



MESSIAH
lutheran church
Sharing the love of Jesus

December 2024

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

Installation Worship for Pastor LaDonna Thomas

Join us as we Worship United on **Sunday, December 8th at 10:00 am**. Rev. Emily Carson from the SEMN Synod will be at Messiah to install Pastor LaDonna. Rev. Rebekah Cochrane, Pastor LaDonna's daughter, will preach that day. There will be a meal after worship welcoming our new pastor.

Messiah Senior Holiday Potluck Lunch —Tuesday, December 10th

You are invited to join us for the 2nd Annual Senior "Holiday Potluck Buffet" at Messiah on Tuesday, December 10th at 11:30 am. Please bring a small dish to pass. We are happy to welcome back Greg and Steve who will entertain us with holiday music and a sing-a-long. We are very pleased that Georgia Holmes will give a brief presentation on Tanzania and South Sudan and the mission work of the ELCA and SEMN Synod in East Africa. She will talk about her trip to Tanzania and her work with the Medical Ministry Team of the SEMN Synod. In addition she will present photos of African wildlife that she saw on her photo safari. Please join us and bring a friend.

Calling all Singers!

The Messiah Choir will be singing in worship at both Christmas Eve worships on December 24th at 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. You are invited to join us (and bring a friend if you like) in preparing.

Choir Rehearsal will be:

Wednesday, December 11th and 18th at 6:30 pm

Any questions, please contact Cindy Rupp at 507-327-9306.



Prayer Shawl Meeting

The Prayer Shawl Ministry team will meet on Saturday, **December 14th, 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 questions, please contact Alice K. at 387-4755.

Christmas Eve Worship Times

(with candlelight and communion)

3:00 pm

5:00 pm

Christmas Day Worship Time

(with carols and communion)

9:00 am



- A Message from LaDonna Thomas -

Dear Beloved People of Messiah Lutheran,

I am so glad to be with you! It seems like a long time ago that I had my first conversation with Messiah's call committee last June and now, finally, I am here among you and eager to be in ministry with you. I look forward to getting to know each one of you over the weeks ahead. Please introduce yourself to me at every opportunity and I will appreciate your patience as I get to know you by name and face.

I want to share with you two observations in these early days, both of which come from a recent gathering of the rostered ministers of our Minnesota River Conference of the Southeast Minnesota Synod. First was the beautiful, breathtaking ride to the meeting in Ellendale. Once outside of Mankato, I was treated to the acres and acres of farmland, wide and expansive. As far as the eye could see was the rich soil that supports our food supply.

The terrain of our countryside is very similar to where I grew up in Northwest Ohio, also farm country. I didn't fully realize it until I visited here for the first time last August how much the land and soil connects to a very deep part of my heart and soul. It gives me a sense of spiritual grounding. It's life-giving and invites me to be rooted and grounded for the well-being of all of God's creation.

The second observation comes from a series of introductions that took place at our conference meeting. When I was introduced as the newly called pastor of Messiah Lutheran, there were knowing smiles and for some, I think, a bit of envy. Several rostered leaders mentioned what a good and healthy congregation Messiah is and what a blessing to be called to this congregation. They were affirming what I have sensed from those early conversations with the call committee, Messiah's council, and our synod staff. Messiah is a good, healthy, faithful place to be.

As we move into the month of December, I look forward to sharing with you two of my favorite seasons of the church year: Advent and Christmas. Worship will be rich and meaningful through music, scripture, prayer and holy communion. I encourage you to invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to worship with you. Christmas is one of those times of the year when those without a church home are likely to accept an invitation when someone extends it. Who will you invite to experience the joy and love of Jesus through the people and ministry of Messiah Lutheran?

Gratefully,
Pastor LaDonna Thomas

Advent Worship Theme ***Individual and Group Study Guide Available***



“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. ‘In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.’” —JEREMIAH 33:14-16 (NIV)

The promises of this advent season are truth, compassion, restoration, and justice. These themes will be reflected in the sermons leading up to Christmas, based on a resource by best-selling author, Kate Bowler. For those looking for a daily devotional or group study that also follows these advent themes, they can be downloaded at this link:

<https://katebowler.com/advent/>

MESSIAH KIDS on Sundays & CLUB MESSIAH on Wednesdays

Christmas Program Information—

The Christmas program will be on Sunday, December 15th during the 10:30 am worship.

Music practice for the Christmas program will be immediately following Messiah Kids and Club Messiah, with Cindy Rupp, for 15 minutes on the dates listed below. Kiddos are welcome to join in this practice on their usual day (Sunday or Wednesday) or join in the following dates: Sunday, December 8th and Wednesday, December 11th.

