



# MESSIAH MESSENGER



Issue #39

JULY 2026



## **THE PASTOR'S PEN**

*Reflections, Encouragement,  
and Christ-Centered Teaching*  
**Pastor Stephen Wareham**

Happy July, Messiah Family!

The lazy days of summer are certainly here, with how hot and humid it is in Valdosta! Now I know that the weather makes all of us want to just stay at home and in the air conditioning (at least for me!), but we've got a lot going on this month here at Messiah that I'd love to have you join us for.

First, our summer "*Grillin' with Pastor*" series is back! This year we'll be grilling out every Wednesday in July, starting with Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 pm, and this year, every Wednesday has a theme:

- **Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> – USA! USA! USA!**

Join us for a good old fashioned American cookout in your most patriotic, red, white, and blue outfit, as we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of America as a Messiah family.

- **Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> – Aloha!**

Messiah is throwing a Luau, and we want you and your family to join us! Come in your favorite Hawaiian clothing for a fun evening with great food, company, and, of course, pineapple!

- **Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> – GO TEAM!**

Rep your favorite sports team! Don't be afraid to show us just how much of a fan you are (Go Dawgs!!).

- **Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> – Back to school!**

To close out our summer cookout series, we'll be having a school supplies drive at our cookout to support local students and teachers. Lists of requested items will be forthcoming, and we'd love your support!

We'll have good food, games, and, most of all, great fellowship with your Messiah Lutheran Church family every Wednesday in July, and I hope you'll join us!!

Next, now that I'm back, that means we're back to our full schedule of Bible Study classes! Just to remind everyone, our classes are:

- **Sunday Mornings at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall – Adult Bible Study:**

We've been studying the book of Hebrews, but we're almost done, so if you wanted to join us as we begin a new topic or book of the Bible, now's a great time to join us!

- **Tuesday Mornings at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall – Adult Bible Study on**

the Lectionary: Every week we dive deeper into the Scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday. If you've ever wondered about how the weekly Scripture readings connect with each other or just had questions about what the readings mean, this is a perfect chance to come and learn!

- **Tuesday Evenings at 6:00 pm** we have two events going on...

- **Women's Potluck Bible Study in the Fellowship Hall**

Bring a dish to share! This is a casual Bible study run by Messiah women that happens every Tuesday at 6:00 pm. They study a range of topics, but if you're new and want to know what they're currently studying or just want some more information, reach out to Wendy Aichele or Connie DeMarco. They'd love to have you, and for you to bring a friend! (And if you have a husband, you can always drag him along and make him go to our...)

- **Men's Potluck Bible Study in the Pine Tree House**

Also bring something to share! After a few months' hiatus, the Men's group is back! This is also a casual Bible study, focused on real-world topics and building great fellowship. We have a great time and are always looking for new guys to join us, so if you're interested you can speak to myself or Ken Eldridge. (Or better yet, just show up and join us!)

Finally, we have our volunteer opportunities! These are ongoing all year and we always need new people, so if you've been looking for a way to give back, get to know your Messiah family better, or maybe even learn a new skill, these are for you!

- ***“Loaves and Fishes” Food Pantry***

Twice a month, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, the volunteers at the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry give out an average of 60 bags of food(!) to individuals and families in need, right here at Messiah Lutheran Church. But this ministry doesn't just happen, it takes a lot of time and effort from volunteers, from shopping for the food, to getting donations put away in the pantry, to preparing the bags of food themselves, and they can always use more volunteers! Speak to Kay Vincent or Kathy Lane if you're interested in helping!

- **Thursday Quilter's Group**

Every Thursday, a group of ladies meets from 9:00 am – 11:30 am for fellowship, and, of course, quilting! You may have seen or heard their announcement that they need some people to help with hemming their quilts (and they do!), but if you'd prefer to just learn to quilt or come only for the fellowship, anyone is welcome. The quilts they make are sold at the Messiah Christmas Bazaar and other events throughout the year, along with some military and patriotic-themed quilts that are donated to veterans. Speak to Nan Boyd or just show up on Thursday if you're interested!

- **LWML**

The Messiah Lutheran Church chapter of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League both has their own events and assists with church events that are ongoing throughout the year, and they're always looking for more women to join them! Speak to Kay Vincent for more information!

