MESSIAH MESSENGER

ISSUE #43 NOVEMBER 2026

PASTOR'S CORNER

Guidance, Encouragement, & Reflection

IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL: FINDING REST WITH GOD

Hello Messiah Family! Ah, November. A great month, right in the middle of everything.

The middle of fall (perfect weather lately!), the middle of the hunting season, the middle of the football season, the middle of the semester for everyone still in school. The holidays right around the corner, finding us all in the middle of planning for them! It can be a lot, trying to coordinate and plan everything coming up while still keeping up with work and all the rest of it.

But not for one person: my mom, Karrie. She retired at the end of October, and now for the first time in forty years, she doesn't have work! Lord knows she's earned it too. She's always been in the middle of everything, all the time. Working, planning, running me and my brother around when we were younger, dealing with us living at her house at different points even when we got older, maintaining the house and everything else too. It's only rarely I remember seeing her have the chance to really relax. Needless to say, she's quite excited to have some real free time, the chance to do what she wants to. And my Dad, my brother, and I are super excited and happy for her! We're only a little jealous.

It's an unfortunate side effect of the modern world that we often find ourselves stuck in the middle of everything, constantly busy with little true free time to relax. Even my Mom will still have responsibilities and such to keep her busy in her retirement, especially around the holidays, just fewer of them. But relaxing, taking a break from all the busyness of our lives, is a necessary thing. More than that, it's commanded by God, who in the Third Commandment tells us to "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*." (Exodus 20:8) But we have a tendency to find ways of getting out of really "resting". We relegate the Sabbath to only one day, Sunday, and even then it's easy to find work to do and things to stress about. But the Sabbath is more than just a day, certainly more than just our Sunday church service.

In Hebrew, "Sabbath" simply means "rest" or "stop". That doesn't mean that we stop everything we're doing for a whole day or punish people who break it, something Jesus makes clear in the Mark's Gospel when he tells the Pharisees, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). But it does mean that we need to rest. Really rest, with our family, with our friends, with ourselves. But most of all it means that we need rest with God. Time spent with Him, focused on our Father and our relationship with Him, resting not with some other goal or purpose in mind but simply resting for the sake of resting. And that's not something that happens only on Sundays or only at church! Rest can seem far away at times, but God is always waiting for us, willing to spend all the time in the world with His children if we will just make the time for Him. It doesn't always mean spending time reading the Bible or praying or going to church. It can be just about anything, at any time, just so long as we take the time to really focus and BE with God, our Father. For me, one of my favorite times of Sabbath is being in the woods, away from the world, enjoying a cold beer as I rest in the beauty and the peace of God's creation.

The holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, give us the perfect opportunity to really enjoy Sabbath. To be thankful for all the amazing gifts that God has given us and our families. To look forward to and celebrate the birth of God's Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. To rest, really rest, and do so with our family, God our Father included. But we do have to make it a priority, because the world doesn't want us to rest and won't let us if we don't. But it's always worth it. So I encourage you all to take time to observe the Sabbath, both you and your family, this holiday season, and I look forward to getting to spend time with all of you, enjoying the Sabbath together as this Messiah Family.

Peace, rest, and God's blessings on your Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons,
Pastor Stephen Wareham

🧭 COUNCIL COMPASS 🧭

Guiding the Direction of Messiah

Connie DiMarco – Council President

SERVING MESSIAH: YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

The December elections are fast approaching! Our Nominating Committee, Cindy Hodge and Sandy Bingham, will be speaking with congregation members about serving on the Church Council. Please give them your time and listen to them with a servant's heart.

Over the past few months, current Council members have explained the responsibilities of Council officers and asked several individuals to consider becoming candidates. You may have noticed the colorful, playful invitations in the church bulletin to join the Council. The Council conducts serious work, but there's also camaraderie and fun! Unfortunately, they report that only one person has committed to becoming a candidate so far.

The election will take place on Sunday, December 12th. The congregation must be notified of the names of the candidates two weeks prior to the election. During this time only, any congregant may nominate a candidate, **after ensuring that person agrees to this nomination and is eligible to serve on the Council.**

If you are approached to consider becoming a candidate, note this: it's because you are someone who has demonstrated special skills, unique talents, and devotion to Messiah Lutheran. The Council needs people like you!