There will be no Messiah Kids or Club Messiah from December 18th—January 1st.

Messiah Kids will start again on Sunday, January 5th as we dismiss out of worship after Children's time. Club Messiah can join in 5:30 pm dinner, 6:00 pm worship, and 6:30-7:00 pm class time starting January 8th.



Middle School Ministries

Winter Warm-Up—MSM students and Pastor LaDonna, along with other area ELCA churches attended the annual Winter Warm-Up in November hosted by Bethlehem Lutheran. The group enjoyed an entertaining, interactive and musical evening with singer Rachel Kurtz.



MSM in December—Dinner, worship, large and small groups resume this month at the normal times. We welcome Pastor LaDonna to Wednesday evenings, and are excited to see everyone get to know each other. She will lead worship and large group.

There will be no MSM from December 25th—January 1st. See you again on January 8th.

Wednesday Worship in December

All are invited to join us again in December as we worship with Pastor LaDonna. Worship is most Wednesdays 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. 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 week and offering trays are available in the narthex.

After worship, enjoy some adult conversation as parents wait for their Club Messiah and MSM students to finish class. Wednesday Worship Dates for December are the 4th, 11th, and 18th.



Opportunities exist to make a meal and serve at the Connections Shelter. Please see sign-up sheets for the coming month in the narthex the 2 weeks leading up to the serve dates. These are the dates: December 9 & 10, January 1 & 2, February 1 & 2, March 3 & 4. If you are unable to help make, serve, or deliver food, please consider a donation to purchase the food.

We also encourage members to form serving groups. Ask your friends, relatives, neighbors to join you in providing a meal for 40 people and serving, once a season or more. You would sign up on-line through the Connections Website on the date of your choosing. Barb Meier can assist in giving more information on organizing and there are church funds set aside for purchasing food if not enough donations are provided.

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 17th. All proceeds will go to the Capital Campaign.

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 15th.





Discover the Joy of Being “Generous Together” – A New Intergenerational Journey

Our congregation is thrilled to be part of an innovative, year-long pilot project called “Generous Together,” running from August 2024 to May 2025. This exciting initiative, a collaboration between the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, aims to reshape how we experience generosity in our church community. This project invites all generations to come together, share their wisdom, and embrace a spirit of giving.

Why “Generous Together”?

Generosity has always been alive in our congregations, even if we haven’t always known how to name it or express it. “Generous Together” is designed to help us recognize and celebrate the abundant ways God is already at work among us. By nurturing an environment where our stories and experiences of giving can be shared and heard, we create space for something truly transformative.

This initiative stands out from other stewardship programs because we won’t just be talking about generosity - we’ll be immersed in it! By using The Generosity Project (TGP) curriculum, we will have the opportunity to experience first-hand what it feels like to live generously. Imagine using all your senses to tell God’s story in your life and witnessing the impact of generosity on our faith community!

Two Pillars; One Purpose

“Generous Together” combines two dynamic components:

- 1. The Generosity Project (TGP):** Originally developed in the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA, TGP connects generations, equips households, and establishes centers for the faith practice of generosity. Through this curriculum, we’ll engage in activities that encourage playful exploration of giving in ways that feel meaningful and joyful. Our congregation will host 6 sessions over the next year, and a coach will be available to support us and accompany us through the sessions. Join us for our first session on **January 12, 2025.**
- 2. Core Stewardship Practices:** Our congregation’s Generous Together team will gather every month with other participating congregations. We will explore practical elements of stewardship like developing gratitude practices, crafting narrative budgets, encouraging planned giving, and telling the stories of our ministry’s impact. These practices will deepen our understanding of how our resources and gifts can make a difference in our community and beyond. Our team is excited to share with the whole church what we learn along the way!

Come Experience the Generosity of Community

“Generous Together” is more than a program—it’s an invitation to experience generosity as a way of life. We believe that God’s generous spirit is already within each of us, and we’re excited to bring that spirit to life through this interactive and engaging initiative.

We invite you to join us for our monthly interactive Sundays, where we will gather to learn, share, and experience the joy of being “Generous Together.” Come with open hearts and curious minds, ready to explore how your unique gifts can contribute to our shared story of faith and generosity.

Let’s embark on this journey together, discovering how generosity can not only transform our congregation but also deepen our connections with one another. Your presence makes a difference—let’s be “Generous Together”!

Members of our congregation’s team include Greg Suskovic, Bill Halstead, Dave Frye, and Bob Rothenbuehler. (We would like additional members with some female representation.)

