Sunday brings some transformative change into my life. Not every Sunday soothes my doubts and calms my fears. Yet every single Sunday brings me joy. There is joy in the simple pleasure of being present among the people of God, showing up week after week. This is why the writer of Hebrews reminds us that we should not neglect to meet together, to assemble together and thereby encourage one another (10:24–25). And while I love that there is so much we can do as a community via all the

We are so busy expecting the word of God to come from the pastor that we miss how God's presence arrives in other forms.

remote tools we now have, nothing can ever replicate the beauty of being with one another in the flesh, fully present.

At the center of Christian theology is an incarnate God who shows up in an unexpected season and in the most unexpected of places. A God who shows up encased in the vulnerability of human flesh, in a community and a family, among a people with a history and a story. That same God longs to show up for us, in small and unexpected ways, so we know that we are not alone and that God is still moving among us.

We invite God's divine presence to show up where there is war, division, and despair and to bring peace. We invite God's divine presence to show up where there is pain and confusion and to bring comfort. We invite God's divine presence to show up where there is exhaustion, so we rest in the certainty that when our strength is not enough, God's grace is always sufficient. And we can try to show up for each other with the same consistency and faithfulness with which God shows up for us. □



Christikon Clip March, 2024

Information for our Congregations



Christikon is an extension of your congregation's ministry.

Annual Benefit Auction is on April 21st at the Billings Depot. We are looking for items for the auction such as: fishing trip, weekend getaway, dinner out, themed baskets, artisan items. Have an idea? Let us know! Watch for more details as they become available on our website.

Pick up your **Christikon Camping Program Brochure** at your church. If you would like one mailed to you contact the office. Registration is online at www.christikon.org.

We are excited about our new registration process! We believe you will be, too!

Adults and families: Watch for the special focus for each of the family/adult weekends next summer at Christikon: work projects, faith formation, and Bible study will be woven together with worship, meal fellowship, re-creation, folk dancing and much more. Check out camping for adults and families online at www.christikon.org.

Bus Attendants needed for 2024 – Would you or someone you know be willing to ride with youth on their way to Christikon? Yes? Please call Kerry in the office at 406-656-1969 or email at secretary@christikon.org for details. It pays a daily rate as well!

**It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—
exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.**

CHRISTIKON • 1108 24th Street West • Billings, MT 59102
406 656-1969 • secretary@christikon.org • www.christikon.org

March, 2024

In Loving
Memory Of




Maureen Sorenson Booth


Oct 26, 1931 - Jan 30, 2024

Our Beloved

Mother, Grandmother & Friend



You Will Always Be
Remembered



Maureen Booth was a force of nature. Born October 26, 1931 in Mitchell, South Dakota, she died peacefully in her sleep on Tuesday, January 30th, 2024 in Billings, Montana. She was a passionate and accomplished musician, a master gardener who could make anything grow anywhere, and always found room in her heart and home for abandoned or abused animals. She left the world a better place.

Maureen was a special friend to Messiah Lutheran Church. She donated her organ to us and spent many hours playing during services and accompanying musical groups and singers. She was an accomplished accompanist and arranger, always ready and willing to play whenever she was needed. We will miss our friend.

Each month Messiah Lutheran supports a designated charity. If you would like to contribute to this cause, please designate “special offering” on your check or with your online gift. This month our special offering is for St. John’s United

Special Offerings for 2024

January - Baretooth Cupboards	May – Christikon	September – Pastor’s Discretionary
February – Red Lodge Ice Rink	June – Boys & Girls Club	October – DSVS
March – St. John’s United	July – Lutheran World Relief	November – Campus Ministries
April – Meadowlark Daycare	August – Red Lodge Fun Run	December – Prison Ministries



St. John’s United is an organization that aspires to provide healing, meaning, and purpose across all stages of life. Here are some key aspects of St. John’s United:

Assisted Senior Living: St. John’s United offers **assisted senior living** in Billings, Montana, and surrounding areas. Their mantra, “So Much Life to Live,” reflects their commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults. [They provide affordable living options, nursing apprentice fellowships, and a warm community for residents¹.](#)

Three Areas of Life That Matter:

1. **Home:** St. John’s creates warm and caring homes for residents, whether within their own homes or within a St. John’s community.
2. **Health:** They offer transitional care, hospice, and rehabilitation services to anyone in the community who needs them.
3. **Family:** St. [John’s has a rich history of supporting families through adoption services, childcare, counseling and spiritual care.](#)

• **Additional Services:**

- **Adoption:** St. John’s has placed hundreds of babies into adoptive homes.
- **Childcare:** They provide care for little ones.
- **Counseling and Spiritual Care:** St. John’s helps heal souls through counseling and spiritual support.

