

April 2022



*Messiah Lutheran Church*

*Red Lodge, Montana*

# **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

***Light in the Beartooths ~ Red Lodge, MT***

***Pastor Ben Cherland***

## **April 2022 Newsletter**





# Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

For most European descendants, the history of Montana began with the Lewis & Clark Expedition when they crossed this land heading west in 1805. But the histories of the indigenous peoples, tribes and cultures in Montana go back thousands of years. Lewis and Clark “were stunned by the abundance and quality of the plants and animals” of this land, but “rarely, if ever, perceived the complex interrelationships between native peoples and native environments.” Indeed, they failed “to understand [anything] of the depth of the tribal relationship with this place - with the land itself.”<sup>1</sup>

Many non-Indian accounts of native cultures, including those of Lewis and Clark, describe a “random, even “desperate ‘chase’ for food” among native tribes. But infact, “our ancestors enjoyed a way of life of remarkable stability and dependable sustenance” by moving “across the land in regular seasonal patterns timed with the fluctuating supplies of plants and animals”. Intimate and detailed knowledge of land bourne of thousands of years of generational cycles of learning and passing on, the people native to this land fed themselves according to the “land’s short and long cycles of scarcity and abundance”.<sup>2</sup>

With traditional practices of wasting nothing and taking only what was needed, native tribes of this land showed respect for plants and animals, practicing gratitude. Such practices were ritualized in tribal communities, helping to form the land-based spiritual connection foundational to indigenous spirituality, which influenced everything from the way food was gathered to the stories of creation passed down for generations. The land of the people sits at the center of native spiritual self-understanding across the continent.<sup>3</sup>

Robin Wall Kimmerer, an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in northern New York, describes in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, her experience of trying to learn her native language as an adult. She attended a special class where every fluent speaker of her tribe would be teaching. There were nine of teachers. At one point, “a great-grandmother from the circle pushes her walker up close to the microphone. It’s not just the words that will be lost,” she says. “The language is the heart of our culture; it holds our thoughts, our way of seeing the world. It’s too beautiful for English to explain.”<sup>4</sup>

Language is at the heart of every culture, but I want to impress upon you here the way indigenous languages come from a deep connection to their land. Kimmerer describes native languages as a “grammar of animacy” where the living world is described in verbs - all connected to the basic verb “Yawe - the animate to be.” “Water, land, and even a day, the language [is] a mirror for seeing the animacy of the world, the life that pulses through all things... By what linguistic confluence do Yahweh of the Old Testament and yawe of the New World both fall from the mouths of the reverent?”

<sup>1</sup>The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition | Salish-Pend d’Oreille Culture Committee and Elders Cultural Advisory Council, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes | University of Nebraska Press, 2018 (pp 19-32)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp21-22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp24-25

<sup>4</sup>*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis, MN. 2013

Dear Friends in Christ,

You may (or may not) recall the request that came from our siblings in the **American Indian/Alaska Native Association of the ELCA (AIAN)** last July to hang orange banners in our churches to honor and remember the lives of the children who were lost to the boarding school system in our nation and who hopefully will be returned home as their bodies are rediscovered. [Here is the link to that request](#) and a [video lifting up that request](#).



In that request, the AIAN asked that we hang these orange banners for 225 days, remembering the 225 bodies of children that had been discovered in Canada and the U.S. at that time. Those 225 days have passed and yet the remembering and honoring continues. But even as we remember and honor, we are called to continue our confession and change of life (repentance) in the face of the suffering that those actions caused not just to those children stolen from their families but also the long-term consequences for their descendants that are perpetuated even today.

By partnering with our Indigenous neighbors and living with them as equals, how can we work with them to seek justice and make their lives better in the ways they wish and hope for? How can we continue to learn more about the truth of the past even as we seek to find ways to rectify the painful consequences of that history and also join the Indigenous peoples in building new and more sacred relationships? In other words, how can we become better neighbors as Jesus calls us to be neighbors, loving our fellow human beings as much as (or even more than) we love ourselves as the Samaritan did in Jesus' famous parable?

So today, I remind you to remember and invite you to lift up those orange banners again, perhaps putting them in a new location, and to honor the children of God those banners represent and the families they left behind. And then reflect anew on how we can learn from the past, including our past sins, to make amends on behalf of those who are not here to do it for themselves. As I stated in July, "We as followers of Christ have the faith to confess our sins in the love and grace of God in Christ. But at the same time, through those same words of love and grace from God, we also hear God's ongoing call to enter into the light of the truth of our history and our present, and to love our neighbors who are suffering.

Blessings to you this week as you explore ways to be Christ-like neighbors through your love!

