Light in the Beartooths MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Pastor Ben Cherland



Dear Messiah,

We have been in this new building for the past four Sundays and we are well on our way to making this place a church! There are still aspects that need finishing, of course. The formation of a "Punch List" (detailing the miniscule tasks yet to be completed) is keeping us on track, even as the list grows. The short term goal of being fully functional with our online streaming ability and the full utility of the whole building is within sight. Longer term priorities are blending with dreams and visions (Acts 2) of what this place will be years from now: Between a drinking fountain, an adult changing table, trees and landscaping, a memorial garden, bridging the ditch as part of a path to a children's playground, and the opening of the child care center, our eyes are wide and our hearts full as we take in this moment of wonder that God has been and is continuing to move and shape this newborn resurrection life.

At the same time, and perhaps more accurately, these last four weeks have also been about something more. The church is not a building after all, but a people. You are the church. And over the last month we have begun growing into our identity as a church in this place. This is the third worship space we have found ourselves in over the past 9 months - it would make sense that we are still "finding our feet." But in this time, we are setting our sights still higher, opening our ears wider to the still small voice (1 Kings 19) calling us forward beyond what we have been, into who we yet shall be.

The Ushering Guild is seeking names (look ahead in this newsletter to see how you can answer the call). This is a ministry of welcome and service that I hope can become a point of pride for this church. We have been welcoming strangers, newcomers and long lost friends for the last month, and with Messiah Connects, we've been extending that welcome to others. The duties of this Ushering Guild center on the welcome of the church not only IN the building but beyond it - a smaller version of what I believe this church is called to be and do in Red Lodge. For part of the vision God has for us in this place is to grow, and this is the work of each person who calls Messiah their church.

The development of a welcome statement is a project we will be taking up in the near future. This call comes from the discernment of our national ELCA church leaders who are encouraging member churches to articulate our welcome with deliberate and specific clarity. This is yet another "point of contact" that we will work into the fabric of the welcome God is inviting us to make.

There are many more such projects ahead of us, Messiah. And so I encourage you to keep dreaming, dear ones. We see this new life clearly now, by the grace of God, but the end of this journey is nowhere to be seen. We give thanks for what has been, and step forward and forward again in the faith that God is present and guiding the way. Pastor Ben

The Good Samaritan - Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



I have been thinking a lot about the parable of the good Samaritan lately (Luke 10:25-37). Parts of it are so familiar—the unfortunate victim, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan—that I miss points of deeper meaning. We all know the compassion and generosity of the Samaritan has become the standard by which we measure our response to suffering. Hospitals are named Good Samaritan. All 50 states have a Good Samaritan law on the books. I always imagined (or hoped) that I would act like the good Samaritan were I ever in a similar situation.

There are two other characters connected to this story that I don't always think about: the lawyer and Jesus. Theirs was not a casual conversation. The lawyer was looking to test Jesus. "Teacher, he said, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers with a question: "What is written in the law?"

Being a good lawyer the man answered from Deuteronomy and Leviticus: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Case closed. Conversation over. But the lawyer couldn't let it go: "Wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

We know the man wanted to test Jesus and justify himself so his question was not an earnest inquiry about the Torah. Are some people my neighbor and some people not? How far does hospitality have to extend? Can there be limits to compassion? What is reasonable: Family? People on my block? My congregation? Fellow citizens? And, conversely, whom can I exclude? People across town or around the world? Who is my neighbor?

It's in answer to this question that Jesus tells the parable—a parable designed to be as provocative as possible.

We call the Samaritan "good" but that word is not found in Scripture. No Jew would call a Samaritan "good" nor would any Samaritan call a Jew "good." Samaritans and Jews regarded each other as ceremonially unclean, socially outcast and heretical. They would not have come up automatically in the neighbor category.

It's not clear that the beaten Jewish man would have been entirely thrilled that he had been helped and touched by the Samaritan. (Think of the All in the Family episode where Archie Bunker realizes he has received a blood transfusion from a Black doctor.)

