

March, 2026

Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Pastor Ben Cherland



The answer to the question I posed in February's Newsletter ("What are my hopes for this sabbatical time?") is that I hope to be renewed; renewed in energy, faith, vision, life, and more. It's no surprise that my father's death last July has hobbled me in some ways. But what has surprised me is how little opportunity I've had to deal with his death amidst a busy life, even in ministry. Getting back from his funeral, I had to quickly develop a way of keeping that grief from debilitating my work. And since then, the "skin" that formed has been difficult so far to shed. So I'm choosing some deeply vulnerable-making experiences (See February's article) in the hopes that I might be rendered open, receptive and available to all that wants back in - hopefully long-waiting grief, a little joy, and who knows what else.

My hopes are not only for myself, however. I have hopes for you, dear church. My journey from here to there mirrors the journey you will undergo. You will be a different church after three months. One hope I have for you is that Sunday numbers stay steady. It would be easy to say, "A three-month break from church sounds pretty good" and not show up again until I'm back.

I am confident that there will be richness to discover in my absence. Lay-preaching, community led, celebratory worship - riches that will ask much of you but give to you so much more. Your presence and your support of our lay leaders gives me hope that you will be rendered open, receptive, and active in the blessing of this life of faith in community.

Another hope I have is for us. I have been asking myself "How can we stay connected across the many miles and months?" Letting my imagination go with that question has led me to another: "What can we carry for each other during this time?"

We all carry burdens. It has been a sincere joy for six years that you've trusted me and this community to help you carry yours. While I am truly grateful and blessed to be given this time to find renewal, it is painful to imagine being apart and absent from our life together. It will be disorienting and a test of endurance for us both. But I am reminded what Luther said about pain: that God is found most immanently, most present, most near in pain. To face pain is to find the face of God staring back from the cross.

Pastor Ben

Time and Talent



- 3/1 Pastor Kim Wilker
- 3/1 Martha Crofts
- 3/4 Denny Chatlain
- 3/10 Jim Kyner
- 3/19 Jack Prather
- 3/20 Molly Kreatz
Terri Wilker
Felicity Cramer
- 3/26 Josh Wilker
- 3/29 Robert Leaverton
- 3/31 Julie Ann Lindgren

God has graciously given gifts to each and every one of us—see I Corinthians 12. These gifts are many and varied. No one gift is greater than another. All work together to form the body of Christ—the church.

We will be sending out a time and talent survey soon. Please take some time to discern your gifts and how they might be of assistance to God's ministry here at Messiah.

Messiah Charity Quilters would love your help

from 1pm—3 pm each Monday. Everything is provided except your sewing needle and a pair of scissors. We will teach you what you need to know.

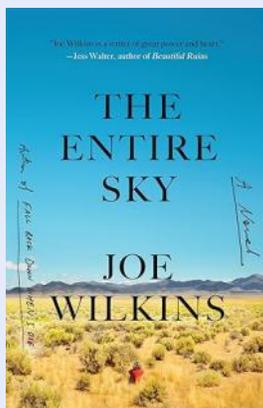
Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you are interested in making prayer shawls, please contact Pat Thompson. If you are in need of a prayer shawl, please contact Pat Thompson or Pastor Ben.



- 3/1 Pastor Kim and Terri Wilker

WOMEN'S SAFARI BOOK CLUB



Date: March 19
 Time: 3:00
 Book: The Entire Sky
 Author: Joe Wilkins
 Facilitator: Kim Elsberry
 Location: Home of Jeri Kyner

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

Carlos has given us 2 copies of his book, Theology at the Borders: the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the Rescue of Jews under the Nazi Dictatorship, to share with the congregation. If you would like to borrow one to read, contact Pastor Ben or Dianne.

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.



March, 2026

Member Spotlight

Mark and Sonya Owan are our featured members this month. They show up from time to time but it took me a while to realize that they actually live and work in North Dakota and spend vacation time in Red Lodge. Mark kindly agreed to introduce himself and Sonya to you in this Members Spotlight.

Mark and Sonya Owan have been married for 35 years. They have four children and eight grand grandchildren. Mark is a third generation farmer in Williams County, North Dakota. Sonya is the Executive Director of Opportunity Foundation, where she has been employed for 33 years. Opportunity Foundation provides residential and vocational services to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Mark and Sonya's family has enjoyed spending time in the Red Lodge area since 2014. When their family would spend the Christmas holidays in Red Lodge, they chose to attend Christmas services at Messiah Lutheran. Since they felt welcomed, they would also attend Sunday Services whenever they were in town. They quickly realized that Messiah Lutheran was their church home.



Welcome New Members!

Kallie Audet

Jackie Cordill

Bob and Bonnie Eichenberger

Barbara Marquardt

We welcome you as brothers and sisters in Christ, and thank God for this unique opportunity to serve God and one another. May the God to whom we belong equip us for every good work that we do together in his name.

March, 2026

INSTALLATION OF 2026 CHURCH COUNCIL FEBRUARY 15, 2006

Left to right

**Pastor Ben, Roy Olpin—Vice President, Melinda Berry—Secretary, DJ Rosekelly—Family Life,
Maria Gibson—Education, Kathy Kreatz—Property Manager, Katrin Chandler—President,
Linda Daily—Stewardship, Susan Leaverton—Worship, Sandy Moe—Outreach**



LivingLutheran.org

In this season of spiritual preparation, find space for reflection, repentance and hope: read uplifting stories of God's people living their faith on the new LivingLutheran.org.

