

"Messiah Messenger"

Issue #31

November 2025

IN EVERY SEASON, GOD IS PRESENT

November is always an interesting month because it's kind of transitional. For most places, even here in Valdosta, by November summer is clearly over and fall has begun.

It's the last month before we really move full strength into the holidays, because after Thanksgiving, there's Christmas, New Year's, College Football Championship, and the Super Bowl (I count them as holidays!), Valentine's Day, Easter, and then Graduation Month and May, all before we get back around to summer. Even for the Church, November is the last month before things get busy! Advent starts right after Thanksgiving, then it's Christmas and Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, before finally festival season is over with Pentecost at the start of June. If you're anything like me, you're going to spend this month preparing for all the busyness that comes afterward! And so I find it appropriate that even the Worship life of the church is kind of transitional, beginning with All Saints Day and ending with Thanksgiving and the start of Advent.

All Saints Day is generally regarded as a somber occasion, the congregation's chance to remember and honor our loved ones, the saints, who have passed away. A painful time for many of us as we hear the names of people we love repeated in Church as part of the group of saints in heaven, and want them so badly to be here with us. Thanksgiving and Advent, on the other hand, are generally joyous occasions, celebrating family coming together and all that God has gifted us, and looking forward to the birth of Jesus Christ! Two very different sentiments in the span of one month that nonetheless speak to the human experience, that constant transition from sad and from somber to joyous and celebratory. A transition that is so often reflected in Scripture in

How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; Light up my, lest I sleep the sleep of death, Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.

It's because of Psalms like these that we can know that we are not alone in our pain and our loss, our crying out to God, and that we are also not alone in our worship and joy and celebration! Christians throughout all of history have gone through the same troubles and pain, crying out, "How long Lord?" one day and "I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me!" the next. That transition isn't always easy; sometimes it's even jarring when it happens too quickly, leaving us reeling from the shift between suffering and joy. But in Scripture, suffering and joy are, paradoxically, often connected to one another. In our sorrow, we are brought closer to God when we seek His presence, His answers, His comfort and peace. And that seeking out of our God, our Father, is always something worth rejoicing over! It brings us closer to our heavenly, eternal home, there with all believers, where the transition between suffering and joy, sorrow and celebration, will be replaced with the never-ending, never-changing, loving presence of God our Father and His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I pray that all of you, whether this time of year is painful or joyful, peaceful or chaotic, a time of remembrance or a time of celebration, or, like most of us I imagine, a bit of both, would seek God and His presence, His comfort and peace, and His Son Jesus Christ, as we look forward to his birth and his return.

**God's Blessings on your Thanksgiving and
Christmas for you and your families,**

**Amen and amen,
Pastor Stephen Wareham**

The Psalms:

Psalm 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

SEASONS CHANGE, CHRIST REMAINS

Connie DiMarco – President

Greetings Messiah Family,

This past weekend, we hosted 15 students from the University of Georgia and Florida State University. They were led by Reverend Jay Winters and Greg Michael. They traveled here to help members of Messiah Lutheran in need.

The students and leaders arrived Friday night, greeted by Pastor Stephen.

Messiah Lutheran volunteers, Ken, Mike DiMarco, Charlie, Rebekah, and Abbey, prepared a Saturday morning breakfast of pancakes, bacon, and sausages. Carol provided her delicious biscuits with sausage gravy. Rebekah, Abbey, Mike, and Ken cleaned the kitchen. We appreciate all of you!

After breakfast, the students/pastors, led by team leaders Charlie, Larry, Ken, and Pastor Stephen, departed for their tasks. Mike remained and cleaned the outside of EVERY window at the church! Hard work, especially when battling limited water pressure! Thank you, Mike. We appreciate Abbey sharing additional pillows and linens, and the guys who took down tables, moved partitions, and covered the nursery windows, to give the students privacy and comfort.

We are grateful for the hard work of the students and team leaders. I know the recipients appreciated it! On Sunday, the students attended Pastor Stephen's Bible study, then the morning services. Afterward, photos of the students were taken, and we wished them safe travels back to their schools. The Messiah Lutheran family is blessed by their kindness and willingness to serve others!