Now it's Jesus' turn to ask a question: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

his becomes the question for us and for these times. When we ask, "Who is my neighbor?" we sort people into categories. Is the refugee my neighbor? Is the Muslim my neighbor? Is the Jew my neighbor? Is the Latina my neighbor? And on and on. This makes for increasingly smaller neighborhoods. And this question can be driven by fear and suspicion. Left to ourselves we turn in and away.

Thank God that God has not left us to ourselves. Our new life in Christ leads us to ask and answer a different question. Not, "Who is my neighbor?" but "How are we neighbor?"

The world is a dangerous place—just check any news source or social media. There are people who mean to do harm to our country. Fear and the threat of danger divide us and constrict us. But we live in the hope of the resurrection and in the certainty of the redemption of the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We no longer ask, "Who is my neighbor?" The question is now, "How are we neighbor?"

The lawyer answered Jesus' question about who was neighbor to the man beaten by robbers with: "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, and to us, "Go and do likewise."

Words from the Synod: Reconciling Works for Congregations

When Pastor Molly Sasser-Goehner learned that Reconciling Works (RW) was coming to Missoula for a local training, she decided to send a team from Immanuel Lutheran Church. She thought that, at the least, the congregation could benefit from having conversations about intentionally welcoming the LGBTQA+ community. The in-person training was held during the fall of 2019 and a small group attended from Immanuel. They discovered that RW advocated an open process that provided flexibility for each congregation. Some teams might decide to move forward while others might find that their congregation wasn't ready but could still benefit from open conversations.

Although COVID hit soon after the initial training, the team at Immanuel decided to continue the process, step by step using resources provided by RW. From the Reconciling Works Website: "Since 1983, the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program has been a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. The RIC Program is made up of congregations, synods, colleges, seminaries, outdoor ministries, and other Lutheran organizations. Every ministry setting begins this journey from its own unique context and ReconcilingWorks is here to help you create an authentic welcome journey that is customized to your community."

The RW Process at Immanuel Lutheran Church:

The most important pieces of the process were: team training, one-on-one conversations, public and open communication, education around Scripture, and prayer. These actions gave the team flexibility to respond to the specific needs and pace of the congregation, rather than an outside, imposed agenda.

First, Pastor Molly formed a team of 4-5 people to take the RW "Building an Inclusive Church" training and follow the process laid out in the "Toolkit" provided. The team then educated the council and received their consensus to move forward with the RW process. Next, the team publicly introduced themselves to the congregation and described their purpose. They invited people to have a one-on-one conversation with a team member and used every communication source such as worship, "temple talks", email, bulletin announcements, and newsletters. At the same time, the team identified initial people to approach for a one-on-one conversation. These were people who might be supportive, including council members. These conversations determined the next steps and a timeline.

The purpose of the one-on-one conversations was to share each other's experiences and questions and to assess overall interest in moving toward an intentional welcome of the LGBTQIA+ community. Rather than persuade people to a particular viewpoint, these conversations were meant to share each other's stories overlapping with the LGBTQIA+ community. People shared the experiences of family members and friends who felt excluded from any church because of their orientation. Most members wanted LGBTQIA+ to participate in church, but some had questions about Scripture or doubts about marriage, leadership positions, and ordination. Others wondered how to talk to or interact with specific loved ones and what all the letters and terms meant. The conversations were respectful, deepened relationships, and held space for varying views.

In December 2020, the team invited the entire congregation to a forum sharing the ELCA story around LGBTQIA+ concerns and to clarify the 2009 churchwide assembly adoption of the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust." At this forum, the team shared an opportunity for Immanuel to host a seminary pastoral intern who happened to be queer and married. The attendees were excited and supportive. After council and congregational approval at the annual meeting, the intern started in the of fall 2021. Her leadership and clear gifts for ministry were key to continuing the conversation and opening the congregation up to an intentional welcome of LGBTQIA+ people. However, there were several beloved members who decided not to remain with the congregation.

