



**THE PASTOR'S PEN**



*Guidance, Encouragement, & Reflection*

**A MOTHER'S FAITH,**

**A LESSON IN TRUST**

Hello Messiah Family! One of my favorite experiences at Easter is joining with the entire congregation, the whole church family, in proclaiming with joy and exuberance that Jesus Christ is alive!! It's what the whole Lenten season has been building up towards, all the Sundays and Midweek services from Ash Wednesday in February through Good Friday in April have led to this moment, the glorious resurrection of our Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ!

But in case you didn't know, none of these things happen here at Messiah without a lot of sacrifices from our many great volunteers. Because of their stewardship, their giving of their money and skills, and, maybe most of all, their time, we can have all our fantastic Worship Services and events! But stewardship isn't easy; actually, I would call it rather difficult, and one of the reasons stewardship can be so difficult is because it asks us to give of something we only have a limited amount of: our time. As we all know far too well, we only have so much of it, and a million things that need to fit into the time we do have (Including, of course, the all-important midday nap). But it always seems like everything is important and needs to be done. And maybe it is! Maybe everything on your list of things to do is something that needs to be done. That's how it was for my mom for years.

She had nothing but an endless list of things that needed to be done. Chief among those things was work. After my parents' divorce, money was always pretty tight. So my mom, who worked a full-time job at the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), got a second job for nights and weekends at Target as a cashier. And for years, she'd work 8-9 hours a day at DFCS, and then 3-4 evenings a week, she'd go straight to Target after work. There were times when she would head to work at 7 am and wouldn't get home till 10 pm! I still don't know how she did it. And then, of course, there was all the stuff Josh and I did that kept her busy as well. I must believe that she felt she had no more time to give to anyone!

And yet, every Sunday, every Wednesday during Advent and Lent, we were at church. We were part of a youth group and Lutheran school events. My mom helped with church events as much as she could. She didn't really have the time to do these things; I'm sure she could have used the time to clean or cook or have a hobby, maybe even simply just take a nap, but she chose to sacrifice what little time she had to be a part of the church. That was her form of stewardship. And it wasn't about just being a good person (although my brother, our Dad, and I are all convinced she \*might\* just be the best person alive), for her, it was about trust. Trust in God that He would use her time to the benefit of His Kingdom, the benefit of the people around her, the benefit of her sons, and yes, to her own benefit. Trust that even though she felt like there wasn't enough time for everything that needed to be done, God would always make sure there was time for the truly important things. And let me tell you, her, Josh, or I could tell you many a story about exactly that happening.

My mom had and has a trust in God that I'm still trying to emulate. But the first step in building a trust like that begins with stewardship. Any kind of stewardship! My mom gave her time, but you're free to give in whatever way you want, as all of you. But I encourage you to continue to give, to sacrifice something, not just this Lenten season, but throughout the rest of the year as well, trusting in God and His promise that He will always take care of you.

*"And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."* *Romans 8:28*

That is a promise that we can truly and fully be confident of because Christ is Risen!!! He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!! And because He is Risen, having defeated sin, death, and the devil, we are redeemed, given life and given it fully. Amen.

**I wish all of you a truly blessed Easter season.**

P.S. Sincerely and from the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone who has given of their time, money, and skills, especially during this long Lenten season. Messiah Lutheran Church wouldn't be as great as it is without you!

## NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

*Ken Eldridge – Treasurer*

Eight months! Yes, it has been eight months! Pastor Wareham joined us fresh from seminary last July. Eight months ago! Time flies! God blessed us with a young, intelligent, former Marine with multiple life experiences to share with us! And he has!

Pastor shares himself, his family, and his life in every Sunday sermon. We know how important family is to him, and how important his fellow Marines are in his life. He is open about the good times and the rough patches that define his life. He is our spiritual leader, Pastor, and has become a part of our Messiah family.

So many positive things have happened since his arrival! Our congregation is growing, and weekly attendance is up! Our ability to cover our expenses has improved. We have a strong men's group that meets regularly and Elders that take their responsibilities seriously.

