



MESSIAH
lutheran church

1706 Lee Boulevard
North Mankato, MN
507-387-5537

messiahnorthmankato.com

Sharing the love of Jesus

**December
2025**

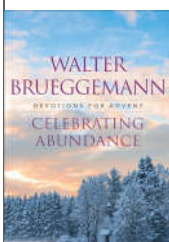
- A Message from LaDonna Thomas -

Dear Beloved People of Messiah,

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..." For me, it's not Christmas or Thanksgiving. It's the time between those two holidays; a time that only the Christian church marks. It's the season of Advent.

Advent is the most wonderful time of the year for me, because the liturgical color is blue - one of my favorite colors. It's not the deep navy blue, but the lighter, hopeful blue. It's the hue of blue that can sit in dim, gray, dark days, confident things will lighten up with God's help and presence. Advent is a time of waiting for Christ's coming, not in some pretend way, as if Jesus has not already been born. Rather it is waiting for Christ to be known and noticed, born again in "real" time in our lives.

The season of Advent is the most wonderful time of the year for me because it gives space for some of my deepest yearnings and longings to know and see God present in everyday life. One of the key words of the advent season is "watch." The Gospel writers tell us to be awake and watch, because Christ will come at an unexpected hour. The writers are not necessarily speaking of the end of time and the return of Christ, but also the way in which Christ shows up in our living, doing and serving.



During advent, I have a daily routine of lighting a candle on the advent wreath each week and reading devotional material prepared for the season of Advent. This year I am using a small book that contains brief writings of the Biblical Scholar Walter Bruggemann, who is best known for his scholarship of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Psalms in particular. The Advent Devotional is Celebrating Abundance: Devotions for Advent. (available whoever you buy books). I am also participating in an online community that will meet on Sunday afternoons at 5:00 p.m. for prayer and reflection. If you would like to be part of that experience, here is the link to register: <https://tinyurl.com/28cctksj>.

The season of Advent invites us to slow down in the midst of our holiday celebrations so that we don't miss the presence of Christ. It might just be possible to see the face of Christ in the one to whom we pass a plate of food at the Connections shelter. We may see the eyes of Christ in that one struggling down the street carrying their bags of groceries home, because they have no car. We may see the hands of Jesus in the person ringing the Salvation Army bell or the cashier handing us our change. We may see the feet of Jesus in the nurse who moves up and down the hall way dispensing compassion and care to the sick and immobile.

It's the most wonderful time of the year!
Advent offers us many gifts as we watch and wait
for the presence of Christ in our daily lives.
It speaks to our deepest spiritual longings and hope.
May you have a blessed advent!

Gratefully,
Pastor LaDonna





Messiah Senior Holiday Potluck Lunch —Tuesday, December 9th

We cordially invite you to attend the third annual senior Messiah Holiday lunch on **Tuesday, December 9, 11:30 am** in the Gathering Place. We invite all seniors to attend and bring a small dish to pass. With our shared food, we can enjoy hot dishes, salads, breads, vegetables, and many kinds of desserts. Greg Suskovic and Steve Howard will provide some fun holiday music.. Lynn Klaber will present a program on her Gustavus Adolphus culinary trip to France.

We could use a few volunteers to help decorate the tables and serve the food.

Please call the church office to volunteer (507-387-5537)

We welcome all seniors to join us for this traditional holiday event.

Sharing Tree and Christmas Bows

Stop by the sharing tree to pick out a Gift Envelope to help a family in need or a Christmas Bow for a resident of Pathstone. Each of these will give specific information on a gift someone would appreciate during a financially difficult time in a family's life or a lonesome time for residents at Pathstone. Return gifts wrapped, by Sunday, December 14th.



Christmas Luminaries

To order a luminary for your loved one,
complete a form and include a \$5.00 donation.
Forms are available in the Narthex until **December 14th**.

Join us for Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Contemporary at 3:00 pm

Traditional at 6:00 pm



We will not be having Christmas morning worship this year.

Centering Prayer

Interested in learning the practice of CENTERING PRAYER? This is a practice that is similar to the way Pastor LaDonna begins most of our worship services with sitting in silence and dwelling in an awareness on God's presence to receive the gifts God wants to give us.



Join Pastor LaDonna in a 3-week exploration of this contemplative, meditative, and ancient practice of prayer, **Tuesdays, 1:30 pm - 2:15 pm**, November 25, December 2 & 9. Attendance at all three sessions is the best, but it's okay if you have to miss one.

Prayer Shawl Meeting

The Prayer Shawl Ministry team will meet on Saturday, **December 13th, at 10:00 am** in the Gathering Place. If you are interested in joining, please come to this meeting and learn more about it. Since this is an ongoing ministry, you may join at any time. If you do not knit or crochet, someone will be happy to teach you! If you have completed a shawl since the last meeting, but you cannot attend, please leave it in the Quilting Room with your name on it. Call Alice K. at 387-4755 if you have questions.

