



# MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

# MESSENGER

Volume 26, Issue 06

### Special Points of Interest

Rogation Sunday-June 7

OWLs-Thursday, June 11,  
7:00 pm

Honor Graduates-Sunday,  
June 14

### Rogation Sunday

**June 7**

Come participate in the celebration of creation God has given to us.

### OWLs

**Thursday, June 11**

**7:00 noon**

Join the OWLs at the Erie Zoo for Glow Wild.

### Honoring Graduates

**June 14**

We will honor high school graduates Kayla Bresee and College graduates Alyssa Bresee, Michelle Flaherty, and Jodi Joyce at the 11:00 am service.

### SUMMER SERMON SERIES

**WHAT IS YOUR LIFE COSTING YOU?**

You're already paying a price. Stress. Pressure. Expectations. Trying to hold everything together.

The question is—**what is it all for?** This summer, we're not offering easy answers. We're telling the truth. **"The Real Cost of Following Jesus"**

A 7-week series through the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. He doesn't promise comfort, He doesn't promise approval, He doesn't promise an easy life; but He does promise something deeper: A life that actually matters.

If you've ever wondered:

Why does following Jesus feel hard?

Why does life feel heavy even when you're "doing everything right"?

What is actually worth giving your life to?

Then this series is for you.

**Starting June 14** at Messiah Lutheran Church, come and wrestle with the words of Jesus. Come and find something real **because an easy life won't satisfy you, but a meaningful one just might!**

### SUMMER SERMON SERIES Readings

Date	Text	Text Title	Series Theme
June 14	Matthew 9:35-10:8	Sending of the twelve	The Call
June 21	Matthew 10:24-39	The cost of discipleship	The Cost
June 28	Matthew 10:40-42	Welcoming Christ through those whom we welcome	The Risk of Association
July 5	Matt 11:16-19, 25-30	The Yolk of Discipleship	The Paradox: Easy Yoke, Heavy Life
July 12	Matt 13:1-9	Parable of Sower & the Seeds	Why Some Fall Away
July 19	Matt 13:24-30, 36-43	The Parable of the Weeds	Why Evil Still Exists
July 26	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52	The Parables of the Reign of Heaven	Why It's Worth Everything

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**Contact Information**

2025 Eastern Ave  
Erie, PA 16510  
(814) 899-6386

**Cindy Anderson:**  
(814) 881-2161  
secretary@messiah-erie.org

**Bonnie Stearns**  
(814) 460-0556  
bettis1234@gmail.com

**Michelle Flaherty:**  
mlcmusic@messiah-erie.org

**Pastor Thomas Glasoe:**  
(814) 460-8529  
pastor@messiah-erie.org

[www.messiah-erie.org](http://www.messiah-erie.org)

Follow Messiah Lutheran  
Church on Facebook

Live Stream Sunday YouTube-  
Messiah Lutheran Church Erie

**Church Office Hours****Monday**

Closed

**Tuesday**

10:00am-5:00pm

**Wednesday**

Closed

**Thursday**

10:00am-5:00pm

**Friday**

10:00am-5:00pm

**From the Desk of Pr. Tom**

There was a time in my life when I thought freedom meant strength, certainty, or having everything under control. I thought freedom belonged to people who rarely struggled, rarely doubted, and never fell apart. I know now how mistaken I was. I never fully understood what being free meant until I hit bottom.

The shame, embarrassment, grief, and despair sat upon me like an anchor refusing to let me rise. There were days when I could barely see beyond my own failures and wounds. I wrestled not only with circumstances around me, but with my own heart, my fears, insecurities, memories, and the scars left behind by pain and abuse. It was excruciating to confront how deeply mortal and human I truly was.

Yet somewhere in that difficult journey, through many tears and long nights of reflection, something unexpected began to happen. Instead of running from my humanity, I slowly began to accept it.

Instead of pretending to be unbreakable, I began learning what it meant to be honest. Instead of despising my wounds, I began asking whether God could somehow work through them.

That acceptance became the beginning of freedom. Little by little, I began to love being alive again. I began to understand love in a deeper way — not as perfection, performance, or pretending, but as grace. I was slowly becoming the man I had wanted to be for years but could never quite become because I was trying so hard to hide my weaknesses instead of facing them. There was freedom in discovering that I could simply be myself. There was life in learning that scars do not disqualify us from beauty.