Dear Friends at Messiah,



The day in February when I delivered Messiah's donation to BareTooth Cupboards, there was a young couple who came in and started gathering their allotment of groceries from the Pantry. Their relief was palpable at receiving generous portions and choices. There was even toothpaste and brushes and toilet paper, and I couldn't help but wonder if those weren't items we had donated in our previous drives for oral hygiene and TP. I could see our donations at work in the Red Lodge community.

I would like to thank you for stepping up to the challenge of our January Special Offering, **BareTooth Cupboards**. Including a grant from Thrivent, we supplied twenty-two boxes of food and, at least \$175. That is the equivalent of \$850 donated for this event.

But the news is far greater than that. The volunteers at the Pantry when we showed up with our donation were simply overwhelmed with the diversity included in the boxes. They stated that they never get spices, we gave them thirty plus jars. They seldom get things like granola bars, vegetable oil, powdered milk, and more. We gave them boxes of these.

As Jesus is quoted in the Parable of the Ten Pounds, "Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities." Luke 19:17. Oh, no! Ten cities?!

What's Going on at Messiah

Meadowlark Tweets



Happy March!

Our crawling has turned to wobbling and has turned to walking! Our fabulous teachers are beginning the Bag Study with the kiddos and we're having so much fun learning all about bags! Purses, grocery bags, duffle bags, backpacks, and so much more! Keep an eye out for April! All funds given to us from the Special Offering in April will go to our Tuition Assistance Fund. This fund is available to our families in times of immediate need to help with tuition costs.

Megan Strong

Calvary Carpenters would love to have you volunteer your carpentry skills. They provide repair and safety installation services for seniors and people unable to afford to hire to have their work done. To volunteer, contact Dianne Milleson in the church office. To request help from Calvary Carpenters, call the Red Lodge Senior Center and ask for Dianna LeBrun.

A letter to the congregation from Barb Ostrum

Friends! As we have new volunteers entering your financial gifts into the computer, we need you to write the proper category name for your gifts on your offering envelope or on the memo line of each check. Category choices include the General Operations, Light in the Beartooths (our mortgage fund), Special Offering, Lutheran World Relief, etc.

Several of you write more than one category for your monthly giving. We appreciate that.

If NO category is written, your gift will go into GENERAL OPERATIONS.

If you have questions, contact Barb Ostrum or Brooke Flynn.

We thank you for your generous giving.

March, 2024

COUNCIL CORNER

Council met on Monday, February 26. You can find the full minutes on our website under the member portal. Highlights are below.

- Received a progress report from Jeri Kyner and Rob Mettes regarding our landscaping efforts.
- Finalized our Special Project offerings for the year. March's special offering is St. John's.
- Reviewed the Building Use booklet and fees. We will make edits and officially approve it next month.
- Received an update on the member directory - selection of photos should be ready in April
- Reviewed request from Meadowbrook to hold summer care for 5-8 year olds. More information is needed. Linda to follow up.
- Reviewed and approved new snow removal contract
- Heard about a possible opportunity to host bicyclists raising \$ for the MT Synod Hunger Fund. RL to Billings might be on the course schedule this summer.
- Our new cleaning person, Daniel, is doing well.

Since the snow started to fall as we started our meeting, some items were tabled, including the following:

- removing of Financial Secretary position in place of multiple people performing the counting and depositing of offering
- updating the constitution. Brooke, Katrin and Linda will review and make suggestions
- understanding of the Andrea Holmen Music at Messiah memorial status (waiting to hear back from Holmen family)

HELP WANTED

We need more people to sign up for helping with Sundays. All things worship related fall under "Ushers". Their duties include greeting, handing out bulletins and hymnals, doing the readings, taking the offering, and serving communion.

We also need folks willing to set up and clean up communion.

Finally, we need folks to sign up to do coffee hour.