Connections Ministry 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 **December 16th & 18th**. If you're not available this month, the additional dates are: January 18 & 19, 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.

Transform the World.

BUILD COMMUNITY.

Kindle Generosity.

Generous Giving for 2026

Please faithfully consider the gifts you can share with the Messiah community moving into the new year. We continue to collect pledges to help plan the 2026 budget. There is a box in the narthex for pledge cards.

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.



Worship United—Sunday, December 28th

Messiah will worship united at 10:00 am on Sunday, December 28th. Stay awhile after worship; join in fellowship with members you might not see often and introduce yourselves to those you may not recognize.

Annual Meeting / Annual Reports February 1, 2026

Join us for the annual meeting after the 10:00 am Messiah Worship 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 by December 31st at the latest.

Messiah Kids & Club Messiah Fall Updates

Preschool – 5th grade students are meeting on **Wednesday evenings**. Parents and children are welcome to join in Wednesday dinner from 5:30-6:00 pm; join in a short 30 minute worship from 6:00-6:30 pm; then send their kiddos off with the classroom teachers from 6:30-7:00 pm. Parents are welcome to stay and socialize with other parents while waiting for class time to finish.

Please note the following updates for the month of December:

- The children's Christmas Program will be Sunday, December 14th and 10:30 am.
- We will not meet on the 24th or 31st.

Middle School Ministries (MSM)

Middle School Ministries for 6th, 7th and 8th graders meet each Wednesday evening.

5:30 pm—meal

6:00 pm—worship

6:30-7:30 pm—large group & small group class time

Please note for the month of December: No MSM December 24th or 31st.

Worship on Wednesdays

All are invited to join us each Wednesday as we worship with Pastor LaDonna. Worship is from 6:00-6:30 pm. Feel free to stop in before worship from 5:30-6:00 for a bite to eat as well, as we offer a free will offering meal. This is a great opportunity for those who are busy on Sundays and/or those who only have time for a shorter worship. Holy communion is celebrated each week and offering trays are available in the narthex.

After worship, enjoy adult conversation as some parents wait for their students to finish faith formation classes.

December Updates: No evening worship on the 24th or 31st.

Bible Study—Wednesdays and Thursdays

Bible Study groups will meet as usual the first three weeks of December but will not meet the weeks of Christmas and New Year's. See you in 2026.

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.

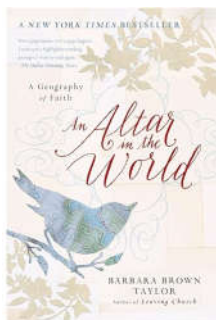
Please note: We will be GATHERing on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24th at 10:30 am.

Wanted: Constitution Update Committee

Messiah's constitution needs some updating. There are some changes mandated by the ELCA, and our constitution could use a little cleaning up. If you like to read/write/organize, this could be a great opportunity for you.

Please contact Janet Jones at 507-340-7093 or jonesjan12@gmail.com or the church office.

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	Chapter
Steve Jones	Steve's	12/16 @ 7 pm	3
Renee Guyer	Messiah	12/7 @ 9:30 am	4
		12/21 @ 9:30 am	5
Greg Suskovic	Messiah	12/17 @ 2 pm	4 & 5
Lynn Klaber	Kimberly's	12/8 @ 1:00 pm	4
		12/22 @ 1:00 pm	5

COUNCIL UPDATES

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

October offerings were \$22,181 vs expenses of \$28,790.188. This left us short by \$6,119 for the month. Income YTD 2025 is \$285,550 with expenses at \$297,160 or a shortfall of \$11,610. Income YTD 2024 was \$265,996 vs. expenses of \$291,424 which left us at a \$26,572 deficit. Therefore, our giving is \$19,554 above last year while expenses are \$5,736 higher. God's blessings to all as we move into our Holiday season!

Church Council met on November 9th and the following was discussed:

- Parking lot lights are now LEDs; HVAC and water fountain replacements will be completed in November. Skylight replacement continues to be in-progress. Snow removal is arranged for winter.
 - Ten ash trees and two evergreens will be removed in the future as funding becomes available; estimated cost is \$10,000. Donations will be welcomed.
 - Special thanks to Social Outreach and congregation members for donations to ECHO in November.
 - There is still a need for audit and audit committee.
 - Help is needed to update the constitution – Contact Janet Jones 507-340-7093 if interested.
 - Music support is still needed for Wednesday nights.
 - The Nomination committee seeks volunteers for vice-president (3-year term), member at large (3-year term), future nomination committee, audit committee, and other roles.
 - Council is reviewing garbage removal and recycling options.
 - Council is considering AED training opportunities for the congregation.
- The next council meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 14th at 6:30 pm. -

God's work. Our hands.