COUNCIL UPDATES

2024 council members: Greg Suskovic, Janet Jones, Jean Zandstra, Britta Petersen, Heather Von Bank, Dustin Runkle, Swede Mundell, and Kim Henrickson.

From Stewardship and Finance: xxx

Remember, you are able to use the following methods of giving:

1. Online banking
2. Simply Giving (credit card or checking account accepted)
4. Put your dollars in the Sunday worship plate

Church Council met on November 21st and the following was discussed:

Treasurer—Income over expenses continue to be down.

Property Team—Roof update, temporary fix to caulk windows; in spring the window company will come to fix.

Lifelong Learning—the PreK-5th Grade program going well. MSM will start in December with Pastor LaDonna.

Worship & Music—Organ battery replaced.

Old Business—The Endowment Fund approved paying for Pastor LaDonna’s moving expenses. Jerry Crest updated council on Strategic Planning Committee. There’s still a need for new council members for 2025.

New Business—Discussions on water fountain cooling issues, paying for another company to do new church directory, and the handicap accessible button on West side of building needs to be repaired.

The next council meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 15th at 11:30 am.

Ways to Give Online

1. Scan this QR code: *or*

2. 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.



Messiah hopes to host the Crossroads Lunch-4-a-Buck in January and February and so we are looking for a lead person for each of those months. Sarah Suskovic will be happy to give you details on what that will entail. Email Sarah at suskovicls@gmail.com or call 612-214-0116 if you are interested.

Quilting 2025

Messiah Quilting begins again in January 2025! We are excited to get cutting, pinning, stitching and tying in the new year! Quilting is on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month and begins January 14, 2025. Our quilting season ends in April and the quilts are displayed on Mother’s Day. We start at 9:00, have our coffee break (a very Lutheran must have!), quilt, enjoy lunch together and quilt some more. And, of course, socialize! We are typically done around 2:00.

HOW CAN YOU HELP??

We are desperately in need of gently used bed sheets. We use these for the backs of our quilts. *Any size is welcome. They can be one color or prints.*

Join us! NO SEWING SKILL IS REQUIRED! We have plenty of jobs for the non-sewer; pinning, cutting and arranging blocks, matching backs and tops, tying the finished quilts.

Questions? Please call Lynn Klaber at 507-380-5465 or email at lynnklaber@gmail.com

December/January 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!

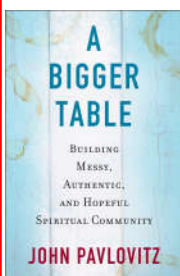
12/1	Ushers: Kim Henrickson & Greg Ous Reader: Sonja Parr-Baker Comm: Elaine Fossen & Linda Wenkel	Dayle Moore & Chuck Rafferty Shirley Rosenau Dee Nolan & Gina Henkelman
12/8	Worship United at 10:00 am Pastor LaDonna's Installation	Ushers: Dayle Moore & Chuck Rafferty Reader: Joan Klanderud Comm: Phyllis & Peter Skadah
12/15	Ushers: Steve Jones & Kyle Vogt Reader: Mike Hanson Comm: Janet Jones & Marilyn Hanson	Jeran Karau & Jon Karau Dee Nolan Karna & Doug Stock
12/22	Ushers: Steve Jones & Kyle Vogt Reader: Diane Halvorson Comm: Sarah & Greg Suskovic	TBD & TBD Lynn Klaber Betty & Chuck Rafferty
12/29	Worship United at 10:00 am	Ushers: Ron Leiferman & Bob Rothenbuehler Reader: Kimberly Moore Comm: Kara Pipes & Deb Leiferman
1/5	Ushers: Barb Pingel & Brad Heilman Reader: Victoria Hanson Comm: Jane & Paul Zwieg	Dave Dahl & Frank Steichen Kay Lund Darci Karau & Judy Spencer
1/12	Ushers: Barb Pingel & Brad Heilman Reader: Carla Butcher Comm: Linda Wenkel & Marilyn Hanson	Dave Dahl & Frank Steichen Jeff Pribyl Marlene & Jim Jilek
1/19	Ushers: Greg Guyer & Rande Bowman Reader: Janet Jones Comm: Sarah & Greg Suskovic	Mark Gulden & Jim Jilek Julie Olsen Marlene Buker & Swede Mundell
1/26	Ushers: Greg Guyer & Rande Bowman Reader: Renee Guyer Comm: Victoria & Mike Hanson	Mark Gulden & Jim Jilek Eva Borneke Sheryl Gulden & Jan Waller

Worship Volunteers NEEDED

A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex at the Usher's Stand, for volunteers willing to assist with 8:30 screens and 10:30 screens and/or Facebook livestream. Anyone who knows how, can sign up on a week-by-week basis. If you're interested, but don't know how, it's easy and we can train you whenever it works best for you—it only takes 30 minutes to get the hang of it. This is a great opportunity for students who are looking for volunteer hours.