In early 2021, retired pastor Jean Larson led discussions on Scripture to address verses often used to speak against the LGBTQA+ community, and an overview of the entire Biblical witness's pattern of reaching out to the outcast, the foreigner, and the vulnerable. These presentations were well attended, recorded, and posted to the church website for anyone to watch. In fall 2022, the team created a welcome statement specifically to include people of varying sexual orientations and gender identities. Another series of educational opportunities involved discussion about the welcome statement. Through a congregational survey, 95% of respondents approved of the statement. The team members presented the statement at the January 2023 congregational annual meeting for a vote, and it was adopted unanimously.

Although Immanuel ended up creating a welcome statement, the team acknowledged that not every congregation will be ready to go through this process. Each congregation has their own context and calling. However, simply going through the training and being available to have conversations around LGBTQIA+ concerns from a faith perspective was valuable to the congregation at Immanuel. The team met with members who wanted to be supportive of gay or lesbian loved ones, but didn't know how. They also met with people who were reluctant to ask their questions for fear of judgement about things they didn't understand or didn't agree with.

Almost four years later, Pastor Sasser Goehner said, "It's wonderful to be a pastor and see people who have family members and loved ones who are queer and to know that our congregation affirms them and loves them. I feel overwhelmed with joy that our congregation can say this. 'You are beloved. There doesn't need to be any shame or guilt or worry. You are a human being who has God-given gifts to share.'"

Christikon Clips

May 2023

Information for our Congregations



There is still room to register for camp this summer! Space remains in most youth sessions and families/adult sessions, including the Work Weekend, May 26-29.

Register for a session online www.christikon.org.

Special guest speakers become part of the Christikon life this summer during sessions for adults and families. During Continuing Education Retreat (July 26-29) we feature **Dr. Eric Meyer. Watch for topic** details on our website for Cont Ed and Mountain Weekend. Come spend a few days of relaxation, learning, and faith growth with us. Full details can be found on our website <u>www.christikon.org</u> .

We covet your prayers for Christikon's this summer, for our summer and fulltime staff, and for all who join in the Christikon life.

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

SPECIAL OFFERING

Christikon



Since 1951, Christikon has been a special place for spiritual growth and renewal with friends, old and new; an intentional Christian community where all are welcome, chosen, cherished, loved, forgiven, redeemed, and made worthy by none other than Jesus Christ himself.

Worship begins and ends each day. We study the Bible together, take time to reflect and be alone before God. We work hard, play hard, enjoy time together and time apart, with time for worship & prayer, and time for silliness and song.

Christikon is a place of joy that lifts up God's gift of life. A place for you. You don't have to be Lutheran to be at Christikon. Come with your questions, your doubts, your challenges, and joys.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS 2023

January......Baretooth Cupboards July.....Lutheran World Relief

February.....Red Lodge Ice Rink August.....Red Lodge Fun Run

March.....St. John's United September...Pastor's Discretionary

AprilRed Lodge Pool October......DSVS

May.....Christikon November....Campus Ministries

June......Boys & Girls Club December.....Prison Ministries

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.

Calling all Ushers!

Messiah is forming an Ushers Guild and we need YOU to step up and add your name to the list. This is the front line of our ministry of welcome, so we are removing it from under the Innkeepers "umbrella" in order for it to be its own independent group. Our goal is to have 4 ushers every Sunday. The responsibilities are light but important, so spreading them out will be the key. There will be an Usher Orientation after worship on Sunday June 4. Even if you think you're a pro, we are adding elements you won't want to miss. Even if you can't make that training we still want your name! This is your way of stepping up into the responsibility of stewarding this building and this community - these gifts of God. This is one way we can be the church God is calling us to be.

Email redlodgemessiah@gmail.com or talk to Dianne Milleson to sign up!