This is the second 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 Ione Barron answers these questions.

Ione Barron's God-given gifts are being social, compassionate and caring. Ione has always enjoyed being around people, especially children and senior citizens. In retirement, Ione has found joy visiting older people who do not get out often. Being a social person, she was invited to be a part of the Messiah Visitation Team. For the past 10+ years, Ione has been visiting seniors hoping to make a difference for them and brighten their day. Ione is now the chair of the Visitation Team. Ione enjoys visiting, playing cards and having lunch with other seniors at the "GATHER" group each Wednesday here at Messiah.

With her love of children, Ione is part of a team of 3 who get materials ready for Sunday School teachers each week. This is her second year in that role. Ione really enjoys helping out at Messiah.

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



- > 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.

December Worship Participants and Communion Assistants

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!

8:30 Worship

- 12/7** **Ushers:** Ron Leiferman & Greg Ous
Reader: Sarah Suskovic
Comm: Jane & Paul Zwieg
- 12/14** **Ushers:** Ron Leiferman & Greg Ous
Reader: Renee Guyer
Comm: Amy & Jeremy Soost
- 12/21** **Ushers:** Les Altenburg & Scott Madigan
Reader: Diane Halvorson
Comm: Marilyn Hanson & Al Narveson
- 12/28** **Messiah Worship United**

10:30 Worship

- Paul Henkelman & Mark Gulden
Sandy Hatlestad
Lauren Pipes & Judy Spencer
- Paul Henkelman & Mark Gulden
Shirley Rosenau
Sheryl Gulden & Gina Henkelman
- Mark Himmer & Peter Skadah
Kay Lund
Marlene Buker & Jan Waller
- Ushers:** Peter Skadah & Mark Himmer
Reader: Eva Borneke
Comm: Breah Hendrickson & Lynn Klaber



Noah Wilson Senior Recital

Noah will be performing his senior recital at MSU on Saturday, December 6th at 7:00 pm in the Elias Recital Hall (Performing Arts Building). Join him in celebrating this great accomplishment.

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 9:00 am SAIL Group 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	2 1:30 pm Centering Prayer	3 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	4 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	5	6
7 Advent 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 9:30 am Renee's Book Club @ Messiah 10:30 am Contemporary Worship	8 9:00 am SAIL Group 10:30 am Social Outreach 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's	9 11:30 am Senior Holiday Potluck @ Messiah 1:30 pm Centering Prayer 2:30 pm Staff Meeting	10 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	11 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	12 Pastor LaDonna gone	13 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Meeting
14 Advent 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 10:30 am Contemporary Worship & Children's Christmas Program 4:00 pm 4H Meeting 6:30 pm Council Meeting	15 9:00 am SAIL Group 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	16 5:45 pm Connections Serving 7:00 pm Steve's Book Club @ Steve's	17 9:00 am Bible Study 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 2:00 pm Greg's Book Club @ Messiah 5:30 pm Wednesday Supper 6:00 pm Worship 6:30-7:30 pm Faith Formation	18 7:30 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group 5:45 pm Connections Serving	19	20
21 Advent 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 9:30 am Renee's Book Club @ Messiah 10:30 am Contemporary Worship	22 9:00 am SAIL Group 1:00 pm Lynn's Book Club @ Kimberly's	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 10:30 GATHER & Lunch 3:00 pm Contemporary Worship 6:00 pm Traditional Worship	25 OFFICE CLOSED MERRY CHRISTMAS (no worship)	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 Advent 10:00 am Worship United (FB Live)	29 9:00 am SAIL Group	30	31 No evening activities			



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Amy Malvin, Office Manager: Messiah@MessiahNorthMankato.com

Label

www.messiahnorthmankato.com



“Sharing the Love of Jesus...”



Thoughts & Prayers: Brooke, Greg, Mollie, Clara, Maddie & Baby, Briana, Sandy, Nancy, Jackie, LaVerne, Jeff, Sandie
Continued Thoughts & Prayers: Craig, Earl, Patty, Neal, Emma, Heather, Carolyn, Bonnie, Elle, Barb, Carl, Dave, Steve, Liz
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 of Linda Wenkel, on the death of her sister-in-law, Jeanie Ruth.
Prayers of Sympathy to the family of Georgia Holmes, on the death of her brother Thomas Holmes.
Prayers of Sympathy to the family and friends of Mary Hlavac on her death.

Messiah Updates

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>



December Updates

There will be Wednesday Evening Worship on the December 3rd, 10th, and 17th.

Children’s Christmas Program will be on Sunday, December 14th during 10:30 am worship.

Christmas Eve worship will be 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

The office will be closed December 25th and 26th.

Messiah Worship United on Sunday, December 28th at 10:00 am.