Please Note: We will stream 8:30 am worship each week and will add 10:30 livestream when we have volunteers.

Messiah Congregational Book Read



You're invited to participate in a Congregational Book Read with small group book study options. The book is [A Bigger Table](#) by John Pavlovitz. Sign up and get your book on the following Sundays – December 8, 15, 22, 29, and January 5 between services at Messiah. Your donation of \$10 for the book, to offset costs, is appreciated, but not required.

This is a wonderful opportunity to engage or re-engage with members of our congregation and build relationships with our fellow servants in Christ. You are encouraged to be in a small group, but it is not required. Feel free to pick up a book and read along with our congregation.

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 10:30 am Contemporary Worship & Messiah Kids (PreK-3rd Grade)	2 9:00 am SAIL Group 2:00 pm Private Meeting 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	3 1:00 pm Staff Meeting	4 9:00 am SEE Bible Study 5:30 pm Anti-Racism Team 5:30 pm Dinner 6:00 pm Worship 6:30 pm MSM Class time 6:30 pm Club Messiah Class time <i>(4th/5th Grade)</i>	5 7:00 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	6	7
8 <i>Pastor LaDonna's Installation</i> 10:00 am Worship United (FB Live) <i>& Messiah Kids (PreK-3rd Grade)</i> 11:00 am Congregational Lunch 4:30 pm 4H Meeting	9 9:00 am SAIL Group 5:45 pm Serve @ Connections	10 11:30 am Monthly Lunchers Christmas Potluck @ Messiah 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 5:45 pm Serve @ Connections	11 9:00 am SEE Bible Study 5:30 pm Dinner 6:00 pm Worship 6:30 pm MSM Class time 6:30 pm Club Messiah Class time <i>(4th/5th Grade)</i> 6:30 pm Choir Practice	12 7:00 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	13	14 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Meeting
15 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 10:30 am Contemporary Worship & Sunday School Christmas Program 11:30 am Council Meeting 6:00 pm Scout Meeting	16 9:00 am SAIL Group	17 1:00 pm Staff Meeting	18 9:00 am SEE Bible Study 5:30 pm Dinner 6:00 pm Worship 6:30 pm MSM Class time 6:30 pm Club Messiah Class time <i>(4th/5th Grade)</i> 6:30 pm Choir Practice	19 7:00 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	20	21
22 8:30 am Traditional Worship (FB Live) 10:30 am Contemporary Worship & Messiah Kids (PreK-3rd Grade)	23 9:00 am SAIL Group	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 3:00 pm Worship 5:00 pm Worship	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED 9:00 am Worship	26 7:00 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am SAIL Group	27	28
29 10:00 am Worship United with Carols (FB Live)	30 9:00 am SAIL Group	31 1:00 pm Staff Meeting	January 1, 2025 HAPPY NEW YEAR Office Closed			



Messiah Lutheran Church
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Amy Malvin, Office Manager: Messiah@MessiahNorthMankato.com

Label

www.messiahnorthmankato.com



“Sharing the Love of Jesus...”



Thoughts and Prayers: Brooke, Cheryl, Micah, Arthur, Lyndsey, Swede, Brian, Norm, Bob, Collin, Lisa

Continued Thoughts & Prayers: Craig, Earl, Linda, Patty, Neal, Lowell, Emma, Margaret, Peggy, Heather, Mollie, Carolyn, Trudy, Elle, Crystal

Prayers for Those Who Serve Our Country: Carley, Alex, Tyler, Cole

Prayers for the Cruz family: Ariac, Andrea, Randy, and Kamil

December Worship Times and Office Hours

Office Hours are Monday—Friday, 8:30 am—4:30 pm. Closed on Wednesday, December 25th.

Sunday Worship in December are all 8:30 am (traditional) and 10:30 am (contemporary).

- December 8th Messiah’s next Worship United will be at 10:00 am. This will be Pastor LaDonna’s Installation and we are having a meal immediately following worship.

Christmas Worship Opportunities:

- 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve (traditional and contemporary filled with music)
- 9:00 am on Christmas Day (carols and communion)

Annual Meeting / Annual Reports

February 2, 2025

Join us for the annual meeting after the 10:00 am Messiah Worship United service on Sunday, February 2, 2025. A light lunch will be served. We will hear team reports from 2024 and discuss the budget and plans for 2025.

Team leaders, please submit final reports by December 31st at the latest.