In thanks,

Pastor Ben

INNKEEPERS FOR THE BALANCE OF 2023

March/August - Lavonne Ervin

Bob & Andrea Holman

Karin Harridge

Kim Elsberry

Lee & Nancy Wood

April/September - Marla Ebel

DJ Rosekelly

Jim & Jeri Kyner

Robert and Sue Leaverton

Peter & Carol Boyum

Shilo Moncada

Beverly Urbaniak

May/October - Barb Ostrum

Jim & Dolly Koski

David Jurkovich

Lauri & Andy Grygiel

Linda & Todd Daily

Katrin Chandler

June/November - John & Brook Flynn

Mary & Vince Ames

Rob and Brandi Mettes

Don Lindall

Chris & Kathy Benton

Melinda Berry

July/December - Kathy Kreatz

Shannon Downing

Donna Downing

Pat & Jeanett Keifert

Dianne Milleson

Dick & Martha Crofts

Allen & Suzi Hansen

Holy Week



Palm Sunday—Hosanna, God deliver us!







Maundy Thursday





Easter Vigil





Good Friday

Beautiful Music was provided by

Meredith, Ben, and Carl

Cherland

Easter Sunday

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!



Jim Johnson
"The Ring of the Rise"





Accompanists

Andrea Holmen and Maureen Booth



Choirchimes



All are welcome here!



A happy Chimer, Barb Ostrum



Easter Treats

Open House—April 15th

Many (at least 120 according to Pastor Ben) friends and neighbors gathered to check out our new building and enjoy some snacks and fellowship time with us.



Friends and neighbors



Robert Leaverton sporting his kilt chatting with Kathy Kreatz



A couple of good old boys

Don Lindall and Pastor Ben

Yee Haw!



The lovely and very talented Dolly Stuber standing beside her beautiful painting of the church with the Beartooth Mountains in the background.

Dick
DeVille
and
Andrea
Holmen
Check out
the snacks.





Special Guest,
John Sedor,
entertained
with his
fine vocals and
Guitar playing

Open House Continued



Lavonne Ervin showing Pastor Kim how to chime.



Ladies enjoying fellowship over snacks.



LuDon DeVille and Bev Urbaniak catching up in our new kitchen



Good friends from the Community Church Carolyn and LuAnne Brown, David and Kathy Munson

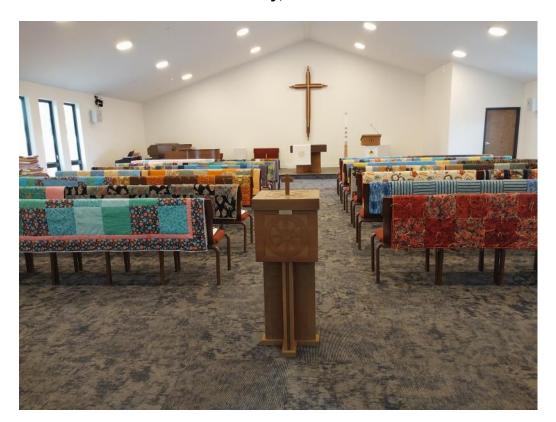
May, 2023
DEDICATION SUNDAY



A huge shout out and thank you to Pastor Paul Schauer and his wife Leanne for providing and preparing the yummy crispy chicken luncheon we all enjoyed following church. Also, thank you to NAPA for providing the rolls and to Diane Dimich for all her work helping to prepare and serve the meal. We are grateful and blessed!

Guests of Honor were our good friends from Calvary Episcopal who allowed us to share their lovely church while ours was being built.





MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH AND QUILTS...a History

In the 1980's Mary Ames and a group of ladies got together weekly and hand quilted quilt tops. Many people asked them to hand quilt their creations and the ladies charged a nominal fee. Over the next two decades the ladies generated about \$20,000 which was donated to charities, locally and nationally.

In the early 2000's several members of Messiah joined the Charity Quilters of Red Lodge, and the charitable work continued, donating about a thousand dollars to charities each year. Also, the group began creating an original quilt which was donated to Christikon, a Lutheran Bible Camp near Big Timber, for each spring auction.