Our Christian education has improved with our Tuesday Mornings with the Pastor led bible studies. I know mine has for sure!

God has blessed us with an outstanding Pastor, leader, educator, and just as importantly, a friend.

Soon, he will be gone for five weeks to attend additional training, which will give him the ability to support our military troops. This training will benefit our congregation as well.

I strongly support his efforts to better himself with additional education. God always has a plan.

In eight short months, our congregation seems happier, friendlier, and more willing to participate again in church worship and social functions. Pastor Stephen is the right man in the right place at the right time. We needed him. God provided.

I prayerfully ask that you offer your support and encouragement to Pastor. He needs our affirmation and love. **God is good!**



## A CALL TO SERVE: WORSHIP CHAIR

*Carol Walters – Worship Chair*

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”*  
1 Peter 4:10

As I look ahead to the close of my second term as Worship Chair at the end of this year, I find myself reflecting with a full and grateful heart. Serving in this role has been one of the most meaningful and fulfilling experiences I have had. It has been a true joy to work alongside so many of you who give your time, care, and love to support worship at Messiah.

This position is open to any member of our congregation, and in December, the selection committee will begin the process of identifying the next person to serve. I wanted to share this now, giving you time to prayerfully consider whether this might be a way you feel called to serve.

The Worship Chair role offers a unique opportunity to be part of the heart of our church life. It brings you into connection with the many faithful hands that prepare our services, support our traditions, and help create a welcoming and meaningful worship experience for all.

I ask that you take some time in prayer over the coming months. Listen, reflect, and consider whether this might be a place where your gifts and heart for service could be shared.

If you are curious, have questions, or would simply like to talk about what the role involves, I would be more than happy to connect with you.

With gratitude for this congregation and all who serve so faithfully,

*Carol*

## THE SHEPHERD’S WATCH POST

*Watching Over Our Flock with Prayer*

*Charlie Francis – Head Elder*

If you know someone in our Messiah family who is ill, homebound, or living in a care facility, please let Pastor or one of the elders know. Your help ensures we can offer timely prayer, encouragement, and care where it’s needed most.

Together, we look after each other — sharing His love and support throughout our congregation.

**A warm and sincere thank you from Pastor Wareham and Your Elders!**

## PANTRY PULSE

*Feeding Bodies, Sharing Christ's Love*

### HARVEST OF HOPE

**Kathy Lane – Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry**

March has been a busy month for our little food pantry! We've moved 1,975 pounds of food, and we're finally able to bring some frozen meat for distribution on March 25th! The number of families we can provide with food increases with each opening (50-60 families). Our sign is like a beacon that most see, bringing them to visit us. We give out cards at St. Francis with our schedule, which brings many to us, and we can share the food that St. Francis shares with us when they have a food drive. Our volunteers have logged 41 hours shopping and preparing bags for the days we're open and providing food to our clients. Thank you to those who help by volunteering and those who provide monetary support! **Each of you is appreciated beyond words!**

**In Christ's love and service,  
Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry**





Shawn Barritt	1
Don Brugel	6
Sheila Knight	11
John Pellicone	15
Raquel Oberg	19
Cherylene Miller	23
Raleigh Mote	23
Kari Berg	25
Helen Whitten	26

## 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 April 13<sup>th</sup>, so that enough seats can be reserved. **See you there!** 😊

 **Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at  11:45 AM**

 **Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen**

## LUTHERAN LOOKOUT

*Faith, Grace, and Christ-Centered Wisdom*

### REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD

“Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.”

*Deuteronomy 32:7*

This month we're reflecting on the gift of Lutheran history—how God has preserved and carried His Church through the generations.

If you'd like to explore more, the *Lutheran History Podcast* offers short, engaging episodes on the people and moments that shaped our faith.

Faith didn't start with us—and thanks be to God, it doesn't depend on us. It is received, preserved, and passed down through His grace.

