



MESSIAH  
lutheran church  
*Sharing the love of Jesus*

1706 Lee Boulevard, North Mankato, MN  
507-387-5537  
messiahnorthmankato.com

Dear Beloved People of Messiah,

I hope you had a blessed Christmas season in which you were touched with the gifts of hope, peace, love and joy! It was a blessing for me to serve as your pastoral leader in those most holy days as we pondered again the divine love of God with us in the person of the Christ-child.

Now, we have opened the book on a new calendar year with all of its hopes, dreams, and promise. The turning of the year always gives me pause to reflect on the gifts and graces received in the past year and to be prayerfully mindful of what God's spirit is stirring for the year ahead. As a congregation, we will be involved in a similar process as our ministry team and leaders prepare their annual reports highlighting our 2025 ministry and together and as we consider the funding of our ministry in 2026. I will have more to say in my annual report to the congregation, but I want to give you a little peek into where my prayerful reflections of 2025 and Spirit led directions for 2026.

Part of my call to Messiah, which began just over a year ago, was to nurture continued progress in four strategic directions the congregation had identified through the pastoral transition process. The strategic directions centered around four areas of ministry that are or have been important to Messiah's identity as a congregation: social outreach, youth and families, an atmosphere of welcome, and spiritual growth. Our social outreach team has led us in an abundance of opportunities to respond to the needs of our Mankato neighbors through collections of food, clothing and household items. And, they have initiated a new ministry, GATHER - a weekly opportunity for people to gather for fellowship, crafts, service opportunities, and a shared meal. A welcome team has produced a welcome video for our website, made permanent name tags available, and refreshed our children's activity bags. There are still plans in the works for upgrading our signage in and around our building. All of those initiatives in service to our strategic objectives have taken place with little to no financial cost to the congregation. Much of the people power and supplies needed has been donated or funded through grants.

In the year ahead, I would like to see us advance the two remaining strategic objectives. I am sensing a particular priority for our ministry with youth and their families. We have a strong educational component in place on Wednesday evenings. Preschoolers - 8th graders and their parents meet for a meal and worship. Following worship the children and youth have age-appropriate instructional time. For our middle school students this time prepares them to affirm their baptism (confirmation) at the end of the 8th grade. However, once the youth complete the 8th grade, we don't see many of them continue their participation in the life and ministry of Messiah. Our ministry with youth and their families must seek to close that gap by providing a meaningful, "next phase" for our Sr. high youth in their faith formation.

This "next phase" is going to require strong, gifted, consistent leadership. Our best prospect for putting that leadership in place is to establish a (very) part-time position dedicated to developing this area of ministry. Our congregation council has begun to respond to this strategic direction by placing into the proposed 2026 ministry spending plan (budget) a 10 hour/week staff position. As we move into this new year and prepare for our annual meeting on February 1st, I ask you to prayerfully consider this proposed staff addition and your willingness to fund it. Adding this position asks each of us to support it with our offerings, as well as our time and energy. Approving it and supporting it will determine if youth and their families are indeed a strategic priority for our ministry at this time.

I look to 2026 with anticipation and excitement about what God's Spirit will do among us and through us. When I look at the new ministry and initiatives of the past year, along with the incredible success and support of our capital campaign, I have no doubt that, with God's help, we can move forward with the remaining of our strategic objectives. As we learned through this year's stewardship emphasis: we are kindling generosity, building community, and transforming the world. Together we are sharing the love of Jesus with all people.

God's blessings in this new year!

*Pastor LaDonna*

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY  
2026

## Connections Volunteers Needed

The Connections shelter is an emergency shelter in Mankato that houses men, women, and families. The shelter is open from 6 pm-8 am daily and has a 35-bed capacity with nightly meal. Opportunities exist to make a meal and serve at the site. Please see sign-up sheets for the coming month in the narthex 2-3 weeks prior to the serving dates: January 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>.

If you're not available this month, the additional dates are: February 16 & 17, March 19 & 21, and April 20 & 21. If you are unable to help make, serve, or deliver food, please consider a donation to purchase the food. Contact Barb Meier with questions.

## Quilting Update

The winter months are upon us, which can only mean one thing; it is time for quilting again! Quilting will begin Tuesday, January 13, 2026. Quilting days are the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the months January through April 2026. ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US! Sewing skills are not required; there is a job for everyone. We will begin between 9:00 - 9:30 and end by 3:00. We provide lunch (we take turns bringing lunch for the group).

Call Lynn Klaber at 507-380-5465 with questions



## Annual Meeting

Join us for the annual meeting after the 10:00 am Messiah Worships United service on Sunday, February 1, 2026. A light lunch will be served. We will hear team reports from 2025 and discuss the budget and plans for 2026. Team leaders, please submit final reports ASAP if you haven't yet.

## Gather

For adults of all ages seeking more social interaction, join us weekly on Wednesdays at 10:30 am for coffee and a free will offering lunch. If you need a ride, contact the church office.

