



Messiah Lutheran Church

Red Lodge, Montana

MESSIAH LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Light in the Beartooths ~ Red Lodge, MT

Pastor Ben Cherland





Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Blessed Messiah!

As I write, we are still in the season of Christmas. These 12 days go by all too quickly but we look forward, on these still dark days, to the return of the light. The light of the world has come in the flesh, and the liturgical season of light is on the way. Much more could be said, but suffice it to say for now that lighter days are coming.

With the light, this new year brings with it a great deal of change for us. I encourage you to explore Messiah's new website (redlodgemessiah.com) as an indication of the kind of change that is on the horizon. We are after all (and by the grace of God) set to build a new church home this year. While I am committed to offering a sense of continuity in the life of Messiah amidst the transitions ahead, change will be difficult to avoid. If these words sound dread in your soul, hear again the words of Gabriel to Mary: "The Lord is with you..." and "Do not be afraid." What do you think the announcement of all that lay ahead sounded in Mary? At this point, we might be sharing some of those feelings with her. But while change may be scary, God's faithfulness helps us to open to what God is doing in our midst.

Our very own Jim Johnson, retired owner of the Bull'n'Bear Saloon, will be leading us through an Adult Forum series this month and next, focused on his book, "Crossing the Bar: Home by Another Way." This is an exciting opportunity to lift up the ministry of a beloved member, engage in the encounters of a retired pastor made-bar owner, and bear witness to the work of Christ outside the walls of church here in Red Lodge. I am grateful to Jim and excited for you as we begin this study together. I wonder what our discussions of the reading might stir up in you.

This book will present some timely subjects for us to consider. As pastor of a small but mighty congregation of remarkably faithful and dedicated people I see two things: The way you are invested in each other's lives and in lives outside these walls, and your great comfort as a congregation "in itself." These are beautiful things. But they show me your desire to share this community and the future of Messiah with more people. The world is starving for the kind of connection we know here - the kind of connection that cannot, must not, be contained to a building.

So the question Jim's book will help us ask is this: how do we plan to "cross the bar" this year? How will we reach beyond our comfort, beyond our fear? How will we invite, greet, and meet those who could use a space like the one we share? How does the good news open us beyond what we have? For what we are set to build will not be of God if it is only for us. In this study we will find encounters that unsettle us from fear, and with Mary, see what God is calling forth in us.

Pastor Ben

The Cross is the True Gift of Christmas

I remember this jarring image: It was the Christmas Eve candlelight service at my home congregation. A banner depicting Mary and Jesus in the manger had been hung from the ceiling at the front of the nave completely obscuring the large suspended cross. I had seen that banner on Sunday mornings, but on this Christmas Eve in the semidarkness something else appeared. A spotlight that illuminated the cross now shown on the banner with the effect of making the outline of the cross appear as the background of the Christmas scene.

The cross on Christmas? I didn't want the crucified Christ casting a shadow on the Christ child. Christmas is about angels and shepherds and the babe, lying in a manger, not betrayal and death. I didn't like it.

Christmas can be such a fraught season. It is forced to carry so much emotional freight. We must be merry. We must be filled with good cheer. We must be home surrounded by family. We must turn our lives into the happy endings of every TV Christmas special. There is a certain drivenness to get everything done, to get everything perfect by the stroke of midnight on Dec. 24.

Secular culture reflects this. A Christmas Carol and How the Grinch Stole Christmas are stories of redemption. The song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and the film Home Alone are filled with wistful longing. I remember a M*A*S*H episode where the doctors in the operating room turned the clock back to 11:59 p.m. on the 24th so a young soldier's death wouldn't be recorded on Christmas.