 <https://tlhp.buzzsprout.com/> 



## ✦ MITE BOX MATTERS ✦

*What's in YOUR Mite Box? – Faith in Action*

**Kay Vincent – LWML Chair**

### APRIL MEETING & ZONE RALLY

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) will meet on **Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 3:00 PM** in the fellowship hall at Messiah Lutheran Church. All members are encouraged to attend as we gather for a time of planning, fellowship, and preparation.

During this meeting, we will be finalizing plans for the upcoming Tallahassee Zone Rally, which will be hosted at Messiah on April 18, 2026 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We look forward to welcoming ladies from all churches within our zone for a meaningful day of worship, learning, and connection.

A request has also been made to ensure the Rally is added to the church calendar so that the space is properly reserved.

We are grateful for all who serve and support this ministry, and we look forward to seeing everyone on April 7 as we prepare for this special event.

In his Name,  
**Kay Vincent**

## ODS PASTOR COVERAGE SCHEDULE AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Pastor Coverage Schedule for the 6 Sundays (May 3- June 7) I will be out attending Officer Development School is as follows:

- Sunday, May 3 Rev. Craig Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret)
- Sunday, May 10, Rev. Gary Siefert
- Sunday, May 17, Rev. Richard Boyd
- Sunday, May 24, Rev. Craig Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret)
- Sunday, May 31, Rev. Gary Siefert
- Sunday, June 7, Rev. Richard Boyd

Covering Pastors:

Rev. Craig Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret): Director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and retired Navy Chaplain with 30+ years of Active-Duty service.

Rev. Gary Siefert: Retired pastor from our Circuit who has agreed to cover two Sundays.

Rev. Richard Boyd: Retired pastor from our Circuit who has agreed to cover two Sundays.

For normal, everyday Pastoral Care needs and visitation, please contact your Elder. If there is an emergency that requires Pastoral Care from an LCMS Ordained Pastor, please also contact your Elder, as they have the contact information for two of our circuit pastors, Rev. Bert Matlock and Rev. Jay Winters, who have agreed to assist with Pastoral Care as necessary. Your Elder will be able to put you in contact with them.

Additionally, I will have access to my phone and my email, albeit sparingly and only in the evenings and on the weekends. If you need to speak to me personally, please call, text, or email me, and I will respond as I am able.

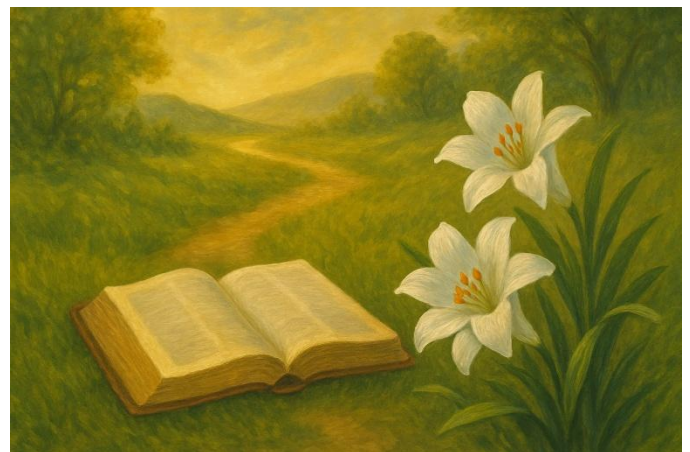
Pastor-led bible studies (Sunday mornings and Tuesday mornings) are cancelled while I am attending ODS.

Finally, I just want to pass on my sincere thanks to the entire Messiah family for making it possible for me to attend ODS. Being a Navy Chaplain has been a dream and goal of mine for years, and I'm very excited to take this step forward toward chaplaincy, something that wouldn't be possible without your understanding and support.

Check Facebook while I'm gone where I plan to post updates on my time at ODS and hopefully even some photos.

I look forward to being back in Valdosta after June 7 and back at Messiah with y'all on Sunday, June 14!