If you'd like to help lead in worship (Usher) contact Susan Leaverton. If you'd like to get involved in communion, contact Dianne Milleson. You can sign up for coffee hour on the board by the kitchen passthrough.

THANK YOU!



"Its from our church... we've been called up for active duty."

March, 2024

Allen Hansen and children of the congregation blessing the new altar Sunday, February 18.



Children have Sunday School during the adult worship service.





LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

“Those who sleep under a quilt sleep under a blanket of love”.

Your Messiah quilting friends are so grateful to have a dedicated quilting area in our new church! The Charity Quilters have finished two hand quilted projects recently, generating contributions to local charities. Lutheran World Relief quilters have been busy tying quilts for April’s pick up. We are so happy to report that we have quilts coming from Kansas and from western Montana to add to the quilts we will be boxing up soon. We also appreciate the fabric and batting which continue to be donated. Many Hands!

People often ask us where the quilts end up. First, Messiah’s quilts are picked up in Billings and added to a big semi truck which has already been in northern Wyoming and will continue filling up until it finally heads to a Lutheran World Relief warehouse in Minnesota. Quilts are unboxed, refolded and then baled to pack for overseas shipping.

Here are some numbers about quilt recipients from Lutheran World Relief for the year October 2022—September 2023. The number of quilts shipped was 194,983 . Roughly 46,000 went to Mali, 38,000 went to Georgia, 26,000 to Tanzania, almost 25,000 to the Ukraine, and another 25,000 to Angola. We have a very informative booklet, “Quilt & Kit Ministry Guide about Lutheran World Relief quilts and recipients in the quilt room if you want to learn more!

During the year, Messiah also gathered items for Baby Care kits and flannel diapers. We will ship these at the same time as the quilts, just in different boxes! Other kits that Lutheran World Relief gathers are School Kits, Personal Care Kits, and Fabric Kits. For more information visit

lwr.org/quilts and lwr.org/kits; or stop by the church on Monday afternoons at 1:00 when we are quilting—we have a needle waiting for you!

Cotton flannel sheets and yardage are still needed



We are collecting cotton flannel sheets and yardage for Pastor Schauer's wife, LeeAnn, to make into diapers for Lutheran World Relief. Sheets can be used and stained because they will be cut up and the unusable parts will be discarded. Once completed, the diapers will be shared with Messiah here in Red Lodge and Sunne Lutheran Church in Wilton, North Dakota and to then be donated to Lutheran World Relief. Let's see if we can help out with this very worthy endeavor.

March

- 3/1 Martha Crofts
- 3/4 Denny Chatlain
- 3/8 Judy Streets
- 3/10 Jim Kyner
- 3/19 Jack Prather
- 3/20 Molly Kreatz
Felicity Cramer
- 3/21 Alex Thuesen
- 3/25 Bob Holmen
- 3/29 Robert Leaverton
- 3/31 Julie Ann Lindgren

Messiah Charity Quilters would love your help from 1pm—3 pm each Monday. Everything is provided except your sewing needle and a pair of scissors. We will teach you what you need to know.



WOMEN'S SAFARI BOOK CLUB

Date: March 21, 2024
 Time: 3:00 pm
 Book: Can't Wait to Get to Heaven
 Author: Fannie Flagg
 Facilitator: Jeri Kyner
 Location: Carol Erkens
 Contact host, Marla Ebel,
 at 406-664-3178 for more information.



Messiah Chimes

Messiah Chimes will once again take part in proclaiming Easter's victory! Their joyful music will support the renewal of light and aid our singing of Christ the Lord Is Risen! Join the chorus as we all declare ALLELUIA!



Messiah Calendar—March, 2024

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
					1	2
3 Lent 3 Sing through Hymns 9:15 am Worship 10:00 am	4 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	5 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Pastor's Bible Study 6:00 pm	6 Midweek Service 6:00 pm Soup and Bread	7	8	9
10  Lent 4 Sing through Hymns 9:15 am Worship 10:00 am	11 Men's Breakfast 8:00 am Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	12 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Hospice Noon Pastor's Bible Study 6:00 pm	13 Midweek Service 6:00 pm Soup and Bread	14	15	16
17  Lent 5 Sing through Hymns 9:15 am Worship 10:00 am	18 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	19 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Pastor's Bible Study 6:00 pm	20 Midweek Service 6:00 pm Soup and Bread	21	22	23
24  Palm Sunday Sing through Hymns 9:15 am Worship 10:00 am	25 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm Church Council 4:15 pm	26 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Pastor's Bible Study 6:00 pm	27	28  Foot Washing Maundy Thursday Service 6:00 pm	29  GOOD FRIDAY Service 6:00 pm	30  Easter Vigil ervice 6:00 pm
31  Sing through Hymns 9:15 am Easter service						

March, 2024

Every Tuesday

Women's Bible Study

10:00 a.m.

