



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

MESSENGER

Volume 26, Issue 09

Special Points of Interest

Community Blood Bank Blood Drive—August 30-September 5

OWLs—Tuesday, September 8 10:00 am

Heart Walk—Thursday, September 10, 5:00 pm

Bald is Beautiful; Rally Day—Sunday, September 13, 9:45 am

Congregational Meeting: Stained Glass Window, Sundays, September 13 and 20.

Crop Walk—Sunday, September 27, 1:00 pm

Lectio Divina—Sunday, September 27, 4:00 pm

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OWLs

Tuesday, September 8
Meet in Parking lot
9:30 am to car pool

10:00 am we start out at St. Patrick's Church, 130 E. 4th Street, for a tour and lunch afterwards, then a tour at St. Peter's Church, 230 W 10th St. 1:00 pm. Need fall related suggestions for our October meeting.

Heart Walk

Thursday, September 10
5:00 pm

Registration: Liberty Park.
Donate online or in the Narthex.

Bald is Beautiful-Rally Day

Sunday, September 13
9:45 am in Fellowship Hall

Enjoy coffee, juice and doughnut holes while Pr. Tom talks about upcoming fall plans.
Feel free to wear your favorite football jersey to church.

Congregational Meeting for Restoring Stained Glass Windows

Sunday, September 13
Sunday, September 20
both at 12:00 noon

Meeting will be held in the Nave of the church to discuss the proposed cost of restoring our beautiful Stained Glass Windows.

Bible Study

Starting September 15/16

Tuesday afternoons
1:30 pm in the Study Lounge

Wednesday night
6:00 pm
in the Study Lounge

Pulpit Swap

Sunday, September 20
both services

Rev. Karen Kostur from Immanuel Lutheran Church will be here to preach for both services.

Crop Walk

Sunday, September 27
1:00 pm, Presque Isle

Sign up on form in narthex, take an envelope and collect donations with checks payable to CWS/CROP.

Don't want to walk/can't walk? Consider sponsoring someone who is by making a donation in the Narthex or online.

Lectio Divina

Sunday, September 27
4:00 pm

Alternative worship service for all member and friends.

Pet Walk

Tuesday, September 29
6:00 pm

Meet in the parking lot for Pet Blessing, water provided, then a walk around the neighborhood.

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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

A Season of New Beginnings

September has always felt like a season of new beginnings. Children return to classrooms, teachers welcome new students, families adjust to new schedules, and young adults begin another year of college, employment, or perhaps vocational or military training. Even those of us whose school years are long behind us can feel the change. The pace of summer gives way to a renewed sense of purpose. Calendars fill, routines return, and we begin asking what the months ahead might hold.

This is also a season of new beginnings at Messiah. Our fall programming year is starting, familiar ministries are returning, and new ministries are taking their first steps. There is a growing sense of life and possibility within our congregation. God is giving us new opportunities to worship, learn, serve, build relationships, and share the love of Jesus with our neighbors.

Of course, God has not been away during the summer. The Holy Spirit does not take a vacation, and the Church's mission does not disappear when the calendar becomes quieter. God has remained present in our worship, our conversations, our acts of service, and the ordinary moments of our lives. Yet September gives us an opportunity to become more intentional about our life together. It invites us to listen

again for God's voice and to ask, "Where is Christ leading us now?"

Lutherans understand the Christian life as one of continual renewal. In Holy Baptism, God gives us a new identity as beloved children of God. Martin Luther taught that we return to the promise of our baptism every day. Each morning becomes another beginning: the old self is put to death, and a new person rises to live in faith toward God and love toward our neighbor. In that sense, the beginning of a school year or a church programming year is part of a much larger spiritual rhythm. God is continually creating, renewing, calling, and sending us.

Here at Messiah, our new programming year is about more than filling the church calendar. Programs are valuable only when they help people encounter Christ, deepen relationships, discover their gifts, and serve their neighbors. Every Bible study, worship service, fellowship gathering, outreach effort, and new ministry must ultimately help us become more attentive to God and more available to one another.