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



## **THE FUTURE FOCUS**

*Looking Ahead with Vision and Purpose*

### **Long Range Planning at Messiah**

The Long Range Planning Committee had a busy meeting this month! We're exploring new and creative ways to promote and grow our church family, along with some practical steps to support Messiah's continued growth. Together, we're working toward our shared goal — building a bigger Heaven!

### **GAME NIGHT AT MESSIAH!**

Get ready for some fun and fellowship! We're hosting Game Night on Saturday, May 16th at 3:00 p.m. Come join us for laughter, snacks, and a great time. A separate submission here in the Messenger has all the details. Mark your calendars—we hope to see you there!

### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)**

We're hoping to bring back VBS this summer! We'd love to have more volunteers join in (not just LWML ladies 😊). We're also thinking about posting on our website to see how much community interest there is. If things move forward, Pastor has training info ready for interested volunteers.

### **LOOKING AHEAD-MESSIAH'S 70th ANNIVERSARY!**

Next year marks 70 wonderful years for Messiah Lutheran Church! We're already brainstorming a month-long celebration, possibly in early summer. Ideas include photo and scrapbook displays, games and prizes, cookouts, and even a fun “get-to-know-you” book featuring our church family. Stay tuned for more as plans unfold!

### **GETTING THE WORD OUT**

We're exploring a few ways to share more about Messiah with our community: Abbey is checking with Moody about advertising options. Paul is looking into Money Pages. Pastor is gathering information from Black Crow Media. Wendy is contacting VLPRA to learn more about their Trail Ambassador Program. We're also looking at possible District grants to help fund advertising if needed.

### **MAKING MESSIAH SHINE**

We'd love to make Messiah more visible from the road—one idea is adding spotlights to illuminate the cross and church name in the evenings. Beautiful and welcoming!

## **GAZEBO UPDATE**

The committee is talking about moving the gazebo over to the Pine Tree House yard. We think it'll get more use there and be a lovely place to gather once it's cleaned up.

## **POLICY MANUAL**

A draft of the new Policy Manual has been handed out for review. It will be presented at the next Council meeting for discussion and feedback

## **CHURCH INVENTORY**

We're working on putting together a complete inventory of church items—just in case of damage or theft. Each Council Chair will handle the list for their area (for example, Worship will cover altar items, Property will track things like tables and chairs, and so on). This, too, will be brought before the Council at the next meeting. Messiah Lutheran Church is moving forward with energy and purpose! From planning Game Night and VBS to preparing for our 70th Anniversary and exploring new ways to reach our community, it's wonderful to see our ministries and members working together in faith and fellowship.

As we continue to grow, let's continue praying for guidance, keep supporting one another, sharing God's love, and shining His light in all we do.

**Together, we're building a bigger Heaven  
—right here at Messiah!**



# April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 9:00 Quilter's Group	2	3
5 7 AM Sunrise Service 8 AM Breakfast 9:15 Egg hunt 10:30 AM Worship	6	7 3: LWML Meeting 6: Ladies Bible Studies	8 11 - 3: Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry	9 9:00 Quilter's Group	10	11
12 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	13 6:00 Church Council Meeting	14 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 6: Ladies & Gents Bible Studies (Separate)	15	16 9:00 Quilter's Group 5:30: Long-Range Planning Committee Meeting	17 Raquel OOO	18 Raquel OOO 9 AM - 2 PM LWML Rally
19 Raquel OOO 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	20 Raquel OOO	21 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 11:45: Joyful Noise - Cheddar's (Norman Dr.) 6: Ladies & Gents Bible Studies (Separate)	22 11 - 3: Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry	23 9:00 Quilter's Group	24	25
26 9:00 Bible Study 9:15 Sun. School 10:30 Worship	27	28 10:00 "Tuesdays with the Pastor" Bible Study 6: Ladies & Gents Bible Studies (Separate)	29 Pastor OOO	30 Pastor OOO 9:00 Quilter's Group		