## Red Cross

Messiah is hosting a blood drive on Monday, January 19th from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. There are appointment openings for both regular and Power Red donations. Sign up at: [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) Code: MESSIAHKATOMN

Maximize your blood donation & help more patients. If you're an eligible type O, B-, or A- donor, consider making a Power Red donation. Red blood cells are the most commonly transfused blood component.



## Messiah Senior Lunch Group

This monthly lunch group is taking a break in January but coming back together again on Tuesday, February 5th at 11:30 am at Happy Chef in Mankato.

This is a senior gathering event for Messiah members and friends. We hope you will join us for good food, lively conversation, fun, and a chance to know other Messiah members. We will meet monthly at various restaurants of your choice in the Mankato area. Come and go as you please.

## Congregational Book Read

Groups have been formed to start the next Congregational Book Read featuring \*An Altar in the World\* by Barbara Brown Taylor. If you are interested in participating, please contact Janet Jones.

Leader	Location	Date and Time
Steve Jones	Steve's	1/6 @ 7 pm 1/20 @ 7 pm
Renee Guyer	Messiah	1/4 @ 9:30 am 1/18 @ 9:30 am
Greg Suskovic	Messiah	1/21 @ 2 pm
Lynn Klaber	Kimberly's	1/5 @ 1:00 pm 1/19 @ 1:00 pm



## God's work. Our hands.

This is the third in a series highlighting some of Messiah's members who are generous with their time, skills, energy, leadership, and creativity. Each person answers the same two questions: What gifts have God given you, and how have you been able to make use of these gifts at Messiah and in the community?

This month, Lynn Klaber is highlighted.

One of the gifts God has given Lynn is the gift of listening. She made use of this in her career as an educator, using this ability to listen to families and guide them in helping their children gain and improve their skills across all areas of development.

Another God-given gift is Lynn's ability in the area of sewing, especially as a crafter and quilter. At Messiah she has organized and led our Quilting Ministry, and in the community she has led a group of volunteers in making ornaments for the residents of the Harry Meyering Center.

The greatest gift she has received in her life is her sister Donna! She taught Lynn patience, that it's ok to try new things, to appreciate the differences in people, and how to live her life in faith.

What are your gifts, and how do you share the love of Jesus at Messiah and in the community?

## Ways to Give Online

1. Scan this QR code:
2. or Visit our website at [messiahnorthmankato.com](http://messiahnorthmankato.com)
  - > Click "OFFERING" on the home-page, or go to the "GIVING" tab
  - > Choose the amount you'd like to give and the frequency (e.g. one-time, weekly, monthly)
  - > Make donations by using a credit or debit card, or by using your bank account. Know your gift is appreciated and helps support the ministry of Messiah.



# A Fresh Start - Begins January 18th

A Fresh Start provides new home essentials for those emerging from homelessness. The white donation box will be out in the narthex for those who want to contribute.



## A FRESH START

### Items We Give Our Clients

- Can Opener
- Plates/bowls
- Lamp
- Strainer
- Drinking Glasses
- Cutting Board
- Kitchen Knives
- Silverware
- Booster
- Chair/High Chair
- Laundry Basket
- Toilet Bowl Brush
- Broom and Dust Pan

- Bath Towels
- Wash Cloths
- Shower Curtain and Hooks
- Sheets
- Comforter or blanket
- Kitchen Towels
- Measuring Cups and Spoons
- Spatula
- Mixing Spoon
- Food Storage Containers
- Pots/Pans
- Hot Pad

- Garbage Cans
- Lamps
- Light Bulbs
- Toilet Paper
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner
- Cleanser(s) – multi surface
- Saran Wrap
- Garbage Bags
- Ziploc Bags
- Shower Gel
- Dish Soap/Dishwasher Soap
- Hand Soap
- Laundry Soap
- Hangers
- Plungers
- Shampoo
- Conditioner

We rely on 75% of what we give our clients to come from donations and the other 25% to be purchased with cash donations.

- Gift Card for 1st meal
- Kleenex
- Baking Sheet
- Cake Pan
- Extension Cord
- Beverage Pitcher
- Toaster
- Pizza Cutter
- Mattress Pad
- Bath Mat



# Council Updates

2025 council members: Janet Jones, Nate Brekke, Jean Zandstra, Katie Hendrickson, Dustin Runkle, Swede Mundell, Julie Olsen and Greg Suskovic.

**November offerings** were \$22,802 vs expenses of \$33,245. This left us short by \$10,443 for the month. Income YTD 2025 is \$308,352 with expenses at \$330,405 or a shortfall of \$22,053. Income YTD 2024 was \$287,091 vs. expenses of \$339,342 which left us at a \$52,251 deficit. Therefore, our giving is \$21,261 above last year while expenses are \$8,937 lower. Have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

## Church Council met on December 14th and the following was discussed:

- The Council endorsed and approved the Messiah budget for 2026.
- Fourth Quarter local benevolences will go to the Connections, the Salvation Army, and the Echo Food Shelf.
- End of year benevolences will be distributed to CADA, ECHO, FOCP (backpack food program), and My Place.
- The constitution is being updated, watch for more information soon. Contact Janet Jones 507-340-7093 if you have questions.
- The endowment policy is being updated and will be reviewed by the council soon.
- Music support is still needed for Wednesday nights.
- The nominations committee is wrapping up the needs for 2026. Thanks to those who have prayerfully committed to serve as needed. Positions will be voted on at the annual meeting.
- A funeral pall for use with cremations will be purchased with memorials from the Brian Novak Family.
- The annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 1, 2026.

