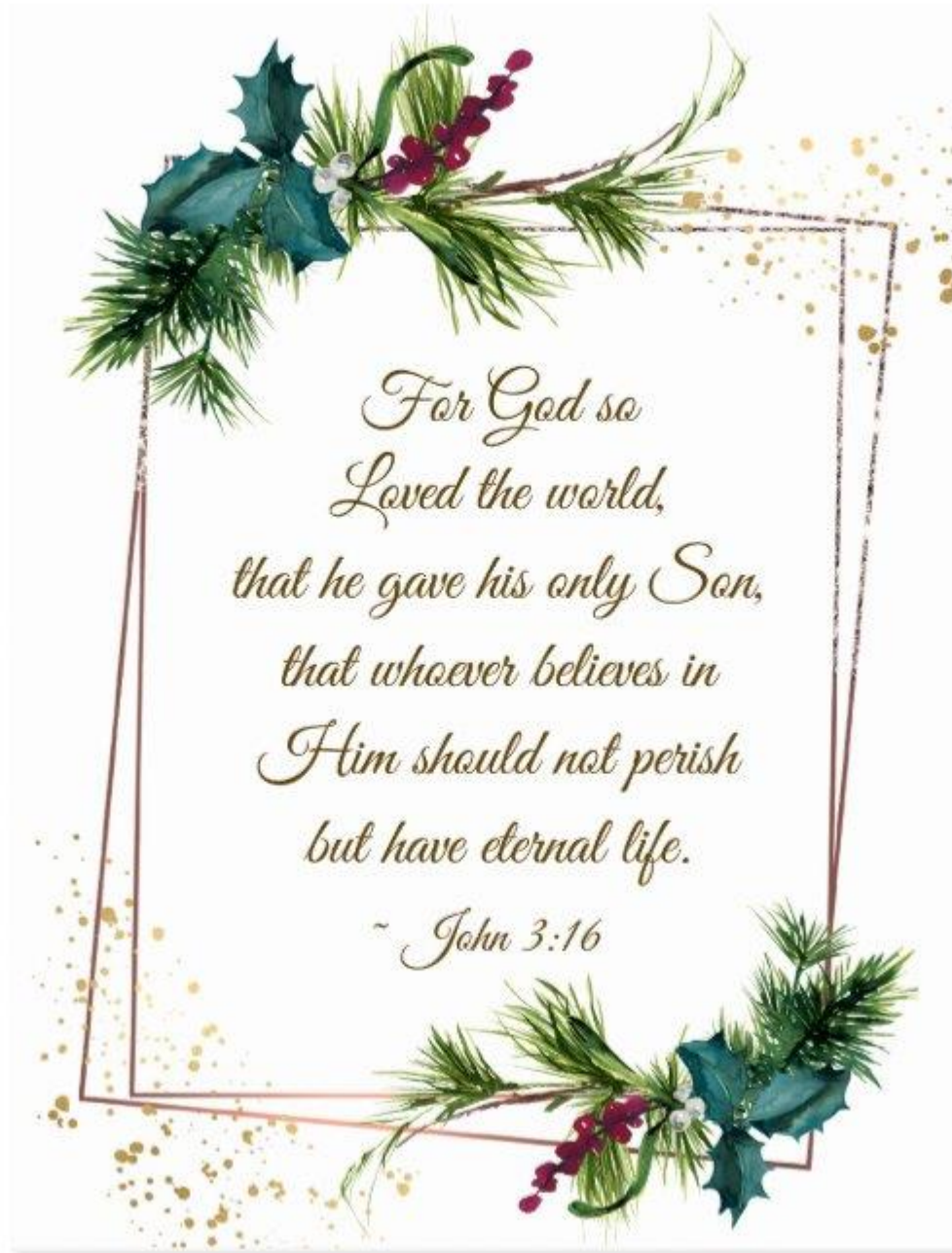


Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Pastor Ben Cherland



Dear Messiah,

In a few short weeks, our sanctuary will be full of people. The lights will go down, a flame will be passed around the room for people to light their candles. The tree will be dazzling bright and all of us will sing Silent Night.