Set up a free digital membership and get inspirational resources to support your faith journey as we begin the Lenten and Easter seasons:

Prayer Ventures: Daily prayer prompts and reflections for personal and congregational devotion.

Lectionary Blog: Weekly reflections and insights grounded in the lectionary to support preaching and study.

Voices of Faith: Stories, reflections and perspectives from a diverse range of voices across the ELCA.

Visit livinglutheran.org and sign up for your free digital membership today. You'll get perks like access to exclusive online content, plus the ability to save your favorite articles and subscribe to our weekly email newsletter.

Council Corner Highlights

Greetings and Blessings!

Your Messiah Church Council met on January 4th at 6 pm. You can get the full report, including financials, by requesting a copy from our Administrative Assistant, Dianne, at the church office (406) 446 - 2430.

□ Pastor Ben's Sabbatical Update, July 21 through October 13th

- o Parsonage lawn care-Kathy, as property chair will organize the maintenance and upkeep of the parsonage lawn while Pastor Ben Cherland is away on Sabbatical.
- o Coverage for Sundays, update from Katrin- Most Sundays have been scheduled with retired clergy from our congregation and trained Montana Synod LMAs. We will fill in the remaining Sundays with congregants from the "Preaching Program" that Pastor Ben Cherland is leading.
- o Roy Olpin will oversee a "Farewell coffee hour" for Pastor Ben on July 19th after service.
- o At Pastor Ben's final Sunday preaching service before departing on Sabbatical, the congregation will light two liturgical candles. During the remainder of Pastor Ben's sabbatical, he will take one candle with him and light it on Sundays and we, as a congregation, will light the one remaining at MLC.

□ Messiah Binder - A Guide to the workings of Messiah Lutheran Church: Pastor Ben has a binder in his office; there is a copy in Dianne's office and council has a binder. As a reference for our meetings. MLC members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the information.

□ Background Checks - Safety Policy - though Linda Daily was absent, some discussion was given to the safety policy and background checks being necessary for anyone who is working directly with youth within the church setting. More clarification will be provided. The topic is tabled for now. Melinda Berry raised a question that we look into policy concerning people being filmed while in the church during livestream. It was decided to note that in the bulletin and designate a space where someone could participate without being filmed.

□ Youth Group (Messiah Lutheran Mighties) Maria Gibson, Education Chair, is planning a quarterly fun meet up. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

Our next regular Church Council Meeting is on Wednesday, March 11th at 7:00 pm.
Submitted by Katrin Chandler, Messiah Church 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 with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.

Claudia B, Meredith Cherland, the family of Jack Ervin, Hannah Gonzales, Dolly Koski, Rick and Sandy Koski, Jim Kyner, Doug & Mary Lair, Lois Miller, Olivia Milligan, Carlos Ramalho, DJ Rosekelly, Sadie Sceva, Guynema Terry, Ace and Jett Wildung, Josh Wilker, Pr Kim Wilker, Josh Winter, Judy Yasi, and Lexi
The unspoken prayer requests of our congregation.



It was so good to hear the laughter coming from the Sunday School room Sunday!

March, 2026

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

January—Tooth Food Bank
February—Boys and Girls Club
March—St. John's Ministries
April—LWR Quilters
May—Christikon
June—Boys and Girls Club

July—Red Lodge Pool
August—Red Lodge Fun Run
September—Pastor's Discretionary
October—DSVS
November—Campus Ministries
December—CART



You know that St. John's United has loved and served thousands of residents in their older adult years. We have kept a warm heart and warm home for them. We have cooked meals, sung songs, and held their hands when things got difficult. But did you know that we have watched over little people through our childcare, and helped heal souls through our spiritual care services? We also provide transitional care, hospice and rehabilitation to anyone in our community who needs these services.

You know St. John's United are champions of the best life possible for all we are privileged to serve, whether our service is within people's own homes or within a St. John's community. We are united to reach out to more people who need a place to live or help staying in their own place, who need a heart

Holy Week Services

Palm/Passion Sunday March 29 Worship 10:00 am

Maundy Thursday—April 2 Service 6:00 pm

Good Friday—April 3 Service 6:00 pm

Easter Vigil—April 4 Service 6:00 pm

EASTER SUNDAY—WORSHIP 10:00 am Followed by a light Easter brunch

A Word From Your Treasurer Regarding the Building Loan.

Several questions were raised at the annual meeting and I've done a bit of research. Our building loan is a 25 year loan that matures on May 1, 2048. The interest rate is adjusted every five years. Currently, the interest rate is 4.375%. That rate will change on 11/1/2027. Our loan payments will be adjusted at that point and will reflect the 25 year payoff period. As of February 2, 2026, our loan balance is \$287,011.19. Our monthly loan payment is

Messiah Calendar—March, 2026

<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	2	3	4 Lenten Service Soup and Bread At Red Lodge UCC 6:00 pm	5	6	7
8 Worship 10:00 am Daylight Savings Time Spring forward Don't forget to set clocks ahead one hour at 2 a.m. Sunday. 	9 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	10 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	11 Lenten Service Soup and Bread At Messiah 6:00 pm Council Meeting 7:00 pm	12	13	14
15 Worship 10:00 am	16 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	17 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm 	18 Lenten Service Soup and Bread At Calvary 6:00 pm	19 Safari Book Club	20 	21
22 Worship 10:00 am	23 Great Books 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm	24 Bible Study with Pastor Ben 6:00 pm	25 Lenten Service Soup and Bread At St. Agnes Catholic Church 6:00 pm	26	27	28
29 Worship 10:00 am 						

March, 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:

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.