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 11 at 6:30 pm. -

# Wednesday Evenings

Wednesday evening activities resume on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Join us for dinner at 5:30 pm followed by worship at 6:00 pm. Messiah Kids and Club Messiah will meet from 6:30-7:00 pm. MSM will meet from 6:30-7:30 pm.

**Take a Peek:** In December, MSM students visited some of Messiah's homebound friends before Christmas. Everyone joined in singing Christmas Carols. Oh What Fun!



# January/February Worship Participants

Please look through the entire calendar for the dates you have been scheduled.

If you are unable to serve as scheduled please call the church office (387-5537) or Linda Wenkel (345-6180) to identify a substitute or get help finding a substitute. Thank you!

<b>January</b>		<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>
<b>1/4</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Greg Guyer & Kyle Vogt Linda Wenkel Kathy & Carl Fitzloff	Bill Halstead & Frank Steichen Marlene Buker Darci Karau & Kara Pipes
<b>1/11</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Greg Guyer & Kyle Vogt Janet Jones Elaine Fossen & Deb Leiferman	Bill Halstead & Frank Steichen Dee Nolan Jodi & Mark Himmer
<b>1/18</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Kim Henrickson & Jeremy Soost Amy Soost Diane Halvorson & Marilyn Hanson	Dayle Moore & Bob Rothenbuehler Jeff Pribyl Marlene & Jin Jilek
<b>1/25</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Greg Guyer & Rande Bowman Renee Guyer Janet & Steve Jones	Dayle Moore & Bob Rothenbuehler Kimberly Moore Swede Mundell & Jan Waller
<b>February</b>		<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>
<b>2/1</b>	<b>MESSIAH UNITED WORSHIP</b>	<b>10 AM</b>	
	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Jim Jilek & Dave Dahl Greg Suskovic Phyllis & Peter Skadah	
<b>2/8</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Rande Bowman & Steve Lenz Kim Henrickson Renee & Greg Guyer	Jim Jilek & Dave Dahl Julie Olsen Gina Henkelman & Lisa Benson
<b>2/15</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Steve Jones & Scott Madigan Sonja Parr-Baker Jane & Paul Zwiig	Jon Karau & Jeran Karau Sandy Hatlestad Debra & Frank Steichen
<b>2/22</b>	<b>Ushers:</b> <b>Reader:</b> <b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Steve Jones & Scott Madigan Diane Halvorson Breah Hendrickson & Mary Borth	Jon Karau & Jeran Karau Lucette Hurley Lauren Pipes & Judy Spencer

**January 2026**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 OFFICE CLOSED	2	3
<b>4</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 9:30 am Renee's Book Club 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b>	<b>5</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group 10:00 am Worship Team 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	<b>6</b> 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Steve's Book Club @ Steve's	<b>7</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7:30 pm Faith Formation	<b>8</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b> 4:00 pm 4H Meeting 6:30 pm Council Meeting	<b>12</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>13</b> 9:00 am Quilting Group	<b>14</b> 9:00 am NO Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7:30 pm Faith Formation	<b>15</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 9:30 am Renee's Book Club 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b> 5:45 pm Connections Serving	<b>19</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group 11:00 am Blood Drive 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's 5:45 pm Connections Serving	<b>20</b> 7:00 pm Steve's Book Club @ Steve's	<b>21</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 2:00 pm Greg's Book Club 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7:30 pm Faith Formation	<b>22</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b>	<b>26</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>27</b> 9:00 am Quilting Group 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Steve's Book Club @ Steve's	<b>28</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7:30 pm Faith Formation	<b>29</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

**Please note: The week of January 12<sup>th</sup>, the office will be closed.  
Regularly scheduled activities will be open as usual.  
For urgent pastoral needs, please reach out to Pastor LaDonna directly.**



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# Prayer List

**Thoughts & Prayers:** Brooke, Greg, Mollie, Clara, Maddie & baby, Briana, Sandy, Nancy, Jackie, LaVerne, Jeff, Sandie, Bernie

**Continued Thoughts & Prayers:** Craig, Earl, Patty, Neal, Emma, Heather, Carolyn, Elle, Steve, Carl, Dave

**Prayers for Those Who Serve Our Country:** Tyler, Cole, Kyra

**Prayers for the asylum-seeking family** the Mankato Area ELCA churches are supporting.

**Prayers of Sympathy** to the family and friends of Barb Anderson on her death.



### Change in Messiah Communication

Scan the QR code or click link to stay informed of Messiah news and events. If you previously received our "What's Up" email, you will need to "opt" in to receive the new weekly message. Guests are invited to sign-up as well.

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/mb3YWRp/messiah>