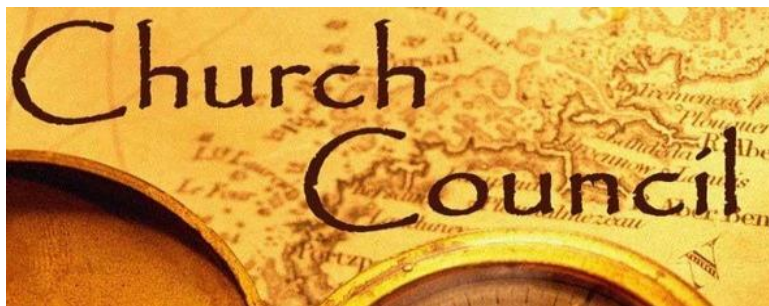
But what are we longing for?

Certainly we want peace in our homes and in the world. We want love and a place to belong. We want life and the end of all the deadly things in the world that bring death and destruction. We want reconciliation. We want rest. We want hope. We want the assurance that all of this means something. We want to know that someone cares. And so we try to accomplish all of those things and squeeze it all into the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. No wonder we can find ourselves exhausted and empty on Dec. 26. The mall scene the day after Christmas—returning broken toys and ill-fitting or unwanted sweaters, the picked-over look of marked down Christmas decorations and wrapping paper—is the retail version of the reality of a broken world that doesn't know peace or love or hope. Except

The hope of Christmas is fulfilled on Good Friday. The cross is part of Christmas. "Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 296). All of our Christmas glorias are realized in Jesus' glorification on the cross. We have peace. We have hope. We are loved. And not just at Christmas.

The cross is the Christmas gift. Through it God reconciles and heals. Through it God's love is made known and in God's love we are known and have our home. And it is a gift. We don't have to spend our energy and time hoping to attract the gift or the Giver by making everything right by Christmas. If we aren't physically at home, if our lives have not turned into the happy endings of TV Christmas specials, if we are estranged from family, if we are not merry, even if we should die, this gift of life has come to us.





Church Council met on December 14th (a week early due to the holidays). Highlights are below. Full meeting minutes and financials can be found on the bulletin board.

- Melinda presented her work on our new website. It looks fantastic!! Check it out!
- Nomination committee is working to fill open slots. Please consider serving.
- The contract has been signed with the builder
- Youth group from Glendive may stay at the church this winter; North Dakota college kids will be here in Feb.
- Annual Meeting is set for Feb. 6; committee reports are due Jan 10

We meet again January 18th at 4:30 PM



Fragrance Free Zone

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

**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.**

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



Building Oversight Committee

The contract has been signed! We will cut a check to Morgan for 10% of the cost so they can start ordering materials. Some items have a 4-6 month lead time. Subcontractors will be secured over the coming months.

Calling all Messiah members and associates. There are many areas to get involved with this building project and we would love for you to volunteer to be on one (or more) of these teams. We want to involve as many of you as possible as we move forward. Please do not wait to be asked - raise your hand and get involved today! Areas are listed below with timing and team leaders (in parentheses). Please email redlodgemessiah@gmail.com to sign up.

Teams:

1. Inventory church items (Jan/Feb) (Jeri Kyner)
2. Make recommendation on what to take with us; what to keep in our archives and what to leave behind (Feb/Mar) (needs a team leader)
3. History of Messiah at our current location - record stories/find pictures to document our time here. (Jan - Mar) (Barb Ostrum)
4. Research alternative forms of energy: Learn about the options, costs, benefits, feasibility and how soon the cost reduction to our power bill would pay for the initial investment. Research grants to help with that investment. (Jan - Mar) (Pastor Ben)
5. Research and price inside furniture. Tables and chairs for gathering room, chairs for sanctuary, office furniture for pastor's office and admin office, quilting room needs? Sunday school room needs? Janitorial/cleaning needs. Hangers/mats for entry. (Mar/Apr) (Linda Daily)
6. Kitchen appliances and things to fill the new kitchen. What are we missing from our current kitchen? (Feb/Mar) (Jeri/Barb)
7. Designing the cross, choosing alter, baptismal font, other "sanctuary" needs. (Susan Leaverton)
8. Work on listing our current building - timing, price, etc. (Jan/Feb) (Linda, with Harry and Council)
9. Closing the gap - A. Fundraising: The Raffle was a great start. Can we raffle something every month? buy a chair/table set, Weenie roast on the land/Snow Angels (when there is snow)? B. Find grants to apply for. (Jan - May) (needs a team leader)
10. Event Planning: Groundbreaking Party, the Farewell Party for our current building, the official opening (Mar/Apr), Open House Party (Fall)

