



MESSIAH  
lutheran church  
*Sharing the love of Jesus*

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

Dear Beloved People of Messiah,

A few years ago I met for the first time the folks who are now my daughters in-laws. We all met for brunch at a farm-to-table restaurant in Duluth. I was living in Pennsylvania at the time and was in Minnesota for my daughter's college graduation.

If you've ever been part of that kind of "meet and greet," you know it can be a little awkward. It takes a while to warm up to one another and find the mutual interests and the shared conversation, beyond the weather and how my trip from Pennsylvania was. What really broke the ice was when they offered me a small gift bag that contained a bag of wild rice they had harvested themselves from the boundary waters near their house and a bottle of maple syrup, which they had tapped and boiled themselves from trees on their property. I learned as much about these future in-laws from their gifts as I did from our conversation. Their hospitality gifts certainly reflected Minnesota culture and they reflected their deep connection to the land, water, and produce of north shore, where they live. They respectfully and with honor and grace harvested what the land and waters offered and received it as gift for the nourishment of their bodies - which they graciously passed on to me.

I don't know that I would have ever sought out wild rice as an addition to my own diet or ever felt a necessity to have home-made maple syrup. But once I tasted it and enjoyed it in recipe after recipe, I began to feel a deeper connection to the folks who shared it with me.

I wonder if that experience or maybe one like it that you have had could serve as a template for our upcoming Lenten spiritual practice of coming together in Sundays in one service (at 9:30 a.m.) instead of two. Our worship committee floated this idea over a couple of Sundays last month. Just as many people take on a spiritual practice or discipline for the season of Lent, we wondered how our worship life would be richly served if we practiced coming together for the six Sundays in lent.

A surprising number of you who responded to the "straw poll" (93%) indicated you would support this practice for a season, then returning to two services on Easter Sunday. This is much more than just our occasional "worships united" Sundays in which we have tried to accommodate the worship styles of each service. In this uniting for one service for successive weeks, let's wonder what we can learn from each other about worship of God. We'll have an opportunity to learn a bit about what makes worship "Lutheran." And, maybe, just maybe we'll receive some gifts from one another that really help us know one another better and build our sense of being community together. We learned through last summer's capital campaign theme that building community is one of our core values around which we focus our time and energy as a congregation.

For those who indicated in our "straw poll" that they would not support this one service practice for Lent, I hope that you might reconsider, given that such a large number are able to support it. If you chose not to be present for all of Lent, we will certainly miss you and grieve your absence. I know that for some, there may be health, family or other logistical issues that make the 9:30 time not feasible. If that is you, we can connect with you in some other way like through our FaceBook live or YouTube recordings or our Wednesday evening service? And, please feel free to speak to me personally if you'd like to explore other possibilities.

Let's all mark our calendars on February 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 for one worship at 9:30 a.m. Together we are kindling generosity, building community, and transforming the world.

Peace and all good,

*Pastor LaDonna*

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY  
2026

## Annual Meeting & Worship United

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.

## 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: **February 16th & 17th**.

If you're not available this month, the additional dates are: 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.

## Gather

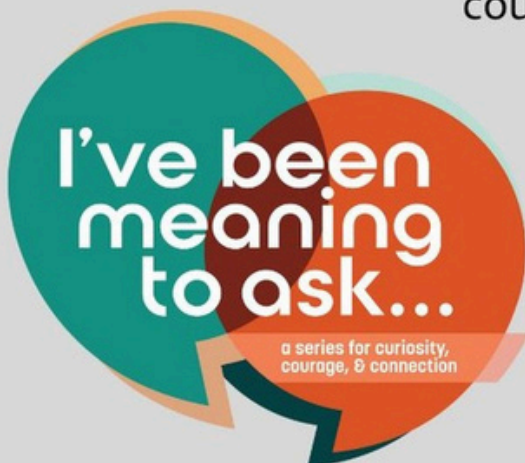
For adults of all ages seeking more social interaction, join us weekly on **Wednesdays at 10:30 am** for coffee and a free will offering lunch. If you need a ride, contact the church office.