- **Messiah Singers** (On hiatus until fall)

Look for more information this coming Fall when they begin to meet again. Whether you can sing or not (or just think you can or can't sing), Messiah has a choir, and they would love you to join them!

- **Worship Volunteers**

Our worship services take a lot of hands to make happen, and we always need more help! Don't worry about whether you know how to do something, because we'll make sure that you get any training you need (all the spots are pretty easy, too!). The positions are:

- **Lector** – reads the Old Testament and Epistle reading for that Sunday. If you can read, you can do it!
- **Communion Assistant** – Carries the cross in the procession at the beginning and at end of the service and assists with communion by carrying the common cup. Open to men and women! A few more things to learn than some other positions, but trust me, I'll make sure you know what you're doing!
- **Altar Care** – Prepares the communion set prior to the worship service, cleans and puts the communion set away after the worship service, and assists with changing altar paraments as necessary. It sounds like a lot, but if you're new, you'll have all the help you need as you learn!
- **Acolyte** – Lights the altar candles at the beginning of the worship service, puts them out at the end of the service, and assists with communion by carrying the individual cup trays. Open to kids AND adults!
- **Greeter** – Hands out church bulletins, welcomes everyone as they come into church, and reminds guests and visitors to sign our guest book so we can send them a welcome letter. If you're outgoing and like to smile and talk to people, this is your spot!
- **Usher** – Every Sunday, we have two ushers who collect the offering and direct communion traffic. Easy, but a needed position to keep things running smoothly!
- **Sound Board** – Runs the soundboard in the back. Looking to train a few more people in how to run the soundboard, so if you're a technical/technology person, or just interested in learning a new skill, we can use your help!

As I said, it takes a lot of volunteers to make every Sunday worship service happen, but the more volunteers we have, the less often everyone gets scheduled! Unless you want to help more often, in which case we can make that happen too! Speak to myself or Carol Walters if you have any questions or want to get put on the volunteer list. And remember, if you feel like you need training or practice, just let us know and we'll make sure you get all the training you need!

Finally have our Church Council and committees! If you're interested in learning and working in a church leadership role, we'd love to have you! The church council chairs are elected by the congregation to a two-year term, and they, along with the Pastor, plan and run all programs and events here at Messiah Lutheran. Our committees are put together by the council chairs and consist of volunteers who assist the council with certain events, such as planning the "*Grillin' with the Pastor*" series or a financial review of the church. This sounds like a lot, and while these positions require more time from our volunteers, I can promise you that you don't need any experience to be a council chair or a member of a committee, as we'll make sure you receive all the help, training, and support you need.

Our Church Council Chairs are:

- **President:** Connie DiMarco
- **Vice President:** Don Brugel
- **Board of Elders:** Charlie Francis
- **Financial Secretary:** Beth Bush
- **Treasurer:** Ken Eldridge  
(please see Ken's article below!)
- **Stewardship:** Marcia Lorden
- **Worship:** Carol Walters
- **Property:** James Edmondson

Open positions! Let any of us know if you're interested in volunteering to fill this position!

- **Christian Education:** Plans and organizes for Bible Studies, especially for kids and youth groups, and other education events (like VBS) in conjunction with the Pastor.
- **Evangelism:** Focused on outreach and mission work, especially here in our local

If you want to help out but don't want to commit to serving as a council chair, that's why we have committees! Talk to any of the current church council chairs, and we can let you know what committees are currently active, what projects are going that they could use help with, or just answer your questions about what the church council and the committees do.

I know this has been a long newsletter article, but I wanted to make sure all y'all know the different ways you can be involved here at Messiah Lutheran Church! And if you know of a ministry or event, bible study, or church group that you'd like to see happening here (or better yet, would like to lead!), let me or anyone on the church council know, because we'd love to help!

Most of all, whether you're able to volunteer or not, I'm glad to have all of you as part of the Messiah family. I always enjoy being with y'all and am glad to serve as your Pastor!