Bishop Laurie

## Redeemed, Reconciled *and* United

Twice in the Gospels there is a story about a woman anointing Jesus with pure nard, one in Mark and one in John. In Mark, an unnamed woman comes to Jesus and anoints his head. In John, it's Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anoints Jesus' feet. In both Gospels the anointing happens just days before the crucifixion. In both stories the disciples criticize the women for their wanton extravagance. In both stories Jesus defends the women and declares that they have anointed his body for burial.

This is a very human Jesus facing his impending death and pausing in the midst of all the turmoil to be ministered to so tenderly. Jesus is with his friends sharing a meal in their warm company. Soon his head and feet would be pierced by thorns and nails. But in these moments, his head and hands are soothed. In John we hear the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (12:3).

Not long before this, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Impatient Martha ran to meet Jesus and chided him for not coming sooner. When Jesus commanded that the stone be rolled away from the tomb, Martha cautioned, "Lord, already there is a stench, because he has been dead four days" (John 11:39). Quite a different fragrance.

Not long after Jesus was anointed with the pure nard, he would gather with his disciples to eat the Passover. Dear friends, good food and wine, and the remembrance of not only the spiritual struggle for freedom but of the physical experience of oppression and violence against their own bodies in Egypt. The bread and wine of that supper fed and warmed the bodies of the disciples.

I had a colleague who once said that our lack of awareness of our spiritual hunger—distracted as we are by all the cares of life—is like someone not even realizing that she was hungry until she smelled baking bread. Stephen Bouman, former executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, remembers as a child that when his parents came back from receiving communion, they smelled different—certainly the wine, but also a fragrance of life.

All of this points to creatureliness—Jesus' and ours. In significant and sometimes disastrous ways, we have separated ourselves from the creation and the Creator. Adam was formed from Adamah, the dust of the earth. Adam was the earth creature. We are earth creatures.

At the beginning of Lent we heard: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Too often in Western thought the material, created world has been deemed inferior to the spiritual—as if God would divorce God's self from the universe God created in love. "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice," the 1993 ELCA social statement, acknowledges humanity's separation from God and from the rest of creation as a central cause of the environmental crisis. Can we return home to God, the creation and ourselves?

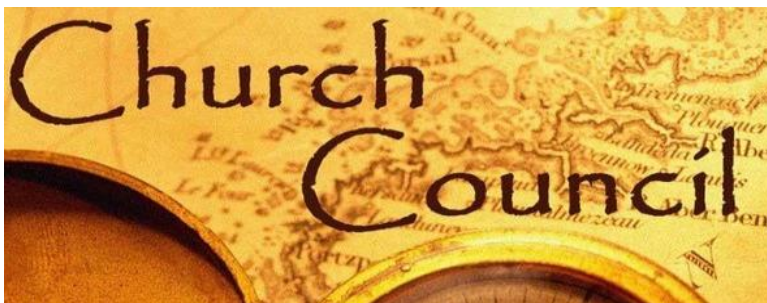
Just before his crucifixion Jesus said to his disciples: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). It falls into the earth, the created earth. God keeps creating.

Back to nard. Nard was rare and expensive. It was also pungent. It has been described as earthy, woody, dank, musty. In short, it smelled like the earth. And it was strong. The account in John says that the fragrance filled the room. It's likely that that fragrance clung to Jesus' body on the cross and in the tomb. Here was the complete accomplishment of the Incarnation—the earth creature of Eden is redeemed by the earth creature of Calvary, Emmanuel, God with us. All of creation is reconciled.

This April we celebrate Easter and observe Earth Day. Heaven and earth meet—redeemed, reconciled and reunited in the beauty of the Creator's loving handiwork.







**Church Council met on March 15th. Highlights are below. Full meeting minutes and financials can be found on the bulletin board.**

- Mutual Ministry Team is set up and meeting.
- Crofts were gifted three octaves (37) of Malmark Choir Chimes from their former church. Martha will form a plan to use them to enhance our worship and possibly extend into the community.
- Innkeepers is really struggling to find more than just the same few people to help out each Sunday. A new plan is being put in place whereby those who attend church will be assigned a month and asked to help on 1 Sunday. The thought is that people are willing to help, they just forget to sign up. Marla will test out this new procedure over the next few months. See Innkeeper article for more information.
- Vanco (direct deposits for giving) is working well for both monthly and special offering
- Approved letter to acknowledge a single cash donation of over \$250
- Discussed market fluctuations and how it affects our Vanguard accounts. Will monitor closely
- Opened a discussion regarding child care needs in Carbon County. Will hear from RLACF of this topic at May meeting
- Approved adjusting class structure based on audit committee recommendation
- Tabled until April: selling the current church when/where - pending further information
- Dianne Milleson has accepted the Church Admin position. She will begin training on April 4th.