I would be remiss if I didn't explain what may happen if the Council isn't fully seated. Under the **Messiah Church Constitution, Bylaws Article II, Section II, Letter A: "A quorum for Council meetings shall be not less than five (5) sitting members, one of which must be the Vice President or President."**

If the current vacancies remain unfilled and the officers whose terms are ending have no replacement candidates for office, the Council will be perilously close to being unable to meet the dictates of the above-quoted bylaw.

At this time, your Council has **four (4)** confirmed Council members, to include the President. Without a full Council, we will not have a quorum. If a Council member should resign, or for any other reason leave the Council. We will not have a quorum. **Without a quorum, the business of Messiah Lutheran church cannot be conducted.** Expenses and current bills will be paid. However, new expenses, loans, any identified needed repairs, etc., cannot be approved by the Council. The current, approved budget will continue until the end of next August. Without a quorum, a new budget cannot be approved by the Council. Of course, repairs needed for the functioning of the church, such as plumbing, AC/Heating, and so forth, could be paid for by the congregation.

Serving your church is more than a duty; it is an honor. It's an important way we serve our fellow members by ensuring Messiah Lutheran continues to function, keeps the lights on, and is reverently maintained for all. Every role in Messiah, no matter how small, is essential to her ability to attract members and grow. In this way, we continue the great mission to grow and maintain the Lutheran Church, to spread the Gospel to others, and thereby honor, worship, and glorify our Lord and Savior.

When you are approached by Cindy or Sandy, or any other Council member, to discuss possible candidacy, please listen, ask questions, tell them about any concerns, then please prayerfully consider becoming a nominee.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU.

In His Name,
Connie DiMarco



💰 NOTES FROM THE TREASURER 💰

Your Monthly Map to Messiah's Treasure

Ken Eldridge – Treasurer

Fall is in the air! What a beautiful time of the year to be outside enjoying the cooler, crisper fall weather! Now if only the fish were biting!

Of course, with the coming winter months, our brief respite from higher utility bills ends as the need to run heat from our heat pumps occurs. It's especially important to keep the sanctuary above 65 degrees so as not to damage the organ and piano.

Along with fall weather, inflation is spiking again in our area. Gasoline and food staples continue to increase in cost.

Over the past 60 days we have had a noticeable drop in our church income. As I write this, our checking account balance has dropped to $4,833, and this week is payroll week. Hopefully giving will return to a more normal pattern with the start of the new month in November.

We've managed our expenses as best we can recently. Our phone lines run $17/month for two lines including taxes. We have managed to keep our internet at $55/month for 300+mbps internet speeds. Utilities fluctuate with the weather, and we have done a much better job in setting our thermostats to "unoccupied" when the building is not in use.

From a financial perspective, we continue to meet our obligations when due, and have zero debt. But we have little extra for things on our wish list such as carpet replacement, etc. And with our high-deductible insurance policies I am reluctant to utilize our investment accounts funds. One storm could wipe out $15,000 easily prior to receiving any insurance reimbursement.

Elections will happen soon in early December. Please prayerfully consider taking on one of the open council positions. The help is needed and appreciated!

My second term ends December 31 st . I will help and support our new treasurer with whatever is needed. I ask that you do the same.

--Ken

🌟 STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT 🌟

Sharing, Serving, and Supporting Messiah

Every year, our calendars remind us to set aside time in late November for a day of Thanksgiving. For many, it is a one-day ritual filled with food, friends and family, and maybe some football. For the people of God, though, it is much richer, deeper and more meaningful.

"Thanksgiving" is a habit of the heart and soul. More than just a ritual, it is a routine. It is, in fact, part of the fabric of who we are as redeemed people of God. We have been given everything truly needful — eternal life and salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the very righteousness of God. **We have much to be thankful for indeed!**

In addition to this, we also thank God for what we call "First Article gifts." As detailed in Luther's Small Catechism, these are the gifts of our body and soul, friends and neighbors, food, shelter and personal possessions that we are given to steward. The First Article of the Apostles' Creed urges us to rightly confess that every good gift is from the hand of God. On behalf of the Office of National Mission — Mercy, we give thanks for your partnership in the Gospel and for joining us in mercy work across our Synod. Let us together give thanks and praise for the God who is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4-8) and from whom flows all human acts of mercy. Visit ***lcms.org/mercy*** for information on the mercy work happening among congregations and organizations across the world.