As we enter the season of gratitude, we are especially thankful for God's blessings. Yet, God blesses us all the time! Whatever we have, God provided. The skills and abilities we have, are God's gifts. Our homes, bank accounts, and our possessions were provided by our Lord to be wisely used and administered. He gave us family and loved ones because Christ loves us and desires for us to love others. Jesus Christ gave us the promise of salvation through his death and resurrection. By his loving grace, we are forgiven. God taught us how to pray, to praise, and thank him for our many blessings.

We don't need a season of gratitude; we can be grateful to Christ all the time!

In His Name, Connie DiMarco

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

Ken Eldridge – Treasurer

Fall is here! The weather is cooler. The sky seems bluer! What a wonderful time of the year to have the Lord with us! As year-end approaches, many Council positions will open up and elections will occur. Think about the gifts you might have to offer to our church family, and consider running for a council position that fits your skills.

The help is needed and appreciated!

My own term as treasurer ends in December 2026, not many months away! I will be 76 years old then, and I am hopeful someone will be interested in the position. If you have an interest, let me know. I'd like to work with potential successors over the next year to get them ready to take over when my departure occurs.

On December 1st, we will receive a \$5/month increase in internet costs from AT&T, raising our cost from \$55 to \$60/month plus taxes. I expect to receive an increase in our insurance costs after the first of the new year. Earlier this year, we had increases from Georgia Power and the City of Valdosta. Just as happens at home, costs go up for your church family. As the new year approaches, I encourage you to look carefully at your budget and to consider increasing your gifts to Messiah to continue our mission of building a bigger heaven!

As a reminder, I am a Georgia Notary Public. I do not charge for this service. If you prefer giving through Zelle, our account is listed under **MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com**. You can also give easily through our [Thrivent Choice page](#):

<https://service.thrivent.com/apps/ThriventChoiceMemberWeb/public/orgDetails/100244343209>.

Each Saturday morning, I send out a brief financial snapshot to anyone interested. If you'd like to receive it, just send me a note at that same address.



Give Online to Messiah!
Scan code with your
phone & follow
directions.

A RECORD MONTH OF GIVING AT 'LOAVES AND FISHES'

Kathy Lane - Evangelism

The month of October was spooky busy!!

We are providing food for more families each and every time we open our door. We helped 69 families on Wednesday, October 22nd...more than we have helped since we have been in the fellowship hall. And it is amazing how many of these are families and the elderly caring for their grandchildren.

We purchased 1700 pounds of food from 2nd Harvest in the month of October, and we're out of food! Food purchases from 2nd Harvest average a cost of 19 cents...I don't about you, but I'm charged far more than that when I shop!

To keep us operational, we need your continuing help...your donations are greatly appreciated. All monies received go into the operation of the food pantry...the hours we work are strictly volunteer...77.25 hours so far this month, and we have a whole week yet to prepare for the next opening on November 5th.

Thank you, Messiah family, for your continuous support, if I could, I'd hug every single one of you because you all are blessed!

Together, we can make sure no one in our community goes hungry.

In His Name, Kay, Cathy, and Kathy

GOOD FOOD, GREAT COMPANY, & JOYFUL NOISE!

Kathy Andrew

This month's Joyful Noise Luncheon is set for Tuesday, November 18th at 11:45 AM, and we're gathering at El Cazador (1600 N. Ashley) to celebrate with Joyful Noise.

It's a great chance to laugh, catch up, and spend some time together. Please let Kathy Andrew (229-444-1505) know if you'll be there.

Can't wait to see you there!

HANDS AT WORK, HEARTS IN SERVICE

Cindy Hodge - Property Chair

A big thank you to the members who volunteered to tidy the church in September and October. We have received a lot of positive feedback on the cleanliness of the church since the program started. Your efforts are very much appreciated! The signup sheet for November and December is on the clipboard on the table underneath the mailboxes. Please volunteer if you're able! Many hands make light work!

And thanks to Mike DiMarco for tackling the cleaning of the exterior windows on October 25th! This is a BIG job, and they look great!

Recently members of the congregation have personally funded an upgrade to our ladies room off the nursery, repairing the tile in front of the entry door to the fellowship hall, and reversing the door on the handicapped stall in the women's room off the narthex. These upgrades have greatly improved the facility. Thank you so much!