Contact Martha Crofts, 239-643-3027

or

Marla Ebel, 406-664-3178

for more information

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

Jeremy Blythe, the family of Maureen Booth, Manuel Cabanas,
Jackie Cordill, Brooke Feister, Jesse Graves,
the family of Betty Hart, Sherry Houser, Jim & Dolly Koski,
Rick & Sandy Koski, Phyllis Kreatz, Jim & Linda Lian,
Deanna Odegaard, Dick & DJ Rosekelly, Al & Dolly Stuber

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please write your prayer requests in the prayer request book in the gathering area. We ask that you re-submit requests at the first of each month if they are still desired or

contact the church office at

406-446-2430 or email requests to redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.

Messiah Church Council

P.O. Box 1330 912 Lower Continental Dr.

Red Lodge, MT 59068

Church: (406) 446-2430

Church email: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Pastor's email: pastorbencherland@gmail.com

Website: www.redlodgemessiah.com

Pastor	Ben Cherland	646-708-1389c	pastorbencherland@gmail.com
President	Linda Daily	406-426-0841c	lindatodd94@yahoo.com
Vice President	Rob Mettes	972-922-9909	rmettes@live.com
Secretary	Brooke Flynn	406-656-0173	flynnquilt@gmail.com
Treasurer	Kim Elsberry	406-425-0967	kelsberrybresnan.net
	Paul Schauer	701-391-0584	pschauer62@gmail.com

Education	Katrin Chandler	406-290-4263c	katregcha@gmail.com
-----------	-----------------	---------------	--

Family Life/Volunteer

Coordinator	Martha Crofts	239-643-3027c	marthacrofts@gmail.com
-------------	---------------	---------------	--

Outreach	Barb Ostrum	406-446-4121	hobin727@gmail.com
----------	-------------	--------------	--

Property	Kathy Kreatz	406-425-1595	kkreatz@gmail.com
----------	--------------	--------------	--

Stewardship	Allen Hansen	508-269-0925	allenrosshansen@gmail.com
-------------	--------------	--------------	--

Worship	Dianne Milleson	406-425-3222	dmille46@gmail.com
---------	-----------------	--------------	--

Other Important Contact Information

Bookkeeper	Vickie Elfering	406-425-1952c	vickieelfering@gmail.com
------------	-----------------	---------------	--

Computer	Gwen Williams	406-425-2401	(Text Gwen Only)
----------	---------------	--------------	------------------

Ministerial Ass'n.	Bryan Lowen	406-860-5571	(financial assistance to the community).
--------------------	-------------	--------------	--

Revised 02/01/2024

March, 2024

Messiah's Mission:

“Live by Faith, Share Christ's Love, Be a Voice of Hope”

HOW TO CONTACT US AND STAY IN TOUCH:

Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Thurs. 11 am - 3 pm

Messiah Lutheran Church phone: 406-446-2430

Administrative Assistant, Dianne Milleson's cell phone:

406-425-3222

Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday: 9:00-4:00

Tuesday : 9:00-4:00

Wednesday: 9:00-3:00

Thursday: **OFF**

Friday: 9:00-4:00

Saturday: 12:00-4:00

Sunday: 8:00-12:00

Pastor's Cell Phone: 646-708-1389

Church Address: P.O. Box 1330

912 Lower Continental Dr.

Red Lodge, MT 59068

Website: www.redlodgemessiah.com

Facebook: Messiah Lutheran

Email: General: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Prayer Requests: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Pastor Ben: pastorbencherland@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Service:

10:00 a.m. Worship



In an effort to make Messiah comfortable and welcoming for everyone we ask that you refrain from using strong personal scents or perfumes.

Thank you.



Fragrance Free Zone
Please help us to accommodate those who are chemically sensitive to fragrances and other scented products.