The Japanese art of kintsugi repairs broken pottery with gold, not hiding the cracks but honoring them as part of the object's story. In many ways, I began to realize that God works similarly within

us. Our wounds, failures, griefs, and struggles do not have to become sources of shame forever. In God's hands, they can deepen us, soften us, and make us more compassionate toward others. The cracks remain, but grace shines through them.

I think many people carry hidden burdens: disappointments, regrets, losses, private pain. We often believe we must conceal those parts of ourselves to be worthy of love or belonging, but the Gospel tells another story. Again and again, Christ meets wounded people not with condemnation but with mercy, restoration, and new life.

Perhaps true freedom is not becoming flawless. Perhaps it is finally realizing that we are loved even in our brokenness. Perhaps that is where new life truly begins.

Pastor Tom



## Rogation Sunday at Messiah: Asking God to Bless What We Cannot Control

This month, we will observe *Rogation Sunday*—a lesser-known but deeply meaningful tradition in the life of the Church. The word *rogation* comes from the Latin *rogare*, meaning “to ask.” On this day, the Church gathers to ask God’s blessing over the land, the work of human hands, and the fragile systems that sustain life.

### A Practice Rooted in Dependence

Rogation Days began in the early centuries of the Church as communities faced crop failure, natural disaster, and uncertainty. Rather than turning inward, they turned outward—and upward. They walked their fields, prayed over their towns, and asked God to provide what they themselves could not secure.

While many of us are no longer farmers, the truth beneath Rogation Sunday has not changed: we are still dependent.

We depend on systems we cannot see, economies we cannot control, weather patterns we cannot predict, and health we cannot guarantee. Rogation Sunday invites us to name that reality honestly before God.

### What We Will Do in Worship

During worship at Messiah, Rogation Sunday will include intentional prayers for:

- The earth and its care
  - Those who work the land and supply our food
  - Local businesses and places of labor
  - Schools, hospitals, and community institutions
- Our daily work—whatever form it takes

In some traditions, congregations process outdoors, marking the boundaries of their community with prayer. Whether or not we physically walk, we will spiritually “walk” our shared life together—placing every part of it into God’s hands.

### Faith in the Ordinary

Rogation Sunday reminds us that faith is not confined to the sanctuary. It extends into fields, offices, kitchens, classrooms, and construction sites. It meets us in spreadsheets and soil, in caregiving and carpentry, in emails and early mornings. This is a day that quietly but firmly declares: God is concerned with all of life—not just the religious parts.

### A Needed Word for Our Time

In a culture that prizes control, efficiency, and self-sufficiency, Rogation Sunday offers a corrective. It teaches us to ask, to depend, to trust. It is not a day of anxiety but of grounded humility. We do our work faithfully, and we entrust the outcome to God.

### An Invitation

As we gather for Rogation Sunday at Messiah, we are invited to bring our life as it actually is—our work, our concerns, our hopes for the future.

What do we need to ask God for right now? What part of our life needs blessing, provision, or guidance? This is a day to name it, and to remember that we do not stand alone in the asking.



## Rest and Sabbath: A Countercultural Practice

June is part of the summer season, and this season is when a lot of us go on vacation, take extra rest days, and spend time away from work. Yet, in a culture that rewards busyness and measures worth by productivity, rest can feel uncomfortable, even irresponsible. However, within the Christian tradition, *rest is not a luxury*. It is a command, a gift, and a quiet act of trust in God.

### The Biblical Shape of Sabbath

The practice of Sabbath begins not with human need, but with God Himself. In Genesis 2, after the work of creation, God rests on the seventh day—not out of fatigue, but to establish a rhythm for life. Work is good, but it is not ultimate.

This pattern becomes command in Exodus 20, where God instructs His people to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.” The Sabbath is not merely a pause; it is a reorientation. It declares that time itself belongs to God, and that human beings are more than what they produce.

Later, in Deuteronomy 5, Sabbath is tied to liberation: “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt.” In other words, ceaseless work is a form of bondage. Sabbath becomes a weekly act of freedom—refusing to live as if everything depends on us.