**We meet again April 26th at 4:30 PM**



**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.

**If you have something you'd like to be included in our monthly newsletter, please send an email to [redlodgemessiah@gmail.com](mailto:redlodgemessiah@gmail.com) with the blurb you want included, no later than the 25th of the month.**



## Building Update

Final plans are complete! Weather permitting, we hope to break ground mid-April. We are working on the interior elements such as lighting, fixtures, carpet and chairs. Allen Hansen worked on a grant to request fund for our audio-visual needs, including speakers, cameras, lapel and standing mics, monitors in various rooms and more. We hope to hear results some time in May.

### **Women's Safari Book Club**

**Date: April 21**

**Time: 3:00 PM (Ongoing until Spring)**

**Book: The Indigo Girl**

**Author: Natasha Boyd**

**Facilitator: DJ Rosekelly**

**Location: TBD**

*Contact host, Marla Ebel, at 426-8277 if  
you need more info*



## We Worship Together

**Dear Messiah Community,**

**Do you remember this last January when we closed the church doors to in-person worship for two Sundays? It was a sad and frustrating move to make in order to keep ourselves and Red Lodge safe. Well those doors eventually reopened and have yet to close again.**

**It's time to gather, Messiah. If you've been away for a while, it's time to come back. If you've missed a few Sundays, it's time to return. This community needs you. You make our singing more vibrant. Your presence is a welcoming sign to visitors. Your physically rejoining this great cloud of witnesses is a sign of the life we find here at Messiah, together - the life to which our Savior invites you.**



## April Special Offering: Lutheran World Relief

[Link to Website](#)

At Lutheran World Relief, we envision a future where all people, in every corner of the world can live full, dignified lives. Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being.

- We work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality. We provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives.
- We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies.
- We break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive.

Our goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem solving that will last long after our projects end.

### **Our Mission**

Affirming God's love for all people, we work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice and human suffering.

### *April Showers Bring May Flowers*

Again this year, we would like to have hanging baskets at the church. We have some funds left over from last year but are looking for another **\$305** in order to fully fund the baskets. If you would like to contribute to the hanging baskets, please note that on your check.

Thanks for beautifying our church!





- 4/6 Lavonne Ervin
- Eva Wilker
- 4/9 Mason Daily
- 4/11 Myrna Hunt
- 4/14 Jeanne Gainer
- 4/19 Kelsey Benton
- 4/20 Hannah Benton
- 4/21 Chris Benton
- 4/22 Katie Atherly
- 4/24 Chris Atherly
- 4/30 Lauren Mullaney

4/22 Shirley & John Overton

### Bring your camera to church!

We need pictures of the life going on here at Messiah! It feels like we're keeping a secret if we aren't showing people in the community that Messiah is alive and that life is flowing here. Pictures show us a reflection of what we enjoy at this church - community, meaningful worship, exploration, the real experience of grace and God's great love for us in Jesus! Would you keep this a secret?



## Worship Reflections | Barb Ostrum March 27, 2022

Today at church Pastor Ben asked for a "young at heart" person to assist with the children's sermon. I volunteered.

Pastor Ben put a heavy box in my arms and then he put another box on top of the first one, adding even more weight.

"How does that feel, Barbara?" It was very heavy--really too much to hold.

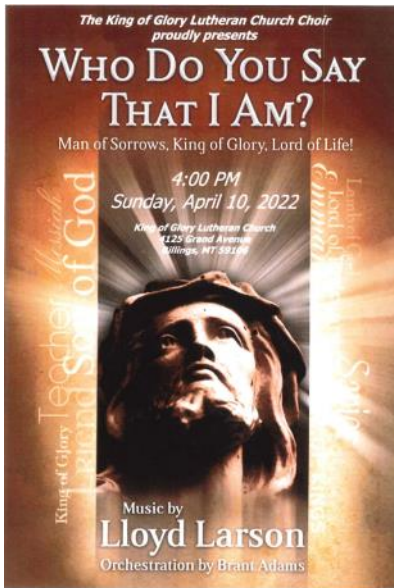
Then Pastor said that he would act as God and he took the boxes, the weight from me. I actually felt that I was lifted up.

This was a clear example of being freed--freed of the weight of guilt.

I will never forget this real experience of what it feels like to be freed of my guilt, my sins. I am so very glad I volunteered today.

I only wish that all of you could have this real experience.





## Free Concert Celebrating Holy Week!

King of Glory Lutheran Church in Billings invites you to attend their Easter Cantata “Who Do You Say That I Am?” on Sunday, April 10th at 4:00 PM. Support local Lutherans and live music NEXT SUNDAY!

King of Glory  
4125 Grand Ave.  
Billings, MT.

## Welcome Dianne Milleson as our new Administrative Assistant!

We are excited that Dianne has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant for Messiah! With her experience at the hospital, her knowledge of Messiah and her cheery disposition, we think Dianne will be great in this role. She will continue to lead worship and sit on Council. Dianne will be working in the church office Monday—Thursday from 10am - 2pm.