**God's Blessings,**  
*Pastor Stephen Wareham*

HANDS to WORK



HEARTS to GOD

*Amish saying*

## NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

*Ken Eldridge – Treasurer*

### **TREASURER NEEDED!**

I've not heard from anyone who wishes to succeed me as treasurer as I depart on December 31<sup>st</sup>! Those of you who know me know that I am leaving the position. If necessary, I will leave the treasurer's laptop, checkbook, and all related records on the conference room table in front of the office on January 1<sup>st</sup>!

I will gladly help train someone to replace me. But after the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, I will no longer be signing checks or paying bills as my 2<sup>nd</sup> term will have expired.

And very soon (August 31<sup>st</sup>), our fiscal year ends! So, budget time is almost here again with budget preparation at the end of July, Council approval in August, and congregation approval at the end of August!

It would really be helpful if an interested person were to get involved now, work on the budget in a manner that suits them, and slide into the treasurer's position as I return to retirement at the end of December!

I have most things automated now, so the bulk of the job is correctly categorizing receipts and expenses, and making sure bills are accrued and paid when due.

Payroll taxes are handled by our CPA, and we simply write the checks to forward the taxes owed to the U.S. Treasury and State of Georgia.

Time is short. Please prayerfully consider running for this important office.

I will be happy to answer any questions anyone may have about the job!

## **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 July 12<sup>th</sup>, so that enough seats can be reserved. **See you there!** 😊

 **Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>**

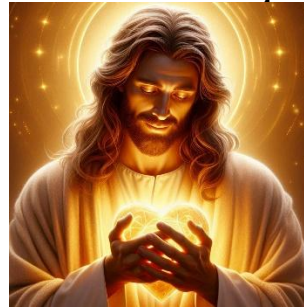
 **11:45 AM**

 **Southern Shores**

**958 N Saint Augustine Rd**

## **SURROUNDED BY GOD'S GRACE**

*Carol Walters – Worship Chair*



There is deep joy in serving the Lord with willing hands and faithful hearts. Each act of service, whether seen or unseen, becomes a quiet testimony of love for Christ and a blessing to His church. When we give of our time, care, and gifts, we strengthen our walk in God's Word and build up the body of Christ in love.

As we move through this season, may each of us prayerfully consider where the Lord may be opening a door to serve with gladness and devotion. Faithful service blesses others, strengthens the congregation, and draws our own hearts ever closer to Him.

***May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.***  
**Ruth 2:12**

**In Christ's peace,  
Messiah Lutheran Worship Committee**



|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Michelle Coelho | 1  |
| James Edmondson | 2  |
| Heather Miller  | 7  |
| Susan Keller    | 8  |
| Gary Bush       | 10 |
| Ver Barritt     | 13 |
| Judy DeWitt     | 27 |
| Valerie Behnke  | 30 |
| Kaden Francis   | 31 |

# July 2026

| Sun                                           | Mon                               | Tue                                                  | Wed                                                                  | Thu                                                                       | Fri | Sat |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
|                                               |                                   |                                                      | 1                                                                    | 2<br>9:00 Quilter's Group                                                 | 3   | 4   |
| 5<br>9:00 Adult Bible Study<br>10:30 Worship  | 6                                 | 7<br>6: Ladies & Gents Separate Potluck Bible Study  | 8<br>11 - 2: Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry<br>5:00 Patriotic Cookout   | 9<br>9:00 Quilter's Group                                                 | 10  | 11  |
| 12<br>9:00 Adult Bible Study<br>10:30 Worship | 13<br>6:00 Church Council Meeting | 14<br>6: Ladies & Gents Separate Potluck Bible Study | 15<br>5:00 Hawaaiian Luau Cookout                                    | 16<br>9:00 Quilter's Group<br>5:30: Long-Range Planning Committee Meeting | 17  | 18  |
| 19<br>9:00 Adult Bible Study<br>10:30 Worship | 20                                | 21<br>6: Ladies & Gents Separate Potluck Bible Study | 22<br>11 - 2: Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry<br>5:00 Sports Fan Cookout | 23<br>9:00 Quilter's Group                                                | 24  | 25  |
| 26<br>9:00 Adult Bible Study<br>10:30 Worship | 27                                | 28<br>6: Ladies & Gents Separate Potluck Bible Study | 29<br>5:00 Back-to-School Cookout                                    | 30<br>9:00 Quilter's Group                                                | 31  |     |