Most of these folks will not be familiar to many of us as members of the Messiah community. But many of these folks have been waiting all year for that moment on Christmas Eve. We cling to it as a moment that fills us, that assures us. It's a moment of beauty that brings us as close to a sense of the holy as many of us get year after year. The promise of that moment will fill our church with friends and strangers who need it.

"Jesus' ministry," says Walter Bruggemann in *The Prophetic Imagination*, "takes place between the clinging and the yearning" (CC Beechy). We are about to enter Advent - the season of anticipation, preparation (both external and internal), and reflection - that will lead us to Christmas. This word from Bruggemann caught my attention because it speaks to me about the tension that lives in Advent.

This is a culture that clings. We'd like to take that quiet moment of candle-lit bliss and stretch it out over the whole season, perhaps the whole year. If we could do this, what would it make of the Silent Night moment? It would lose something, wouldn't it? But experiencing it one night of the year, for the briefest of moments during that service, our yearning for that moment grows, drawing us to that night, to that light. So when it happens, we can receive its gifts that hopefully sustain us again for another year.

Rather than cling, Advent asks "for what do you yearn?" As we did last year, we will not be celebrating the Eucharist (Holy Communion) during our Sunday Advent services. This is one way we will be leaning into that yearning. The Advent hymns we'll be singing will teach us this yearning too. We could certainly sing our way through the Christmas carols each of these four Advent Sundays, clinging to the familiar feelings and our sense of nostalgia for years and circumstances past. But would they not lose some of their power?

Advent is the season in which we can look honestly at the distance between what has been promised, and the darkness in which we find ourselves. "Already but not yet": Already it has been promised, but it's not yet here. In this way, Advent is the season in which we can shed our illusory hopes - hopes that are illusions - and wait with anticipation and yearning for the real thing: The light of Christ coming into the world, of which our Silent Night candle light is a beautiful reflection.

Pastor Ben

ST JOHN'S UNITED

St John's United is a ministry organization owned by 23 Lutheran congregations in Montana. St John's is a not-for-profit 501 (C) (3) organizations that provides living opportunities within a nurturing environment of hope, dignity and love.

St John's United provides a variety of living arrangements to meet the needs of their residents. They have both independent living and assisted-living communities. Residences differ in value and services. Aries, a 12 story building currently being built in downtown Billings will have 101 low cost apartments and a large community area on the main floor called Centrum that will provide recreational services, conference facilities, and a store and market for the public. Chapel Court provides medium income residences and when completed will have 20-24 apartments. Mission Ridge provides more expensive housing and social community services.

St John's provides outpatient rehabilitation, inpatient transitional care, and hospice services at the end of life. A new program, called Older Adult Caregiving Project, initiated by St John's involves training family members to be caregivers for their elderly parents. In rural areas this training can be done virtually. The family member would have a monthly stipend and support given to them by St John's trained staff. A three year grant was achieved for this project.

St John's United also provides high-quality early child care and education to promote children's development and learning. They promote parental employment and family self-sufficiency. The Center for Generations (CFG) provides affordable childcare for it's staff and community. It helps bridge the gap between low access to child care while providing meaningful intergenerational opportunities for residents and children.

Currently the Center for Generations is remodeling it's facility and playground to provide the best services for childcare. The program has raised \$90,000 and will need an additional \$30,000 before completion.

St John's provides a program called C.A.R.E.S. This program works with Wendy's Wonderful Kids providing adoption and guardianship placement. Family Services

has contracted adoption services with international partners. In 2023 there were 7 infants adopted. In 2024 there has been only 1 so far.

The C.A.R.E.S. program began in 2021 and can support people for 1 ½ years. It is team and community based. The program had 232 referrals, has enrolled 87 families of which 78 families connected. Counseling and mental health services were provided.

St John's Luther Lodge provides provisional housing for individuals who have hospitalized family members. The cost is based on ability to pay and is a great service preventing the high cost of hotels or long drives from the hospital to home and back.