LCMS Family Ministry "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" (1 Chronicles 16:34).

Thanksgiving is a time of year when we praise God for the gifts that we have been given. One tradition that many families have is that at Thanksgiving dinner, they will go around the table, and each person will say something for which they are thankful. Taking time to do this is a good thing; however, as you and your family talk about what you are grateful for and the blessings that you have been given, it is important to remember where all of those blessings come from. Everything that you have is a gift from God. As you talk about what you are thankful for and the blessings that you have been given as a family, also take the time to give thanks to God for those blessings and all that He has done.

PREPARING HIS HOUSE, PREPARING OUR HEARTS

Carol Walters – Worship Chair

Advent: Preparing Our Hearts for Christ

Advent begins Sunday, November 29

Advent is a season of hope, anticipation, and preparation as we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and His promised return in glory.

The Advent wreath is a beautiful reminder of that promise. Each Sunday, as another candle is lit, the growing light reminds us that Christ is the Light of the World. The blue or purple candles reflect our hope, prayer, and preparation, while the rose-colored candle on the third Sunday reminds us to rejoice, for our Savior is near.

Blessing of the Advent Wreaths

Sunday, November 22

As we prepare to enter this sacred season, we invite you to bring your family's Advent wreath to worship for a special blessing. Please place your wreath on the table at the front of the left pews before the service.

May these wreaths become a meaningful part of our homes, gathering families in prayer and reminding us that Advent is not simply a countdown to Christmas, but a season of preparing our hearts to receive Christ.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." ~ Isaiah 9:2

In His Service,
Messiah Worship Committee



CALLING ALL CHRISTMAS ELVES! 🎄

Carol Walters – Worship Chair

Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 5
Starting at 9 am

It's time to deck the halls, untangle the lights (a Christmas miracle in itself!), and transform Messiah into a beautiful celebration of the season!

Every year, we're blessed with a wonderful crew of helping hands, and this year we're hoping to add a little extra decorating magic!

Is decorating your superpower? Do you have an eye for making things merry and bright? We'd love for you to be our Head Christmas Elf, helping guide the decorating fun and bringing everyone's creative talents together. No clipboard or whistle required, just a little Christmas spirit and a love for making things beautiful!

And there's room for everyone in Santa's workshop! We need men and women alike to string lights, decorate trees, haul boxes and totes, and share a few laughs along the way.

Whether you're a decorating pro or simply willing to lend a hand, come join the fun!

Many hands make light work, and good company makes it fun!

Together, we'll prepare God's house for the beautiful seasons of Advent and Christmas.

"Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" ~ Psalm 100:2

In His Service,
Messiah Worship Committee



🍓 JOYFUL BITES & HARMONY 🎶

Food, Fun, & Fellowship EVERY month!

Joyful Noise will be gathering for food, fun, and fellowship! If you'd like to join, please notify Kathy Andrew by November 11th, so that enough seats can be reserved.

📅 **Wednesday, November 17th** ⏰ **11:45 AM**

📍 **Red Lobster (1179 St. Augustine)**

😊 **We HOPE to see you there!** 😁



💜 THE LWML BAZAAR 💜
A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

The LWML Bazaar Ladies

November 7th

Mark your calendars, Messiah Family!

The LWML Bazaar is coming Saturday, November 7th, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.! Come browse the handmade treasures and baked goods while supporting our LWML ladies.

Donations & Drop-Off Times

Handmade items and baked goods may be dropped off:

- Thursday, Nov. 5th, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 6th, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Please include your desired pricing on all donated items.

Calling All Bakers! 🧁

Please price and label your baked goods and indicate whether they contain nuts.

Special Shopping Invitation for Messiah Members! Members are invited to shop Friday, November 6th, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. for first choice of the goodies and treasures!

Questions? Contact Nan Boyd at 229-834-4881. Thank you for supporting our LWML ladies and helping make this year's bazaar a success!



Bob Hubbard	8
Marcia Lorden	8
Kelly Berg	11
George Vincent	12
Kathy Sheeley	14
Jake Whitten	15
Jeff Kraushaar	23
Ken Eldridge	27



🎄 BLESSINGS, BITES, & CHRISTMAS DELIGHTS 🎄

December is a time for Advent, Christmas, and celebrating the blessings of fellowship!