The new ministries that are starting will give us fresh opportunities to connect with people, strengthen our life together, and respond to needs within our community. Some of these ministries may grow quickly. Others may

begin quietly and require patience. We may learn as we go, make adjustments, and discover that God's plans are sometimes different from our original expectations. That is part of faithful ministry. We do not need to know every step before taking the first one. We begin with prayer, trust, curiosity, and a willingness to follow where Christ leads.

Every member of Messiah has a place in this new season. You may feel called to participate in a ministry, volunteer your time, share a particular gift, invite someone to attend, or encourage those taking on new responsibilities. Perhaps your first step is simply to pray for these ministries and the people they are intended to serve. No contribution is too small when it is offered in faith and love.

May this be a year in which children grow in wisdom and confidence, adults discover new ways to serve, neighbors are welcomed, and our congregation continues becoming a beacon of hope and a light on the hill. Most of all, may everything we begin lead us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and with the people God has placed around us.

A new year of learning and ministry is beginning. Let us enter it together—with hope, courage, curiosity, and faith!

Pastor Tom

Ordered for Relationship

Over the past few years one conviction has continued to grow within me. The more I study Scripture, the more I reflect on my own life; and the more I experience God's grace, the more I am convinced that the Christian faith is, at its very heart, about relationships.

That may sound like a cliché. We hear people say, "Christianity isn't a religion; it's a relationship." While there is truth in that statement, I think it often fails to capture just how profound that relationship truly is. One ancient Christian phrase has helped me understand this more deeply: *ordo amoris*, a Latin expression meaning "the order of love."

St. Augustine taught that humanity's greatest problem is not that we love too little, but that our loves become disordered. We give our hearts to things that were never meant to occupy the center of our lives. We pursue success over faithfulness, possessions over people, power over humility, certainty over compassion. Even good gifts can become idols when they replace the One who gave them.

As Lutherans, we approach this idea through the Gospel. We do not begin with our love for God. We begin with God's love for us. Before we ever sought God, He sought us. Before we ever loved rightly, Christ loved us completely. Through His life, death, and resurrection, we are forgiven and made new—not because we have perfectly ordered hearts, but because God's grace comes to us long before we deserve it. That grace changes us.

Luther often spoke of vocation, the many callings through which God serves the world. Whether we are parents or grandparents, teachers or students, nurses or mechanics, retired or employed, God places people into our lives whom we are called to love and serve. This is where *ordo amoris* becomes wonderfully practical. Love is not simply a feeling. It is lived out in the relationships God has entrusted to us. I have come to believe that relationships are where the Kingdom of God becomes visible.

- Every kind word strengthens the Kingdom.
- Every act of forgiveness reflects the cross.
- Every shared meal echoes the table of Christ.
- Every patient conversation becomes an opportunity for grace.
- Every encouragement reminds someone that they are not alone.

Conversely, every cruel word, every act of contempt, every unnecessary insult, every refusal to forgive damages relationships. While God's grace is always greater than our failures, we should never underestimate the power our words and actions have to build up or tear down the people around us.

When Jesus summarized the Law, He did not give us a list of religious accomplishments. He gave us relationships:

- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."
- "And love your neighbor as yourself."

Everything else grows from these two relationships. Perhaps that is why the Church exists. We gather, not simply to learn information about God but to encounter Him together. We worship together, pray together, laugh together, grieve together, bear one another's burdens, forgive one another, and remind one another of the promises of Christ. The Church is a living community of relationships shaped by God's grace.

I find myself asking a simple question more often these days: *Will what I am about to say or do strengthen this relationship or weaken it?* That question has changed how I speak, how I disagree, how I lead, and how I try to live each day. It reminds me that every person I meet is someone Christ loves.

Perhaps this is what an ordered love looks like. We place God at the center of our lives, and from that center His love flows outward—to our families, our friends, our congregation, our neighbors, even those with whom we disagree. Love is no longer merely an emotion. It becomes the pattern of our lives because it reflects the very character of God.

As St. John writes, "We love because He first loved us." May God continue to order our hearts, deepen our relationships, and make our congregation a place where His love is not only proclaimed, but experienced.

Why Do Christians Love the Ten Commandments?

Many Christians are surprised to learn that traditional Judaism does not understand the Law of Moses in quite the same way Christians do.