For the past fifteen years the hand quilters have worked in St Agnes Church, using their facility for their charitable work. The group has been charging the quilt owner \$2 per hour per person for their skilled quilting. Of each generated sum, twenty per cent has gone to St Agnes for electricity and heat. This has worked well except that whenever the church had a funeral or other major event, the quilt frame had to be taken down and then put up again the following Monday. Sometimes restretching the quilt was very difficult. So being able to have our quilt frame set up in a room in our new church and not have to take it down is very exciting for all of us. It saves time and work. We are very grateful for the space.

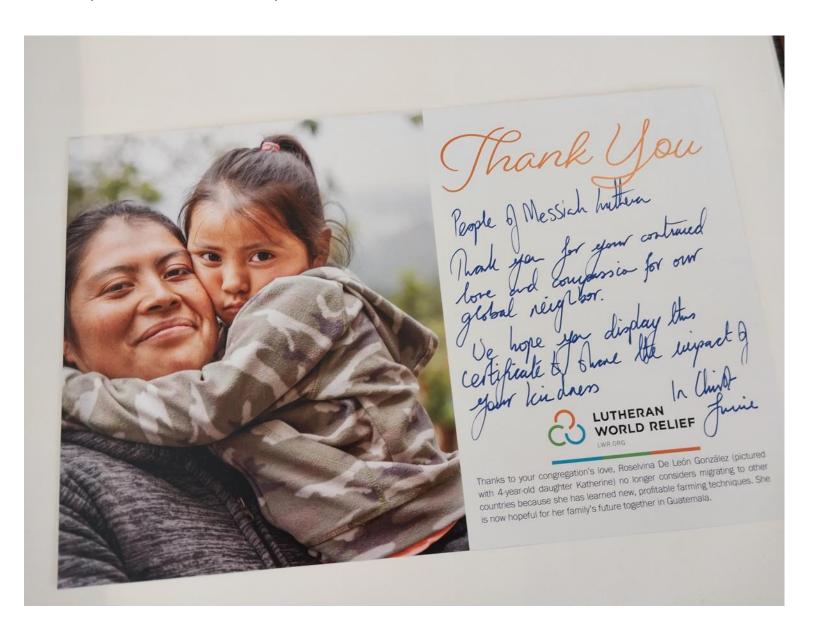
Also, over the past twenty years several of our quilters have been creating quilts which are donated to Lutheran World Relief. We have on average created 60 quilts yearly and packed them up for distribution both nationally and internationally.

On Sunday April 30 our quilts were displayed on the sanctuary chairs and packed up later to be collected in a truck and driven to Minneapolis.

Barb Ostrum

May, 2023

Sunday, March 30, 69 new quilts were blessed to be sent out to Lutheran World Relief.



COUNCIL CORNER

Council met on Tuesday, April 18. A full set of minutes can be found in the members section of our website. (Dianne - please make sure these are posted).

Highlights from our meeting:

- Celebration and thanks for a successful Holy Week and a successful move into our new building.
- The furnace at the parsonage has been repaired multiple times over the past few months, and after serving us for over 30 years, we agreed that we needed to replace it with a high efficiency furnace.
- Adult forum series is in the works for June
- Help with worship (Innkeepers) is still a great need. Please consider signing up.
- Details for the Open House and Dedication Sunday were discussed
- A lot of discussion and ideas on how worship in the new building will be different.
- 1. Hymnals have arrived and we are figuring out the shortened bulletin to go along with them. First use will be the Sunday after Easter season
- 2. Messiah Connects is our new way to connect with members and visitors. Note cards were purchased and in use (our 1st step in reaching out to visitors). Step 2 is a call from an Usher/Elder and Step 3 is a call/invite for coffee from Pastor Ben. Also, if a member wants a call from Pastor, they can request it.
- 3. How we pray for those on our prayer list will be simplified during worship. We welcome feedback to this new process!
- A Hetzel grant was submitted again requesting funds for our AV/tech system.
- A Wine/cheese Fellowship event will take place on May 9th at 6:30pm. At this event, we will blind taste new communion wine. We will also touch on procedures for the new building (lights, key codes, cleaning, kitchen use, av/tech use, etc). If you are able, please bring a box of crackers or cheese to share. Wine provided.
- New Member luncheon will be held on June 11 after worship. Questions will be answered and a little about Messiah will be shared. Those interested in learning more about becoming a member are welcome to attend. Please RSVP. New members will be welcomed during worship on a Sunday they agree upon at this June 11 luncheon.
- Pastor Ben will be out of town May 15-22.