Finally it should be noted that St John's United has provided a summer concert series for 27 years. Closer to the summer months, information regarding specifics will be available.

St John's United depends on volunteers which helps to defray costs of their programs. If you are interested in volunteering please call 406 655 5390 or email: volunteer@stjohnsunited.org



December 2024

As we move into the dark days of winter,

and in the midst of a world weary of brokenness, division, natural disasters and war, we look yet again towards the promise of the coming Christ child. As the gospel writer proclaims, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and yours from your Christikon family.

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

The 5-Finger Prayer



Thumb: Pray for those closest to you: your family and friends.

Pointer finger: Pray for those who point you in the right direction: your teachers, and other leaders in your life. Pray for wisdom and support.

Middle finger (tallest): Pray for those that lead us: those in government, in business, in church leadership. Pray for guidance and wisdom.

Ring finger (weakest): Pray for those who are poor, sick, in pain, in trouble: those most in need.

Pinkie finger (smallest): Pray for yourself and your own needs.

Submitted by Marla Ebel

This is the proposed Sabbatical Policy for Messiah Lutheran Church.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH SABBATICAL GUIDELINES

PURPOSE OF A SABBATICAL

Wholeness and wellness are important principles in the life of the church and in the practice of its ministry. Congregations and agencies will be served best by pastors and deacons who are healthy--both spiritually and physically--and who are committed to grow both in their understanding of the faith and in enhancing their skills in ministry. A sabbatical provides an opportunity for the pastor to take an intentional, extended period of time away from regular parish demands to experience renewal, study, spiritual growth, travel, or skill development. After the sabbatical the pastor returns to the parish with new energy and resources for ministry.

LENGTH OF SABBATICAL

A sabbatical may be granted for twelve weeks (three months). The sabbatical takes the place of any continuing education time for that year. Vacation time is not included as sabbatical time.

ELIGIBILITY

A pastor may take a sabbatical after every sixth full year of service with approval by the church council.

FINANCING A SABBATICAL

The congregation will pay full salary and benefits during the sabbatical. Expenses incurred during the sabbatical – e.g. Tuition, books, supplies, travel and living expenses outside of the parsonage – will be borne by the pastor. These expenses may be covered by allotted continuing education funds.

PLANNING

Planning for a sabbatical should begin the calendar year before the sabbatical. A written proposal for a sabbatical should be submitted for approval no later than six months before the sabbatical. The timing and proposed plans for a sabbatical must be approved by the church council.

COMMITMENTS FOLLOWING A SABBATICAL

The pastor is normally expected to serve Messiah for at least twelve months following the sabbatical. The pastor will present the results/impact of his/her sabbatical to the congregation within a mutually agreed upon period of time following the completion of the sabbatical.

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.

January.....Baretooth Cupboards

February.....Red Lodge Ice Rink

March.....St. John’s United

AprilMeadowlark Childrens Center

May.....Christikon

June.....Boys & Girls Club

July.....Lutheran World Relief

August.....Red Lodge Fun Run

September...Pastor’s Discretionary

October.....DSVS

November....Campus Ministries

December.....Prison Ministries

Our special offering for December supports the Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry at Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge. This mission is widely supported by Montana Synod – individuals, congregations, the Synod Office, and Churchwide.

The Ministry remains incredibly important as a resource that inmates turn to for support, guidance, and spiritual renewal. Transforming Corrections published a study in 2017, **The Impact of a Volunteer Prison Ministry Program on the Long-term Recidivism of Federal Inmates**, that showed that recidivism rates dropped by 21% for inmates engaged in Prison Ministry. For women, older inmates, and low risk offenders, the rates dropped by nearly 60%. There is virtually no ELCA presence in the Women’s Prison in Billings and Montana Synod has the most involvement of the mainline Protestant denominations in the Men’s Prison. FIC hopes to engage with the Women’s Prison in the next two years if more consistent funding is established.