### Rest Is Not Laziness It Is Obedience

Modern culture often equates rest with weakness or lack of ambition, but Scripture presents the opposite: refusing to rest is a subtle form of pride. To keep Sabbath is to admit limits. It is to acknowledge that the world continues without our constant effort. It is to trust that God sustains what we cannot. Even Jesus Christ withdrew from crowds, stepped away from demands, and rested with His disciples. If the Son of God did not operate at a constant pace of output, neither are we called to do that. Rest, then, becomes an act of faith. It says: God is God. I am not.

### Practicing Sabbath in Modern Life

Sabbath in today’s world will not look identical to ancient Israel, but its purpose remains the same. It is intentional time set apart to cease, to delight, and to remember.

Some practical ways to begin:

#### Set a defined time

Choose a consistent block of time each week—whether a full day or a portion of one—and guard it.

#### Cease from work

Step away not only from your job, but from productivity-driven tasks. Let unfinished work remain unfinished.

### Unplug from noise

Limit digital distractions. Silence creates space for awareness of God and others.

### Engage in life-giving practices

Worship, shared meals, time in creation, reading, prayer, or simple enjoyment of beauty can renew us.

### Receive rather than produce

Sabbath is not about accomplishing spiritual tasks. It is about receiving God’s presence and gifts.

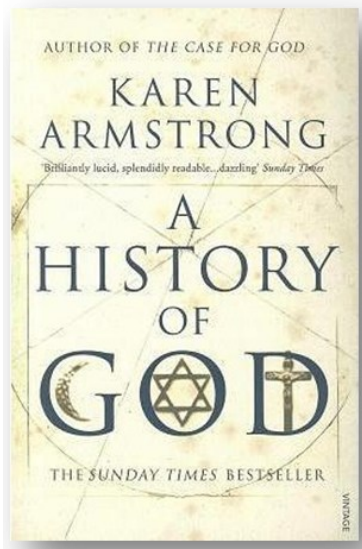
### A Quiet Resistance

To practice Sabbath today is to resist the assumption that constant activity is necessary or virtuous. It is to push back against exhaustion as a way of life. It is also deeply formative. Over time, Sabbath reshapes the heart. It loosens anxiety. It recalibrates identity. It teaches us to live not as slaves to time but as people held within it by God.

### An Invitation

Sabbath is not another burden to carry—it is a gift to receive. The question is not whether you have time to rest. The question is whether you trust God enough to stop. In that stopping, something essential is recovered: the knowledge that your life is sustained not by your effort alone, but by the grace of God.

## Book Review: *A History of God* by Karen Armstrong



In *A History of God* (published in 1993), Karen Armstrong offers a sweeping intellectual history of how the idea of God has developed across the three major monotheistic traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rather than arguing for or against belief, Armstrong traces how human beings have understood, imagined, and wrestled with God from the ancient world to the modern era.

Her central claim is straightforward but significant: *our understanding of God has never been static*. It has evolved in response to cultural shifts, philosophical developments, political realities, and existential questions.

### Main Thesis

Armstrong challenges the assumption that there has ever been a single, fixed concept of God. Instead, she demonstrates that what people mean by “God” has always been shaped by context.

- In early Israelite religion, God is experienced as active, personal, and involved in history.
- In the classical Greek period, philosophical reflection introduces more abstract, transcendent notions of the divine.
- Medieval thinkers attempt to harmonize faith with reason, often redefining God in increasingly metaphysical terms.

- The modern period, shaped by science and skepticism, pushes God toward either abstraction or rejection.

Across these movements, Armstrong argues that God is not an object to be proven but a reality to be *encountered and interpreted*.

### Book's Strengths

#### **Breath and Accessibility**

Armstrong covers an enormous span of time and thought while remaining readable. Complex theological and philosophical developments are explained with clarity, making the book accessible to non-specialists.

#### **Interfaith Perspective**

By placing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in conversation, Armstrong highlights both shared roots and divergent paths. This comparative approach is one of the book's strongest contributions.

#### **Emphasis on Experience Over Abstraction**

Armstrong consistently returns to the idea that God-language is rooted in human experience—ritual, suffering, transcendence—rather than purely intellectual speculation.

### Book's Limitations

#### **Compression of Complex Traditions**

The scope of the book requires significant simplification. Major thinkers and movements are sometimes treated briefly, which can flatten important distinctions.