## Ash Wednesday & Wednesdays in Lent

**Ash Wednesday, February 18th, worship will be at 6:15 pm.** There will be no youth education classes on this evening. Soup suppers begin the following week on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

### WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Join us for an evening of  
delicious **soup**,  
creative **worship** and  
courageous **conversations**



**Soup supper** 5:15-6:00 p.m.

**Worship** 6:15-7:00 p.m.

Led by PastorLaDonna and  
pastors from area Lutheran churches

Children dismissed from worship to  
classes at 6:30 p.m.

February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25

## 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	2/10 @ 7 pm
Renee Guyer	Messiah	2/8 @ 9:30 am
		2/22 @ TBD
Greg Suskovic	Messiah	2/18 @ 2 pm
Lynn Klaber	Kimberly's	2/2 @ 1:00 pm
		2/16 @ 1:00 pm



## A Fresh Start - Collecting until February 22nd

A Fresh Start provides new home essentials for those emerging from homelessness. Tables are available 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



## Messiah Kids / Club Messiah Updates

**Wednesday evening activities will be as usual on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**February 18<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday** and the beginning on Lenten evenings at Messiah. Ash Wednesday worship is 6:15 - 7:00 pm. For this evening, a meal will not be served and there won't be any class-time after worship.

**From February 25<sup>th</sup> through March 25<sup>th</sup>** there will be a Lenten Soup Supper from 5:15 - 6:00 pm. Lenten worship led by Pastor LaDonna and other local ELCA pastors from 6:15 - 7:00 pm. Messiah Kids and Club Messiah students will be dismissed from worship at 6:30 so they can have their class-time from 6:30 - 7:00 pm.

**Attention 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Families:** Letters have been sent inviting students and parents to the First Communion Retreat on February 28th. Please **RSVP to the church office by February 8th**. (If we have missed someone who has not gone through First Communion yet, please contact the office.) Mark your calendars for First Communion on Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at the 9:30 am worship united service.

## MSM Updates

**Wednesday evening activities will be as usual on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**February 18<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday** and the beginning on Lenten evenings at Messiah. Ash Wednesday worship is 6:15 - 7:00 pm. For this evening, a meal will not be served and there won't be any class-time after worship.

**From February 25<sup>th</sup> through March 25<sup>th</sup>** there will be a Lenten Soup Supper from 5:15 - 6:00 pm. Lenten worship led by Pastor LaDonna and other local ELCA pastors from 6:15 - 7:00 pm. MSM students will have their class-time from 7:00 - 7:30 pm.

**Attention 8th Grade Families:** An email was sent to all families about important Affirmation dates coming up.

- February 7<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm - 8<sup>th</sup> grade retreat at Gustavus Adolphus
- February 18<sup>th</sup> @ 7:15 pm - Student AND Parent Affirmation Informational Meeting
- March 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Design Stoles for Affirmation
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 10:30 am - Affirmation of Baptism

## Messiah Senior Lunch Group

This monthly lunch group is taking a break in February. So, no senior lunch in February, stay home and keep warm. We will come back together on **Tuesday, March 3rd 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.

## 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.



## Council Updates

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

**December offerings** were \$43,001 vs expenses of \$33,425. This resulted in a surplus of \$9,576 for the month. Total income for 2025 is \$351,352 with expenses at \$363,831 or a shortfall of \$12,479. Total income for 2024 was \$334,227 vs. expenses of \$362,069 which left us with a \$14,842 deficit.

Therefore, our giving is \$4,125 greater than last year while expenses are \$1,762 higher. Happy New Year!

### **Church Council met on January 11th and the following was discussed:**

- Correction - The previously mentioned Fourth Quarter local benevolences (Connections, Salvation Army, Echo Food Shelf) are actually the First Quarter local benevolences for 2026.
- The 2026 budget approved and endorsed by the Congregation Council in December, includes a stipend for a youth director. We are hoping to move forward with growth in our programming for our youth.
- The Congregation Council approve a minor change in Messiah's Gift Policy.
- The Congregation Council approved and endorsed changes to the Messiah Constitution. This draft document will be sent to the synod for approval and then brought to the congregation for approval. This draft brings our constitution more in line with the format of the ELCA Model Constitution. There are also updates in several areas (participating in sacraments, endowment disbursements, and adding the pastor as a voting member of the Congregation Council). Watch for further information about this.
- We should be moving to Thompson Sanitation for trash removal and recycling. Some paperwork needs to be completed.
- The date to install the 2026 council will be Sunday, February 8.