The Men’s Prison houses nearly 1,600 inmates and has their own issues with staffing and funding from the state. Visitor access has been dramatically curtailed leaving inmates with little or no contact with the ‘outside world’. FIC tries to fill some of that void.

Please keep FIC in your prayers and consider donating to this month’s special offering.

“We have operated in the Montana State Prison for ten years and the recidivism of our guys is low, which coincides with statistics showing that faith ministries inside prisons (and re-entry programs) reduce the return to prison by 80%.”

That's good news! That's why we do what we do!





MESSIAH CHIMES OUT & ABOUT

Go Tell It on the Mountain that Messiah Chimes will Jingle Bells their Joy to the World, representing our congregation, both at Festival of Trees and Christmas Stroll.

Come and carol with us!

Spread the Word!

Saturday, November 30 at 3:30, Civic Center--Festival of Trees

Friday & Saturday Christmas Stroll, December 6 & 7, at 7:00--Pollard Hotel Hemingway Room

Sunday Worship, December 8, at 10

Just weeks prior to charter chimer Allen Hansen's death, he asked if chimes might take on a new piece of music—Welcome Christmas, from the film How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Not only that, Allen provided for the cost of the sheet music. Just a few months later, it's our favorite selection, rung with much love for Allen.



COUNCIL CORNER

Council met on Nov 12. Below are the highlights. As always, if you want a full report, please see our website or contact Dianne.

- Changes to the constitution are being finalized. The congregation will have a chance to review and vote on proposed changes.
- Timeline was shared for Christmas Kids Shoppe. We hope many will sign up to help and experience this amazing mission of ours!
- Approved the Gifting Policy. This will be shared at our Mission Spending plan (formerly budget) meeting at the end of November.
- Agreed to form a committee to begin work on an endowment fund
- Approved Pastor Ben's 2025 work agreement
- Finalized 2025 special projects

Our next meeting is on Dec. 11 at 2:06 at the parsonage.

Results of Messiah's Brawl of the Wild

The Nov special project of the month was financial support of Montana's two campus ministries: one at U of M/ Missoula and the second at Montana State University in Bozeman.

Two youth carried the Cats and Griz mugs around collecting \$529 which will be divided equally between the two ministry programs. Of course, you want to know which team won. The Griz won by \$11 dollars. HOWEVER, there was a late Cat donation of \$20. That means that the Cats won by \$9. GO CATS! So a total of \$549 will be split and sent to the two ministries.



We look forward to adorning our sanctuary with poinsettias again this year. As in the past, members and friends fund this project to honor and memorialize loved ones. Should you wish to make such a donation, please complete a form, found on the hymnal bookcase, with the appropriate information. These donors and names will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Poinsettias are \$20 again this year.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA DEDICATION FORM

Please submit this form, with payment, \$20 each, to the church office or the offering plate. Note Poinsettia on your check, please.

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Given by _____

A list of dedications will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

What's Going on at Messiah



On Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 a.m., our church will be filled with many eager children wanting to shop for free gifts for family members. In 2023, Messiah's Christmas Kids' Shoppe served over 250 young shoppers who went home with more than 1,300 wrapped gifts!

There are many opportunities for everyone to help make this year's Shoppe another wonderful event! Please look through the lists below for a task that suits your time and interest and sign up on the chart at the church or telephone Jeri at the number shown below.

PRIOR TO THE EVENT

Bakers - Bake cookies to be served at the event.

Thursday, December 5 (6:00-8:00 p.m.) - Load up the things that are not at the church and bring them to the church. Set up tables.

Friday, December 6 (9:00 a.m.) - Arrange gifts on tables in the sanctuary. Arrange the wrapping area and chairs. Arrange chairs for children and adults in the gathering area.

DURING THE EVENT

on December 7 (8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

Kitchen Staff - Arrange and serve cookies and beverages to the adults.

Door Monitors - Welcome children. Check their shopping tickets or help them complete one. Pass out big shopping bags. Keep children in the line while awaiting their turn to shop. Only children are admitted to the shop while adults enjoy refreshments in another area.