#### **Interpretive Lens**

Armstrong's approach tends to favor a more fluid, evolving understanding of God. Readers committed to a fixed doctrinal framework may find her conclusions at odds with their theological commitments.

#### **Limited Engagement with Contemporary Theology**

While the modern period is addressed, the book does not deeply engage with recent theological developments or lived congregational realities.

### Theological Significance

For readers engaged in ministry or theological reflection, *A History of God* offers a valuable reminder: the way people speak about God is always shaped by their time, place, and concerns.

This has practical implications:

- It encourages humility in theological claims.
- It helps explain why belief and doubt take different forms across generations.
- It invites deeper listening when engaging those who struggle with faith.

Armstrong does not dismiss belief; rather, she reframes it as something historically situated and continually reinterpreted.

### Conclusion

*A History of God* is best read not as a defense of faith but as an exploration of how faith has been understood. It is a work of intellectual history that invites readers to consider not only *what* they believe about God, but *how* those beliefs have been formed.

For clergy, educators, and thoughtful lay readers, the book provides a broad framework for understanding the development of monotheistic thought—and a useful lens for engaging contemporary questions about God, belief, and meaning.

Pastor has a copy if you would like to borrow it.

**Committee Meetings**

- Altar Guild
- Bible Study      Every Tues.  
Oct.-April      1:00 pm  
Wed.  
6:30 pm
- Bound Together      1st Wed.  
Sept.-May      1:00 pm
- CYFM      1st Thurs.  
12:00 noon
- Church Life
- Grateful Prayer      Every Thurs.  
10:00 am CC
- Guided Meditation      Every Mon.  
6:30 pm
- Property      2nd Sun.  
9:45 am
- Sewing Circle      Every Tues.  
10:00 am
- Servant Outreach      1st Sun.  
9:45 am
- Stewardship / Finance      3rd Thurs.  
5:30 pm
- Worship      1st Wed.  
11:00 am

**Church Council Leadership**

- Art Anderson—President
- Robin Curtis—Vice-President
- Cyndi Allen
- Laurie Hecht
- Steve Porada
- Nate Sprouse
- Linda Voigt
- Blaine Waters—Secretary



**BOUND TOGETHER**

**Messiah Lutheran Church Book Club**

*We meet on the first Wednesday of each month during the school year.*

**School Year – September 2026-2027**

**First Wednesdays of each month at 1PM in Study Lounge  
September to May**

Everyone is welcomed at all Bound Together gathering

Month	Title	Author	Presenter
<b>September</b>	The Rent Collector	Camron Wright	Karen P
<b>October</b>	The Nine	Gwen Strauss	Jean P
<b>November</b>	This Impossible Brightness	Jessica Bryant Klagmann	Linda F
<b>December</b>	As Long as the Lemon Tree Grows	Zoulfa Katouh, Rasha Zamamiri, et al.	Sandy H
<b>January</b>	Theo of Golden	Allen Levi	Bonnie M
<b>February</b>	The Alchemist	Paulo Coelho	Cyndi A
<b>March</b>	The River is Waiting	Wally Lamb	Mary R
<b>April</b>	The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau	Kristin Harmel	Candy S
<b>May</b>	The Midnight Library	Matt Haig	Madalyn S

Please go to the church’s website for ordering information for these books.

[www.messiah-erie.org/books](http://www.messiah-erie.org/books)

For more information, please contact the church office.

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH PRELIMINARY 3-YEAR VISION**

Approved- 2025 to 2027

**WORSHIP**

Music Ministry

Build out the Band (2026)

**CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY**

School Day Off Camp (2026)  
Milestone Ministry (2026)

**PROPERTY**

Plumbing Upgrades/Restrooms (2027)

**IN-REACH**

Recruit and Train More Volunteers (2026)  
Training for in-home communion ministry (2026)

**OUTREACH**

Maintain Community Garden (On-Going)  
Continue Back to School Bash (2025-2027)  
Continue participation in Community National Night Out (2025-2027)

**FELLOWSHIP**

Explore more group events (On-Going)  
OWLs ministry (spiritually and fellowship) (On-Going)  
Lutheran Walkers (2026)