Our electricity bills continue to decline with the cooler temperatures. Please continue to be vigilant in checking to be sure our air conditioner settings are correct when departing the building. We need to remain in the habit in order to conserve energy in the winter as well.

As always, thanks for your support in caring for our church home. We are blessed!

LWML NEWS: FALL INTO FELLOWSHIP

Kay Vincent - LWML

The next LWML meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. We plan to choose which agencies we give our bazaar proceeds to. If you have any favorites, please let Janie Jenkins, Sandy Bingham, or me know.

Thank you.

***With love and gratitude,
Kay & Messiah's LWML***

STEWARDSHIP CORNER: **HARMONIOUS STEWARDSHIP**

Pointing to the Rock of Ages

Not the labor of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law's demands; Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow, All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone. (LSB 761:2)

While the classic hymn "Rock of Ages" shows up in the Lutheran Service Book in the "Hope and Comfort" section, it can also teach us a valuable lesson about Christian stewardship. If that surprises you, stay with me on this one.

No Lutheran would ever dispute the fact that our work does not save us. Ephesians 2 makes it truly clear that we are dead in our trespasses and sins and would remain in that state until Christ raises us by grace. There is not a ladder on which we can climb out of the grave that our sins have dug for us. No blood, sweat nor tears will be able to rescue us. We all know this.

Our works do not save. Christ's work on the cross of Calvary does! He bore human flesh. He carried the burden of our sin to the cross. His body was beaten, bruised and bloodied for us. He has indeed atoned for us! This is more than enough reason for this hymn to be bouncing around in your head all day today!

But our work has a place. The place is in response to what the Father has done for us in Jesus. The Rock of Ages, who is Jesus, becomes the foundation on which our lives of faith are built. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to make us God's workmanship that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2:10.

Our workmanship does not display our power or prowess. Like the heavens declare the handiwork of the Creator, the works of a redeemed sinner point others to the salvation that is worked only by Jesus alone. Our work is a response to and reflection of a grace and glory that we ourselves could never accomplish or achieve.

We become stewards of the treasure that is the Gospel. When we faithfully support the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our financial support, we are doing the work which points to the One who alone atones. When we come alongside a struggling sister or brother for whom Christ died and we share the stewardship work of compassion and care, we enfold the treasure of God's love and redemption.

When we make it a weekly priority to arrange our schedule to be in the Lord's House with other stewards of the Gospel to receive again and again the Gospel's

precious gift, we are stewards of the Body of Christ in the congregation that points even more people to Jesus.

We cannot do this. Jesus does it through us. We are simply stewards of this precious treasure!

OKTOBERFEST SUCCESS **THANKS TO YOU!**

What a wonderful day of food, fellowship, and fun! Our Oktoberfest celebration was a great success thanks to the many hands and hearts who made it happen.

Special thanks to Rebekah Rothas, our powerhouse planner who coordinated every detail and stayed to help clean up; Mike Rothas, Larry Lorden, and Ken Eldridge, our grill masters who kept the bratwurst sizzling; Pastor Wareham for filling the air with joyful music; Wendy Aichele for capturing memories with her camera; Marcia Lorden for her beautiful touch with décor, setup, and takedown; Karin Boles, Connie DiMarco, Rebekah Rothas, Ken Eldridge, Larry and Marcia Lorden for their cheerful cleanup help; and Raquel for creating the bingo cards, crossword, and word search added extra fun to the day. You all made this celebration one to remember—thank you for sharing your time, talents, and love for our Messiah family!

November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	3	4 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 6:00 Potluck Bible Studies	5 11-3 Food Pantry	6 9:00 LWML Quilter's Group	7	8
9 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	10 6:00 Church Council Meeting	11 OFFICES ARE CLOSED 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 6:00 Potluck Bible Studies	12	13 9:00 LWML Quilter's Group	14	15
16 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	17	18 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 11:45 Joyful Noise (El Cazador on Ashley) 5:30 Elders Meeting 6:00 Potluck Bible Studies	19 11-3 Food Pantry	20 9:00 LWML Quilter's Group 5:30 Long-Range Planning Comm. Meeting	21	22
23 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	24	25 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 6:00 Potluck Bible Studies	26	27 9:00 LWML Quilter's Group	28	29