This year, we're combining our LWML Holiday Lunch and Joyful Noise Lunch for one merry gathering.

Instead of our regular LWML meeting, we'll enjoy good food, great company, and the joy of sharing our love for our Lord and Savior. We may even squeeze in a little conversation about our successful Bazaar and plans for upcoming meetings!

📅 **Date:** December 8th

🕛 **Time:** 11:30 AM

📍 **Location:** Smokin' Pig, 4228 N Valdosta Rd.

Please let Kay Vincent or Kathy Andrew know by **December 1st** if you plan to join us.

Come hungry, bring your holiday cheer, and let's celebrate the season together!

OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS: THANK YOU, MESSIAH FAMILY!

October brought wonderful opportunities for fellowship at Messiah Lutheran Church with our New Member Luncheon and Oktoberfest!

Both events were filled with good food, warm fellowship, and the joy of spending time together as a church family. We are grateful for a congregation that comes together to welcome new members, build friendships, and create opportunities to share in fellowship.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who helped make these gatherings possible!

From planning and preparation to cooking, decorating, bringing dishes, and pitching in wherever needed, your time, generosity, and willingness to help made all the difference.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and helped make October such a wonderful month at Messiah!

Here's to many more opportunities to gather, serve, and enjoy time together! 💚



THANK YOU, MESSIAH FAMILY FROM THE DiMARCOs

Mike and I want to share our thanks for your prayers, gifts, and donations in support of our grandson David Spencer. He is finally at home after four months of treatment.

David has a long road ahead, but we and his parents are deeply grateful to our Messiah family for your support. To God be all the glory for his grace and mercy!

GOBBLE UP THE DETAILS: THE COUNTDOWN TO GIVING DAY IS ON THE MENU!

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on our blessings and share our gratitude through generosity! On Tuesday, December 1, 2026, Thrivent Giving Day offers an opportunity to help your gift go even further in supporting Messiah Lutheran Church.

Thrivent is offering up to $3 million in matching funds, giving eligible donations the potential for a dollar-for-dollar match to support Messiah's ministry and community.

🗓️ **Mark Your Calendar:**
Tuesday, December 1, 2026!

Donate through Thrivent's giving platform that day only, and let's flock 🦃 together to make a BIGGER IMPACT for Messiah! Every gift makes a difference!


ONE DAY ONLY
Unlock
3 million
in support
GIVING TUESDAY
DEC. 1, 2026
We're teaming up with Thrivent for Giving Tuesday!
Thrivent is committing $3 million to support organizations
like ours.[1] When you donate through Thrivent's giving platform,
they'll boost your gift so your generosity goes further.
Together, we can do more.

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 **9:** **Adult Bible Study** **9:30:** **Bible School** **10:30:** **Worship**	2	3 **10: Tuesdays with the Pastor Bible Study** **12:** **Womens Potluck Bible Study** **6** **Mens Potluck Bible Study**	4	5 **9:** **Quilter's Group** **6:** **Messiah Singers Practice**	6 **Members Only Bazaar Shopping** **5 pm - 7 pm**	7 **LWML Bazzar & Bake Sale** **8 AM - 1 PM**
8 **9:** **Adult Bible Study** **9:30:** **Bible School** **10:30:** **Worship**	9 **6:00 Church Council Meeting**	10 **10: Tuesdays with the Pastor Bible Study** **12:** **Womens Potluck Bible Study** **6:** **Mens Potluck Bible Study**	11 **11 - 2:** **Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry**	12 **9:** **Quilter's Group** **6:** **Messiah Singers Practice**	13	14
15 **9:** **Adult Bible Study** **9:30:** **Bible School** **10:30:** **Worship**	16	17 **10: Tuesdays with the Pastor Bible Study** **11:45:** **Joyful Noise - Red Lobster (1179 St. Augustine)** **12:** **Womens Potluck Bible Study** **6:** **Mens Potluck Bible Study**	18	19 **9:** **Quilter's Group** **5:30:** **Long-Range Planning Meeting** **6:** **Messiah Singers Practice**	20	21
29 **9:** **Adult Bible Study** **9:30:** **Bible School** **10:30:** **Worship**	30					