*Find out what is going on in the ELCA:*

Church-wide - [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

NWPA Synod - [www.northwesternpasynod.elca.org](http://www.northwesternpasynod.elca.org)

### Ongoing Ministries

- Altar Guild open to training new members
- Bethany Outreach - collected men's and boys' clothing. Special need for underwear.
- Blankets for Babies - Through the Soldiers and Sailors Home we were asked if we could sew, knit, or crochet baby blankets 18x22 that will be part of a kit given to families in the National Guard.
- CYFM - Children, Youth, Family Ministries - Bible Studies, youth activities, milestones
- Church Life - plans fellowship activities. Open to new members to help
- Counter Ministry - open to training new members
- Guided Meditation - prayer ministry group
- Prayer Chain - email or call the office for prayer requests
- Prayer Shawl - available for all occasions; baptisms, baby shower/ birth, weddings, illness, hospitalization, men, women, or children who need to feel God's love wrapped around them. Contact the office to pick one up.
- Property - takes care of the building and landscaping
- Servant Outreach - Outreach activities locally and globally
- Sewing Circle - sews blankets for various organizations including Lutheran World Relief, National Guard, Linus Project
- Stewardship/Finance - takes care of our financial well being
- Sound Booth Technician needed for both services - training available
- Worship Assistant/Lector blank availability schedule posted through the 15th of the month
- Worship Committee - plans worship services

### 2ND MILE GIVING APPEAL

Recipient for June

#### BETHANY OUTREACH CENTER

You may contribute through your regular envelope, marking how much to designate to 2nd Mile on the "other" line on your envelope, or by sending a separate donation.

Through **May 23 \$108.00** has been donated for **Back to School Bash**

Thank you for your generosity!

#### **Want to know more about our 2nd Mile Giving organization?**

Bethany Outreach Center impacts Erie's lower eastside by providing services and by teaching skills for positive life change. They offer a food pantry, clothes closet, fitness classes, reading sessions and so much more. They are all about reaching out in the community to improve the lives of those they serve.

### Wesleyville Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunities

June 2 at 5:00-6:00pm for Country Fair distribution.

June 8 at 10:00am to unload senior boxes.

June 15 at 10:00am to unload food delivery.

June 16 at 10:00-11:00am & 5:00-6:00pm for regular food distribution.

### Quilter's Article

One of the many organizations that the Messiah Quilters sew for and donate to is:

**Project Linus**, which is a nonprofit organization.

In general, if you want to know where the blankets go:

1. St. Vincent
2. Hamot NICU Babies and Pediatric
3. Millcreek Community Pediatrics Behavioral Health
4. Shriner's Hospital in Erie
5. W.I.C.
6. Crime Victim Center
7. Community Shelter Services
8. Other agencies as needs arise

Messiah Lutheran Church buys some of the backing material, and Project Linus provides us with kits, we sew them into blankets ready for delivery.

Blankets delivered by Project Linus organization here in the Erie Chapter for the 2026 year were:

- January blankets: 244
- February blankets: 281
- March blankets: 235

Again, Project Linus is truly thankful for Messiah's help in purchasing some of the material that is needed for Project Linus Blankets.

Anyone who can tie a knot can help us! Please contact any one of the quilters. We meet most Tuesdays from 10:00 until 12:00.

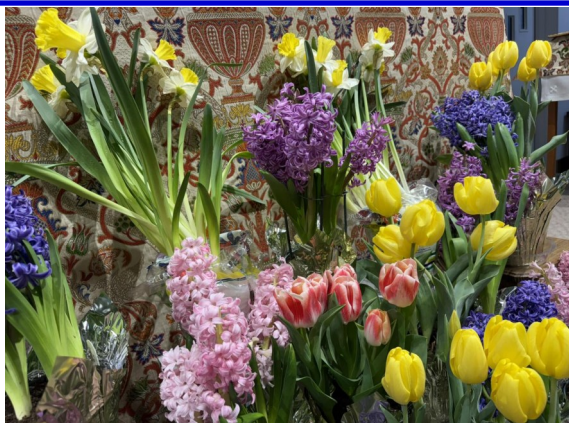
***Our Mission:***  
*Glorifying God through our worship, our witness, our service, and our support*

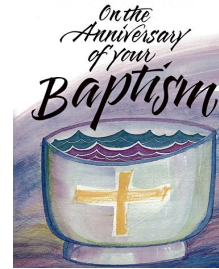
***Our Vision:***  
*To build and strengthen the body of Christ*

**Unofficial Council Highlights**

- No Business Meeting this month.
- Next meeting will be June 18 at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room.