## Innkeepers are Coming Back!

Each member of Messiah Lutheran Church will be asked to share in some of the various ministries that need to be carried out by our congregation.

There are six innkeeper Tasks:

- Greeters/Ushers/Acolytes
- Scripture Readers
- Communion (Set up and Cleanup)
- Hospitality (Provide, Setup and Cleanup refreshments after worship)
- Cleaning our Worship space and Bathrooms
- Snow removal

See the Sanctuary Door for your assigned month. If you're unable to serve that month, contact your Innkeeper leader. Church is the work of the people!

# Bible Study



**Every Tuesday**  
**Women's Group**  
**at Messiah**

**10:00 a.m. In person and  
online via Zoom**

**Contact Andrea Holmen if  
interested**

## *Ongoing Prayer Concerns*

Lowell Anderson	Nathan Green	The family of Tallu Quinn
Marphel Ballentine	Andrea Holmen	Kenneth Rich
Russ Born	Herb & Myrna Hunt	James "Bud" Ridenour
Manuel Cabanas	Jim Johnson	Dick Rosekelly
The Family of Amy Crane	Jim Koski	DJ Rosekelly
Lenny Erickson	Rick Koski	Julie Schweitzer
Brooke Feister	Sandy Koski	Christian Strickland
Larry Fry	Neil Laird	Josh Wilker
Mike Gasparro	Jim & Linda Lian	Jim Zenz
	Ray Loyning	
	Shilo & Kingston Moncada	

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

**For prayer requests, contact the church office at  
446-2430 or [messiahprayers@gmail.com](mailto:messiahprayers@gmail.com)  
with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.**

# Christikon Benefit Auction

*"The Ministry  
Speaks For Itself"*

Check out the [Video!](#)

by Pr. Mark Donald

Camp Director

**Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 4-7<sup>pm</sup>  
The Billings Depot**

**Live Auction begins at 5:30pm  
\$20 admission - Tickets at the door**

**Heavy hors d'oeuvres provided by  
TopNotch Catering  
Beer and wine available for purchase**

**Proceeds support  
the outdoor youth ministries of  
Christikon Bible Camp**

**Go to [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org) for details.**

Online auction begins April 22<sup>nd</sup> and closes at the end of live auction on April 24<sup>th</sup>



April 2022

# Messiah Calendar—APRIL

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
					1	2
3 9:30 AM Worship	4	5 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study  Building Committee Meeting 4:00 PM	6  Last Lenten Evening Soup & Service 6:00 pm	7  Bridge lessons 10a-2p	8	9
10 9:30 AM Worship  Palm/Passion Sunday	11	12 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	13	14 Bridge lessons 10a-2p  Maundy Thursday 7:00 PM	15 Good Friday 7:00 PM	16 Easter Vigil 7:00 PM
17 9:30 AM Worship  <b>EASTER SUNAY</b>	18   Messiah Lutheran GROUND BREAKING #:00 PM	19 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study  Pastor Ben Gone Through the 22nd.  Building Committee Meeting 4:00 PM	20  Pastor Ben Gone Through the 22nd.	21  Pastor Ben Gone Through the 22nd.  Safari Book Club 3:00pm	22  Pastor Ben Gone Through the 22nd.	23
24 9:30 AM Worship Easter II  Christikon Auction 4:00—7:00 pm Billings Depot	25	26  Council Meeting 4:30	27	28	29	30



April 2022

Messiah's Mission:

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



**Worship Through Holy Week!** Holy Week is its own journey through the last week of Jesus' life that brings us to the joy of the resurrection. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil are each one part of a single “service”. Immerse yourself in the story and be blessed in its celebration. Join us.

**Holy Week Schedule**

**Palm/Passion Sunday**

9:30 AM Sunday, April 10

**Maundy Thursday**

7:00 PM Thursday, April 14

**Good Friday**

7:00 PM Friday, April 15

**Easter Vigil**

7:00 PM Saturday, April 16

**EASTER SUNDAY**

9:30 AM Sunday, April 17

**HOW TO CONTACT US AND STAY IN TOUCH:**

**Church Office: 406-446-2430**

**Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Thurs. 10 am - 2 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:** 723 S. Adams  
P.O. Box 1330  
Red Lodge, MT 59068

**Website:** [www.redlodgemessiah.com](http://www.redlodgemessiah.com)

**Facebook:** Messiah Lutheran

**Email: General:** [redlodgemessiah@gmail.com](mailto:redlodgemessiah@gmail.com)

**Prayer Requests:** [messiahprayers@gmail.com](mailto:messiahprayers@gmail.com)

**Pastor Ben:** [pastorbencherland@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbencherland@gmail.com)

**Sunday Worship Service:**

9:30 AM



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