Women's Safari Book Club

Date: January 20th

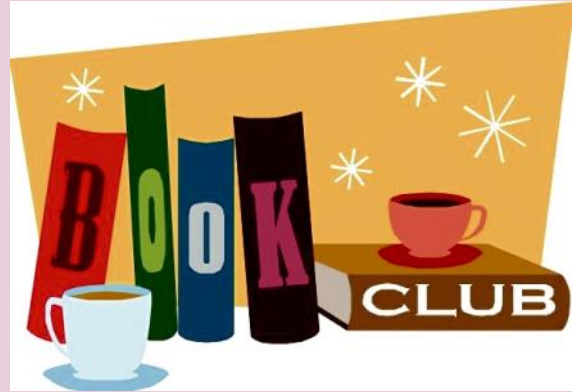
Time: 3:00 PM (Ongoing until Spring)

Book: The Orphan Sisters

Author: Shirley Dickson

Facilitator: Mary Ames

Location: Jeri Kyner's home



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



How We Worship Together Safely

These are the guidelines under which we will remain open:

- **Masks will continue to be required**
- **The vaccine and the booster are highly recommended**
- **Washing hands regularly and often, even and especially at church, is strongly encouraged**
- **If you feel unwell in any way, please stay home (Zoom will continue to be available)**
- **If you feel uncomfortable at all gathering in person, please stay home**

We truly all share the responsibility for the health of our community.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Ben

JANUARY 2022



January's Special Offering: Baretooth Cupboards



Dear Members of Messiah,

Our January special offering will benefit BareTooth Cupboards, Food Pantry of Carbon County.

Unfortunately, BareTooth Cupboards is still unable to accept food/product donations so we hope to raise at least \$250 in cash donations that will match a \$250 Thrivent

Financial grant.

Alternatively, oral hygiene (Toothpaste, brushes, floss — both kid and adult) and kitchen products (paper towels and dish soap) will be collected. Go ahead, be creative as well as generous!

This is a time of year when pantry Cupboards get pretty bare, so we hope to relieve some of the need, the Messiah working through us!

Thank you for your donations

~Allen Hansen~



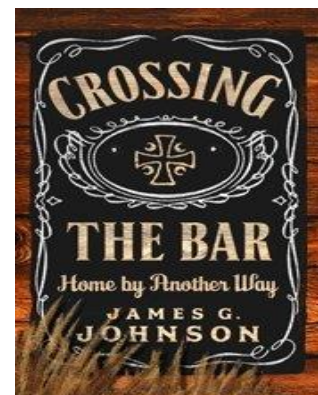
We have a BEAUTIFUL new website! Look it up, go through it, and let Melinda or Pastor Ben know what you think - redlodgemessiah.com An important way to support this website is by taking pictures at church and sharing them with Melinda and Pastor Ben. A good website helps people find their way to us, but a good website is only as good as its pictures: They tell the story of who we are better - especially pictures of people. For all the wonderful things to read on our website, pictures will draw the eye and tell the story of who Messiah is far better than words.

So start seeing events at church, including worship, through the eyes of a photographer and maybe start taking a few pictures. You don't need a fancy camera - if you have one, a smart phone can take great pictures. If you don't want your picture taken, contact the office and let us know.

The more pictures we have, the better our website will become, and the more people we'll begin to reach, welcoming them into the story of God happening at Messiah.

Crossing the Bar: Home by Another Way

An Adult Forum Book Study by Jim Johnson



Messiah will be reading Jim's book "*Crossing the Bar*" during Epiphany and discussing it together in a series of adult forums starting Sunday January 9th.