According to Jewish teaching, all humanity is accountable to God through what are known as the Noahide Laws—a small set of universal moral principles believed to have been given to Noah and his descendants after the flood. Because all people are descended from Noah, these commandments are considered binding on everyone. While different Jewish traditions enumerate them slightly differently, the seven Noahide Laws generally include prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, sexual immorality, and cruelty to animals, along with the requirement to establish systems of justice.

The Law of Moses, by contrast, is understood within Judaism as a covenant specifically given to Israel. The 613 commandments of the Torah—including dietary laws, Sabbath regulations, festival observances, and the Ten Commandments—are part of Israel's unique covenant relationship with God. Jews traditionally do not expect Gentiles to become Jewish or to keep

the Mosaic Law in order to be righteous before God. This creates an interesting irony.

Many Christians place tremendous emphasis on the Ten Commandments, often displaying them in churches, memorizing them in confirmation classes, and using them as summaries of God's moral will. Yet in traditional Jewish thought, Gentiles are not actually under the Mosaic Covenant at all. They are accountable instead through the Noahide Laws.

So why do Christians place such emphasis on the Ten Commandments?

The answer lies in how the early Church understood Jesus and the Old Testament. Christians believe that Christ fulfills the Mosaic Law while also revealing God's eternal moral will. The Church came to see the Ten Commandments as expressing universal moral truths that transcend Israel's national covenant. The commandments against murder, theft, adultery, false witness, and idolatry are not merely Jewish laws; they reflect God's design for all humanity.

Lutherans have historically used the Ten Commandments in this way.

Martin Luther included them in his Small Catechism, not because Christians are saved by obeying them, but because they reveal our sin, guide our lives, and point us toward our need for God's grace.

At the same time, learning about the Noahide Laws can remind Christians of something important: God has always cared for all nations, not just Israel. Long before Sinai, long before Moses, God established a relationship with humanity itself. The covenant with Noah reminds us that God's concern extends to every people, every culture, and every corner of creation.

Perhaps the greatest lesson is one of humility. The Jewish roots of our faith often challenge assumptions we have inherited without question. Studying the Noahide and Mosaic laws helps us appreciate the richness of God's covenant history and the remarkable way God has worked through Israel to bless the whole world.

As Lutherans, we ultimately read both Noah and Moses through the lens of Jesus Christ, in whom God's promises find their fulfillment and through whom all nations are welcomed



Lectio Divina Description

Lectio Divina is a slow, prayerful way of reading Scripture that developed in early Christian monastic communities, especially within the Benedictine tradition. The Latin phrase means “divine reading” or “sacred reading.”

Rather than studying the Bible for information alone, Lectio Divina approaches Scripture as a living word through which God speaks personally to the reader. The traditional movement of Lectio Divina has four stages:

1. LECTIO (Read)

Read a short passage of Scripture slowly and attentively. Notice

words or phrases that stand out. The goal is not speed or analysis but attentiveness.

2. MEDITATIO (Meditate)

Reflect on the text. Turn the words over in your mind and heart.

Ask:

1. What is God saying in this passage?
2. Why does this word or image draw my attention?

3. ORATIO (Pray)

Respond to God in prayer. This may include gratitude, confession, longing, questions, or silence. Scripture becomes conversation.

4. CONTEMPLATIO (Contemplate)

Rest quietly in God’s presence beyond words. The emphasis shifts from speaking to simply being with God.

A simple description would be: “Lectio Divina is an ancient Christian practice of slowly reading Scripture, listening for God’s voice, praying in response, and resting in God’s presence.” The practice is especially associated with figures such as Benedict of Nursia and later the monastic tradition of the Order of Saint Benedict.

Fall 2026 Semon Series: Purpose Driven: What is Life For? WHAT IS YOUR LIFE REALLY FOR?