Personal Shopper - Help a child select gifts for those listed on his/her shopping ticket. PLEASE mark who each gift is for on the shopping ticket, e.g. "Ball for Joey" or "Earrings for Mom" so the gifts can be properly labeled when wrapped.

Gift Wrappers - Wrap or bag the gifts. Bows and curly ribbons are available.

Wrappers' Helpers - Write "To" and "From" and fill in the appropriate names on the gift tags and tape tags to the proper gifts.

Table Monitors - Restock gifts on the tables as needed.

AFTER THE EVENT

Saturday, December 7 (after 3:00 p.m.) - Pack up everything. Clean up the sanctuary.

Thank you in advance for whatever you do to help make our Christmas Kids' Shoppe a success! Any questions? Call Jeri (406-208-4422) or Kathy (406-425-1595).

Have a wonderful season and share the Spirit with children!

December, 2024

**Happy
Birthday!**

12/01 Owen Yates

**A new ministry here at Messiah
Cotton flannel diapers**

We are collecting cotton flannel sheets and yardage to be made into diapers. In January we will begin making diapers here in Red Lodge to be donated to Lutheran World Relief at the same time we donate our quilts. These are fun and easy to make.

Sunday, December 15 - SAVE THE DATE

The Worship and Family Life Committees join forces to provide a light lunch of Sloppy Joes, Salad, Fruit, and Dessert—

Peppermint or Vanilla Hot Fudge Sundaes & Cookies

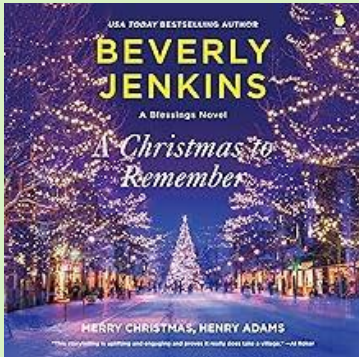
Sunday, December 15

immediately following Morning Worship.

A musical treat is added with a 'Round the Table Sing of holiday favorites including Deck the Halls, Jingle Bells, and The Twelve Days of Christmas.

There's no charge but we need your help, by signing up, so we may adequately prepare.

WOMEN'S SAFARI BOOK CLUB



Date: December 18
Time: Noon
Book: A Christmas to Remember
Author: Beverly Jenkins
Facilitator:
Location: Roberts Cafe

Contact host, Marla Ebel, at
406-664-3178 for more Information

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.



Pastor Ben's hours have changed. He now has Mondays and Saturdays off.



Messiah Calendar—December 2024

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
1 Worship 10:00 am Chimes 11:30 am	2 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	3 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	4	5	6	7 Christmas Kids Shoppe 
8 Worship 10:00 am Chimes 11:30 am	9 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	10 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	11 Church Council 2:06 pm	12	13	14
15 Worship 10:00 am Potluck Lunch and Advent Party Chimes 11:30 am	16 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	17 Women's Bible Study 10:00 am	18 Safari Book Club Noon Roberts Cafe	19	20 Calvary Episcopal Longest Night Service 6:00 pm	21
22 Worship 10:00 am Chimes 11:30 am	23 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm	25 	26	27	28
29 Worship 10:00 am	30 Great Books 9:30 am Quilters 1:00 pm	31 				

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

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.

This month the people of Messiah are praying for
Melinda Berry,
Brook Feister, the family of Jim Koski, Dolly Koski,
Rick and Sandy Koski, Rob Loney, Howard Marquart, Carlos Ramalho,
the family of Dolly Stuber, and David Tilton

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			
Secretary	Brooke Flynn	406-656-0173	flynnquilt@gmail.com
Treasurer	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	kkreatzgmail.com

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

Other Important Contact Information

Computer	Gwen Williams	406-425-2401	(Text Gwen Only)
Ministerial Ass'n.	Bryan Lowen	406-860-5571	(financial assistance to the community).

December, 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: Off

Tuesday : 9:00-4:00

Wednesday: 9:00-3:00

Thursday: 9:00-3:00

Friday: 9:00-4:00

Saturday: Off

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.