If you want to sit in on a conversation with a bartender who is a pastor, this book is for you. If you want to take a journey filled with stories and insights born of the joining together of these two worlds, you will find such things contained in these pages.

"Crossing the Bar: Home by Another Way" is written for the church, yet for the sake of those beyond its well established boundaries. It is a book about God's love, our freedom within that love, and hope yet to be established in the lives of people the church often ignores, but who are precious to God, and for whom God never ceases to seek.

Get your copy at Messiah for \$10. Free copies are available from Pastor Ben first come, first serve.

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
Marphel Ballentine
Monnie Boldt
Manuel Cabanas
Amy Crane
Lenny Erickson
Brooke Feister
Larry Fry
Mike Gasparro
Nancy Gasparro

Nathan Green
Ruth Hilderman
Andrea Holmen
Jim Johnson
Rick Koski
Sandy Koski
Neil Laird
Ray Loyning
Edythe Miller
Shirley Overton

Tallu Quinn
Kenneth Rich
James "Bud" Ridenour
Dick Rosekelly
DJ Rosekelly
Michelle Rosekelly
Marianne Schapendonk
Julie Schweitzer
Josh Wilker
Jim Zenz



PRAYER REQUESTS

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



1/1 Dennis Luoma

1/3 Vince Ames

1/15 Don Peterson

1/18 David Downing

1/19 John Elsberry

Leanne Mullaney

1/22 Laura Hollman

Congratulations to the winner of the quilt raffle—**Amy Brown**, of Wichita, KS, friend of Andrea Holmen, and daughter of former Messiah member, Nancy Smith. Amy is a Vocal Music Curriculum Coach for Wichita Public Schools.

A special Thank You to Jeri Kyner for donating this quilt.

\$927 was raised for our new church!



Join us for the Epiphany Tree burning party on Thursday, January 6th at 6:00 PM on the corner lot of our Hwy 78 land.

JANUARY 2022



Pastor Ben hosted a Christmas Coffee Hour at the Parsonage after worship on Sunday, December 26



Christikon Clips



January, 2022

Information for our Congregations

Watch this month for Christikon brochures on opportunities for youth. It's not too early to start thinking about this summer. Youth brochures will be mailed to every young person in grades 4-12 in our congregations this month. Those brochures will detail some very special deals for registering early for camp. We hope to serve even more people from our member congregations in 2022! Early registrations have been very strong so get registered earlier than later!

Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction is scheduled for April 24th.

Too few of our nation's young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience with a community experience that helps open people to the life of faith. Think about joining the Christikon life this coming summer. It can do a world of good...

**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 • director@christikon.org •
www.christikon.org

Messiah Calendar—January

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
						1 Happy 2022!
2 9:30 AM Worship Christmas II	3	4 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	5	6 Epiphany Tree Burning Party 6:00 pm Hwy 78 land	7	8
9 9:30 AM Worship Baptism of Our Lord	10 Committee Reports Due For Annual Report	11 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	12	13	14	15
16 9:30 AM Worship Epiphany II Website Navigation Tech Forum	17 Martin Luther King Day	18 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study Council Meeting 4:30pm	19	20 Safari Book Club 3:00pm	21	22
23 9:30 AM Worship Epiphany III	24	25 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	26	27	28	29
30 9:30 AM Worship Epiphany IV	31					

JANUARY 2022

Messiah's Mission:

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



HOW TO CONTACT US AND STAY IN TOUCH:

Church Office: 406-446-2430

Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Thurs. 9-1

Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday: 9:00-4:00

Tuesday : 9:00-4:00

Wednesday: 9:00-3:00 (Text Study 10:00-11:30)

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

Facebook: Messiah Lutheran

Email: General: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Prayer Requests: messiahprayers@gmail.com

Pastor Ben: pastorbencherland@gmail.com

**Sunday Worship Service:
9:30 AM**



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