<b><u>Altar Flowers</u></b>	<b><u>Bulletins</u></b>	<b><u>Vigil Candles</u></b>
\$30.00 for one, \$55.00 for two	\$7.00 each	\$3.00 a week
<b>June 7</b>	<b>June 7</b>	<b>June 7</b>
1. Pam Bresee	8:30:	Jean Parker
2. Pam Bresee	11:00:	
<b>June 14</b>	<b>June 14</b>	<b>June 14</b>
1. Porada	8:30:	Jean Parker
2.	11:00:	
<b>June 21</b>	<b>June 21</b>	<b>June 21</b>
1.	8:30:	Jean Parker
2.	11:00: Candy Sprouse	
<b>June 28</b>	<b>June 28</b>	<b>June 28</b>
1.	8:30:	Jean Parker
2.	11:00:	





*“Through baptism you have been received into the household of God, entrusted with the good news of Jesus Christ, and strengthened to serve by the holy and life-giving Spirit.”*

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 03 Lori Bresee    | 17 Debbie Rogala     |
| 06 Bonnie Stearns | 18 Linda Porada      |
| 07 Bill Magee     | 19 Brian Rogala, Jr. |
| 10 Sandy Lee      | 29 John Szczutkowski |
| 11 Pamela Bresee  |                      |

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 14 Lauren Proper   | 18 Bill Roth  |
| 15 Emmanuel Alaniz | 27 Bill Magee |



# Heaven's Whispers

## June

*“Bless them so that all may see in their lives together within the community of your people a vision of your kingdom on earth.”*

- Day 1: Jeremiah 33:3
- Day 2: John 10:27
- Day 3: 1 Kings 19:12
- Day 4: Psalm 46:10
- Day 5: Proverbs 3:6
- Day 6: Isaiah 30:21
- Day 7: Psalm 25:4-5
- Day 8: James 1:5
- Day 9: Psalm 119:105
- Day 10: Psalm 143:8
- Day 11: John 16:13
- Day 12: Matthew 4:4
- Day 13: Isaiah 55:3
- Day 14: 1 Samuel 3:9
- Day 15: Psalm 37:23
- Day 16: Romans 10:17
- Day 17: Proverbs 8:32-34
- Day 18: Revelation 2:7
- Day 19: John 14:26
- Day 20: Psalm 81:8
- Day 21: Matthew 17:5
- Day 22: Hebrews 1:1-2
- Day 23: Deuteronomy 4:29
- Day 24: 1 Corinthians 2:10
- Day 25: Isaiah 28:23
- Day 26: Psalm 40:1
- Day 27: Psalm 85:8
- Day 28: Isaiah 55:3
- Day 29: Psalm 95:7-8
- Day 30: Psalm 119:11

- |    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 13 | John & Robin Szczutkowski  |
| 23 | Bruce and Barb Frick       |
| 24 | John and Cynthia Needham   |
| 30 | Debra and David Tarasovich |

*If we missed your Birth, Baptism, or Marriage Anniversary we apologize.*

*Please contact the church office to provide us with that information.*

### Memorials

#### **William “Bill” Voigt**

Linda Voigt– new red long banners for Pentecost and Reformation

Thank you for all the cards and prayers during the passing of Barbara.

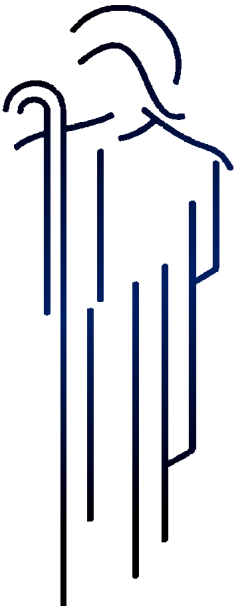
Your thoughts are heartwarming.

Ron Martucci



*“God speaks to you in between the silence of your thoughts.”*

*Russ Walden*



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Volume 26, Issue 06

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*Check out Messiah Lutheran Church on*