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 9th at 6:30 pm. -

## Quilting Update

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



## February/March Worship Participants

As the congregation supported having one Sunday service/week during Lent, the calendar of Worship Participants has been amended as follows for a 9:30 AM worship time.

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>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>	Jim Jilek & Dave Dahl	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Greg Suskovic	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Debra & Frank Steichen	
<b>2/8</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Rande Bowman & Steve Jones	Jim Jilek & Dave Dahl
	<b>Reader:</b>	Kim Henrickson	Julie Olsen
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Renee & Greg Guyer	Gina Henkelman & Jan Waller
<b>2/15</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Kim Henrickson & Scott Madigan	Jon Karau & Jeran Karau
	<b>Reader:</b>	Sonja Parr-Baker	Sandy Hatlestad
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Jane & Paul Zwieg	Phyllis & Peter Skadahl
<b>2/22</b>	<b>MESSIAH UNITED WORSHIP</b>	<b>9:30 AM ... please note time change</b>	
	<b>Ushers:</b>	Jon Karau & Jeran Karau	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Lucette Hurley	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Lauren Pipes & Judy Spencer	
<b>March</b>		<b>9:30 AM</b>	
<b>3/1</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Brad Heilman & Barb Pingel	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Linda Wenkel	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Sarah & Greg Suskovic	
<b>3/8</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Brad Heilman & Barb Pingel	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Kim Henrickson	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Breah Hendrickson & Deb Leiferman	
<b>3/15</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Mark Himmer & Dayle Moore	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Kimberly Moore	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Cindy & Bob Rothenbuehler	
<b>3/22</b>	<b>Ushers:</b>	Mark Himmer & Dayle Moore	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Kay Lund	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Darci Karau & Swede Mundell	
<b>3/29</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY</b>		
	<b>Ushers:</b>	Rande Bowman & Steve Lenz	
	<b>Reader:</b>	Amy Soost	
	<b>Communion Assistants:</b>	Renee & Greg Guyer	

# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 10:00 am <b>Worship United</b> 11:00 am Annual Meeting & Light Lunch	<b>2</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	<b>3</b> 1:30 pm Staff Meeting	<b>4</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7 pm Class-time PreK-5th 6:30-7:30 pm MSM Class-time	<b>5</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30 am – 3:30 pm 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat
<b>8 INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 9:30 am Renee's Book Club 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b> 4:30 pm 4H Meeting	<b>9</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group 2:00 pm Private Meeting 6:30 pm Council Meeting	<b>10</b> 9:00 am Quilting Group 7:00 pm Steve's Book Club @ Steve's	<b>11</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7 pm Class-time PreK-5th 6:30-7:30 pm MSM Class-time	<b>12</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30 am <b>Traditional Worship</b> 10:30 am <b>Contemporary Worship</b> 1-3:30 pm Conference Assembly	<b>16</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's 5:45 pm Connections Serving 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	<b>17</b> 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:45 pm Connections Serving	<b>18 ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 2:00 pm Greg's Book Club 6:15-7 pm Worship 6:30 NO Class-time PreK-7 <sup>th</sup> 7:15 pm 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Affirmation Student/Parent Meeting	<b>19</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 10:00 am Private Meeting
<b>22</b> 9:30 am <b>Worship United</b> TBD Renee's Book Club	<b>23</b> 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>24</b> 9:00 am Quilting Group	<b>25</b> 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 5:15-6 pm Soup Supper 6:15-7 pm Lenten Worship 6:30-7 pm Class-time PreK-5th 7-7:30 pm MSM Class-time	<b>26</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8:30 am – 1:00 pm 1 <sup>st</sup> Communion Retreat 10:00 am Private Meeting



Messiah Lutheran Church  
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North Mankato, Minnesota 56003

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Amy Malvin, Office Manager: Messiah@MessiahNorthMankato.com

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www.messiahnorthmankato.com



*Sharing the Love of Jesus*

# Prayer List

**Thoughts & Prayers:** Greg, Mollie, Clara, Maddie & baby, Briana, Sandy, Nancy, Jackie, Jeff, Sandie, Wayne, Brian, Ron

**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.



## 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>