

May, 2026

# *Light in the Beartooths*

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Pastor Ben Cherland



***"God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on trees,  
and in the flowers and clouds and stars."***

**Martin Luther**

May, 2026

Dear Messiah,

Do you remember your Confirmation? Many of us didn't grow up in a Lutheran tradition. Whether you did or not, I think a definition would be helpful. Confirmation is a rite of passage in the Church. It usually comes after some education about the Church, the Faith, the Bible, and more. But in the actual rite, a young person confirms before God and the Church their God-given identity through baptism and their desire to grow in Christian faith and understanding. To put it simply, God says *Yes to us in baptism, and we say Yes to God's Yes at Confirmation.*

I'm thinking about it this month for a few reasons. First, because Confirmation is essentially a confirmation of our baptism, and in this regard, Messiah has a problem. As a church, we are required to have a record of everyone's baptism. Some of us have yet to be baptized, and many who have been don't have any information about it for us to update our records. There is more to say about this, but for now, know that your belonging at Messiah is secure in both our and God's love for you, whether baptized or not. And for the sake of good church order, we'll be turning back to this again soon.

I'm also thinking about Confirmation this month because on May 31, my youngest nephew Leif will be confirmed at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Good Thunder, MN. I've been asked to preach and I'm wondering what to say... For Leif, Confirmation has been three years of weekly FaceTime calls with his Godmother, Marja – a Lutheran Pastor herself. He has practically received a full seminary education and is ready to confirm his baptism. Thanks be to God.

Lastly, Confirmation has been on my mind because we have a young person in this congregation who is "of age" (it has been a while since this was true!). Maria Gibson (the Education Chair on Council) and I are planning confirmation classes for him AND any of you who would like to learn more about the Church, the Faith, the Bible and your own Christian identity. Classes will start in October, just to plant the seed.

Baptism is core to the faith – it is one of two sacraments that Luther claimed as central. My hope is that if you haven't yet been baptized, you are feeling drawn to the water by all that you have found here at Messiah. I am grateful for you, and for a tradition in which we are invited to together find our Yes.

Pastor Ben



### ELCA Presiding Bishop

The Rev. Yehiel Curry is the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Elected at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix, Ariz., on July 30, 2025, Presiding Bishop Curry began this role on Oct. 1, 2025.

Previously, he served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod, where he led a synod staff and 160 congregations by providing pastoral care, preaching, teaching, administering sacraments, and overseeing ordinations and installations. He was elected synod bishop in 2019 and reelected in spring 2025. During that time, he chaired the ELCA Conference of Bishops, fostering ecumenical relationships and theological engagement across the Lutheran communion.

Prior to his role as bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Presiding Bishop Curry served as the mission developer (2007-2012) and pastor (2013-2019) of Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church in Riverdale, Ill. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill., and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He and his wife, LaShonda, are the proud parents of three daughters.

May, 2026

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 5/5 Brent Moore
- 5/7 Brian Langeliers
- 5/13 Sue Prather
- 5/14 Linda Daily  
Joan Skibber
- 5/27 Brooke Flynn
- 5/30 Barb Ostrum

Do you want to help mothers and babies through Lutheran World Relief?

We have been collecting cotton flannel sheets and yardage to be made into diapers. These diapers then become part of the baby care kits which are donated to Lutheran World Relief. Heretofore, Pastor Paul and his wife, along with Sunne Lutheran Church in Wilton, North Dakota, have been doing the sewing and assembling of these kits. We would like to begin making diapers and assembling the baby care kits here in Red Lodge. The diapers are fun and easy to make, no sewing experience is necessary. Everyone can help, including kids! Please contact Dianne (406-425-3222) and we'll get rolling.



- 5/3 Brent & Jodie Moore
- 5/29 Jim & Nancy  
Johnson

## PRAYER SHAWLS

If you would like to help knit prayer shawls, please contact Pat Thompson.  
If you need a prayer shawl, please contact Pat Thompson or Dianne Milleison.



## WOMEN'S SAFARI BOOK CLUB



Date: May 14  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Book: Covington Hang  
Author: Lee Cooper  
Facilitator: Marla Ebel  
Location: Home of  
Jeri Kyner



Messiah Charity Hand Quilters need your help to continue this ministry. We meet from 1pm—3 pm each Monday. Please bring a thimble, small scissors and a quilting needle. We will teach you what you need to know. If you don't have any of these things, come anyway and we will help get you set up.