Building Oversight Committee

We officially received the keys from the builder and all of our items have been moved in. Siding is nearly complete and the "punch list" items are being addressed (things like shelving in the entry and pastor's closet, pain touchups, fixing a window, extending fridge platform, installing air conditioner units and gutters, etc.). We need to build exterior signs and determine what will be placed on the exterior (cross? LIB logo?). This will be the last report for the Building Oversight Committee. Thank you for all of the nice comments on the building. We are glad you like it!!

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				
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Vice President	Rob Mettes	972-922-9909	rmettes@live.com				
Secretary	Brooke Flynn	406-656-0173 flynnquilts@gmail.com					
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		406-664-3178					
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Stewardship							
Worship	Dianne Milleson	406-425-3222	dmille46@gmail.com				
			14 4 4444				
Other Important Contact Information							
Financial Secretary	Donna Downing	406-425-3742c	downing.donna@gmail.com				
Microsophia (A. Santa V.		406-446-0164	identification				
Bookkeeper	Vickie Elfering	406-425-1952c	vickieelfering@gmail.com				
Computer	Gwen Williams	406-425-2401	(Text Gwen Only)				

Revised 05/01/2023

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

5/2 Shirley Overton

Jackie Cordill

5/6 Joan Kyro

5/7 Lynn Sorensen

5/13 Sue Prather

5/14 Linda Daily

5/27 Brooke Flynn

5/28 Lance Franz

5/29 Brooke Feister

Jim Koski

5/30 Barb Ostrum

Belated Birthday
Wishes to Pastor
Paul Schauer whose
birthday was April 1.



Cotton flannel sheets and yardage needed

We are collecting cotton flannel sheets and yardage for Pastor Schauer's wife, Leanne, to be made 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. Let's see if we can help out with this very worthy endeavor.

WOMEN'S SAFARI BOOK CLUB

Date: May 18

Time: 3:00 pm

Boo

k: Honoring Anna

Author: Douglas Hoff

Facilitator: Marla Ebel

Location: Home of Donna Downing

Our Kitchen needs

a hand held electric mixer, rubber spatulas, and a variety of tongs. If you can help out, please bring items to the kitchen and leave them on the center island.

Every Tuesday Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. In person and online via Zoom Contact Andrea Holmen at 406-425-2657 if interested

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

Lowell Anderson Allen Hansen Dick & DJ Rosekelly Andrea Holmen Emma Balsam Christian Strickland Manuel Cabanas Jim Johnson Al & Dolly Stuber Lenny Erickson Rick & Sandy Koski Josh Wilker Brooke Feister Jim & Linda Lian Eva Wilker The family of Ray Loyning Jesse Graves Bill & Lois Miller

PRAYER REQUESTS

For prayer requests, contact the church office at 406-446-2430 or redlodgemessiah@gmail.com with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.

Messíah Calendar—May, 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	3	4	5	6
7 Easter V Worship 10:00 am	8	9 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am Wine Tasting 6:30 pm	10	11	12	13
Celebration Sunday Worship 10:00 am	Council Meeting 4:30	Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	17	3:00 pm Safari Book Club	19	20
Easter VII Worship 10:00 am	22	23 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	24	25	26	27
Pentecost Sunday Worship 10:00 am	29	Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	31			

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

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 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.