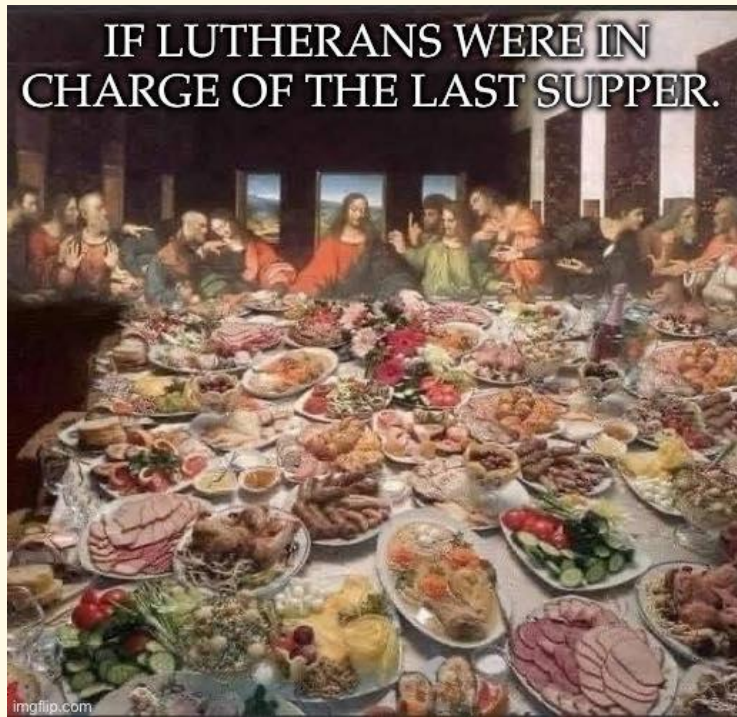


Contact host, Marla Ebel, at 406-664-3178

Let's keep in touch!

If email is not your favorite way of receiving communications from the church, please talk to Dianne in the office and let her know how you prefer to be contacted.





### **Blankets for the homeless**

**We are still collecting warm blankets and boots for the homeless. The bin is now located in the Administrative Assistant's office.**

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**Plans are being made for our "Trash to Treasure" sale this summer, so as you are doing your spring cleaning, please consider saving good gently used items for the sale.**

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**Submissions to the newsletter are welcome! We'd love to hear from you. Please get them to Dianne by the 25th of the month.**

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**If you would like to use the church for a meeting or event, please contact Dianne in the office. She is the keeper of the schedule and can be sure there are no conflicting events.**

**If you are planning a church function, please make sure you let Dianne know so it can be added to the schedule. Thanks!**



May, 2026

## Member Spotlight

Carlos Ramalhos is our member in the spotlight this month. You have undoubtedly noticed that we haven't seen Carlos here for a while and the letter which follows will explain why that is. Please keep him in your prayers. He misses worshipping with us and sends you all his love and blessings.

This past year has been, for me, a deeply personal journey. Approximately one year ago, I was diagnosed with cancer for the third time in my life. Like many who receive such news, I found myself discouraged and questioning how this could happen again. It is often said that lightning does not strike the same place twice, but life, as we know, does not always follow what we expect.

The months that followed were difficult. I underwent several surgeries and chemotherapy. I am now awaiting further imaging to determine the next steps in my treatment. It has been a time marked by uncertainty, physical challenges, and reflection.

And yet, I am still here.

I am profoundly grateful to the physicians and nurses who have cared for me, especially the team at the Billings Clinic Cancer Center. I am equally grateful for the unwavering support of my family, friends, colleagues at LIFTT, and our Board of Directors. Their presence has been a constant reminder that none of us walks these paths alone.

While I would never wish such an experience on anyone, I have come to understand something more deeply: there is, indeed, life at the end of the tunnel. And perhaps more importantly, there is life within the tunnel itself, moments of connection, strength, and meaning that we might otherwise overlook.

This experience has strengthened my commitment to LIFTT's mission. Every day, we work alongside individuals who face barriers, uncertainty, and challenges of their own. What I have learned personally is what we affirm professionally: that dignity, independence, and hope are not abstract ideals. They are lived realities, often forged in the most difficult moments.

As we move forward together, I carry with me a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude for this work, for this community, and for the opportunity to continue serving alongside all of you.

With appreciation,





Carlos Ramalho, LIFTT Executive Director

**[About Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow \(LIFTT\):](#)** LIFTT is a Montana 501(c)3 corporation organized as a Center for Independent Living (CIL). With team members based in Billings and Glendive, LIFTT provides aging and disabled members of the community with programs and services that help empower them to break down the physical, bureaucratic, and cultural barriers that prevent them from being fully independent participants in their lives and communities throughout 18 counties in southeastern and south-central Montana: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Golden Valley, McCone, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, Wibaux, and Yellowstone. For more information, please visit [liftt.org](http://liftt.org) or download our mobile app for your [Apple](#) device.

**Our Vision:** Empowering aging and disabled individuals to LIFTT themselves above the barriers of life.

**Our Mission:** Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow – LIFTT's mission is to empower aging and disabled individuals to live independently through education, support, and opportunities.

# Messiah Calendar—May, 2026

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
					1	2
3 Worship 10:00 am	4 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	5 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	6	7 National Day of Prayer	8	9
10 Worship 10:00 am 	11 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	12 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	13	14 Safari Book Club 7:00 pm	15	16
17 Worship 10:00 am	18 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	19 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	20	21	22	23
24 Worship 10:00 am	25 Memorial Day 	26 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	27	28	29	30
31 Worship 10:00 am						

May, 2026

## Council Corner

### Greetings and Blessings!

Your Messiah Church Council met on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 @ 6:00pm.

You can get the full report, including financials, by requesting a copy from our Administrative Assistant Di-  
anne at the church office (406) 446 - 2430.

- The Stewardship Chair, Linda Daily, will provide a giving statement update for our membership in the months of April, August, and January for congregants.
- According to MLC policies, we need to have background checks on our members who work with children.
- We formed an advisory group to start creating the memorial garden.
- The cost of insurance for church and the parsonage is increasing.
- We formed a committee to update our church's record keeping.
- Thank you to Peter Boyum who is building a new baptismal font for MLC. Upon completion, we will schedule a Sunday of baptisms / reaffirmations of baptism in early 2027.
- Council voted on using the designated donated funds to purchase a set of used handbells for Messiah. Martha and Dick Crofts are planning on travelling to Washington to pick up the set of handbells. The set of handbells which we had on loan must be returned.
- Council is working on fixing or replacing the wi-fi switch for our sanctuary lighting.
- We scheduled the Spring Clean-up event for June 13<sup>th</sup> from 9 am - 12 pm.
- On March 13<sup>th</sup>, a mass email was sent out to our congregation without a clear message. It was the weekly Sunday giving amount and just intended to be sent to our treasurer in North Dakota. This email was sent out to all by mistake. We would like to assure you that this will not happen again.

Our next regular Church Council Meeting is on **Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.**

Please come to our meeting, if you want to find out about the workings of Messiah. Please reach out to me if there is something you would like us to discuss as your Messiah Church Council.

Submitted by Katrin Chandler, Council President

**Hebrews 4:16: Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

### 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](mailto:redlodgemessiah@gmail.com)  
with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.

Claudia B, Meredith Cherland, Donna Downing  
Hannah Gonzales, Dolly Koski, Rick and Sandy Koski, Jim Kyner,  
Mary Lair, Lois Miller, Carlos Ramalho, Sadie Sceva, Guynema Terry,  
Josh Wilker, Josh Winter, Judy Yasi and Garrett

The unspoken prayer requests of our congregation.

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.

**Special Projects 2026**

January: Bare Tooth Food Bank  
February: Boys and Girls Club  
March: St. John’s Ministries  
April: LWR Quilters  
May: Christikon

July: RLACF Fun Run  
August: Carbon County Arts Guild Youth Education  
September: ELCA World Hunger  
October: DSVS  
November: Campus Ministries

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

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.

National Forest Permit area is located in the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Christikon seeks to provide opportunities for campers young and old to grow as the Body of Christ. We move towards a deeper experience and awareness of Christian community centered in worship, where all are sustained in the covenant of baptism and drawn more deeply into the lives of each other.



**Holy Week at Messiah was Awesome!**

**The Holy Week services at Messiah began with Maundy Thursday and the first official communion for four of our young people, Hank Brummer, Ella Kinzley, Liam Moore, and Reagan Yates. After receiving communion, the young people served communion to their families and friends**



**Good Friday was a solemn service of prayer and reflection and music based on the Holden Village Prayer Around the Cross model.**

**The Saturday Vigil was a joyous service featuring a skit about Noah and the Flood called 100% Chance of Rain-performed by several young Messiah thespians. We enjoyed singing and Bible stories followed by a beautiful baptismal service for Ella, Indi, and Romy Morales.**



May, 2026

Messiah sent five bell ringers to a regional hand bell festival in Livingston, Montana April 26 which consisted of more than 150 ringers from all over Montana and Idaho.



Martha Crofts, Bonnie Eichenberger, Jodie Moore, Pam Wagner, Dick Crofts



Happy Ringers



Bells are a family affair



A view from the bleachers



## Recap of St John's United Spring Delegate Day, March 28. 2026

Messiah is one of the area's Corporate Congregations who are committed to supporting the missions of St John's United. Each year Delegate Learning Days keep participants informed of SJU projects.

At the March program, Messiah's two delegates, Laurie Grygiel and Susan Leaverton, heard Peter Crist (long time member of Messiah & currently VP of Mission Advancement) explain ways our congregation(s) can remain active in the life of SJU. We were encouraged to lift up our shared missions in prayer, serve as volunteers, and communicate SJU goals & objectives to the public.

A majority of the 101 new Aeries apartments on the main campus have been reserved, well before even ground breaking has occurred. 16 Patio Homes, at Wyndstone (in the Heights) will be ready for occupancy soon. Luther Lodge has begun renovations at First English Lutheran Church near the hospital corridor. Six guest rooms with common spaces will provide low and no cost accommodations to those in town receiving medical care.

We were briefed on the range of services offered to Yellowstone County residents who prefer to receive care in their own homes. These services improve quality of life & reduce re-hospitalization.

This year's Summer Concert Series will feature a varied line-up of performers, with lots of fun opportunities to volunteer.

CEO David Trost offered a realistic overview of the successes and challenges facing senior and social services providers like SJU. Reduced national inventory of senior housing combined with a growing senior population adds pressure to find innovative solutions.

Please speak with Laurie or Susan for further information.

May, 2026

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:**

Tuesday : 11-4:00

Wednesday: 12:00-4:00

Thursday: 11:00-4:00

Friday: 12:00-4:00

Sunday: PM

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

**Facebook: Messiah Lutheran**

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

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

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