At some point, most people ask it—quietly, honestly, sometimes desperately: *Is there more than this?* More than the routine. More than the pressure. More than just getting through the week. This summer, Messiah Lutheran Church invites you to explore that question through a 5-week sermon series:

The Purpose Driven Life

Discover the five purposes that shape a meaningful life:

- A life connected to God
- A life shared with others
- A life that is growing
- A life that gives
- A life that matters

You don’t have to have it all figured out. You just have to be willing to take the next step: **because your life was made for more!**

Date	Text	Text Title	Serie Theme
9/13/26	Psalm 95:1-7, Romans 12:1-2, John 4:1-24	Worship	You Were Made for God
9/20/26	Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, John 13:34-35	Fellowship	You Were Made for People
9/27/26	Romans 8:29, Colossians 2:6-7, John 15:1-8	Discipleship	You Were Made to Grow
10/4/26	1 Peter 4:10-11, Ephesians 2:10, Mark 10:42-45	Ministry	You Were Made to Serve
10/11/26	Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, Matthew 28:18-20	Mission	You Were Made for a Bigger Story

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 Every Thurs.
Prayer 10:00 am CC

Guided Every Mon.
Meditation 6:30 pm

Property 2nd Sun.
9:45 am

Sewing Circle Every Tues.
10:00 am

Servant 1st Sun.
Outreach 9:45 am

Stewardship / 3rd Thurs.
Finance 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



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

Church-wide - www.elca.org

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

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

For more information, please contact the church office.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH 3-YEAR VISION

Approved- 2025 to 2027

WORSHIPMusic 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)

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 **September** is:

Bethesda Trinity 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 **August 18 \$130.00** has been donated for **BWERANYANGE GIRLS SCHOOL**

Thank you for your generosity!

Want to know more about our 2nd Mile Giving organizations?

Bethesda Trinity Center is located on West 18th Street. As Erie's oldest neighborhood community center, we are dedicated to providing children, youth and families with programs and resources to live a healthy and productive lifestyle. We provide Drug & Alcohol Prevention Programs and After-School Educational and Summer Recreational Programs with an emphasis on education. All programs are free.

Wesleyville Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunities

September 1 at 5:00-6:00pm for Country Fair distribution.

September 7 at 10:00am to unload senior boxes.

September 14 at 10:00am to unload food delivery.

September 15 at 10:00-11:00am & 5:00-6:00pm for regular food distribution.

Stained Glass Windows Special Congregation Meetings

**September 13 & 20,
12:00 noon.**

The Council invites you to an all-important meeting of the congregation to discuss and vote on the next step of restoring our beautiful stained-glass windows.

Please come and hear the council's proposal about the windows. We are required by our constitution to hold two meetings for a project this large.

Community Blood Bank Blood Drive

Thank you to those who have donated in the past. As you may know, you can donate every 56 days, so we have scheduled our next drive for **August 31-September 5** so that you can stay on schedule.

Needless to say, the Blood Bank is always in need of new donors!

For anyone who wishes to donate but doesn't have a ride, please call the church office and let them know when you would like to go.

If you would be willing to drive someone and wait for them to donate, please call the church office and let them know your availability.

If you have any questions, please contact Jean Parker at 814-528-5817.

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 September 17 at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room.

Altar Flowers

\$30.00 for one, \$55.00 for two

September 6

1. Sallie Barnes
- 2.

September 13

1. Linda Voigt
- 2.

September 20

1. Robin Curtis
- 2.

September 27

1. Shirley Damon
2. Shirley Damon

Bulletins

\$7.00 each

September 6

- 8:30:
- 11:00: Mary Rush

September 13

- 8:30:
- 11:00: Mary Rush

September 20

- 8:30:
- 11:00: Karen Pistner

September 27

- 8:30:
- 11:00: Jean Parker

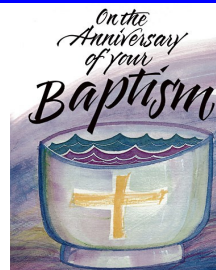
Vigil Candles

\$3.00 a week

September 6**September 13**

Linda Voigt

September 20**September 27**



"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."

08	Rich Shatzer	27	Carol Ingram	strengthened to serve by the holy and life-giving Spirit."			
09	Ray Bennett	28	Carol Ann Wolf	Arthur Anderson	08	Marilyn Rizzo	
11	Shirley Damon	29	Barb Frick	Marylou Bartlett	26	Shirley Damon	
15	Jeff Damon			04	Dave Hauser	29	Kit Glasoe



September Harvest of Hope



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

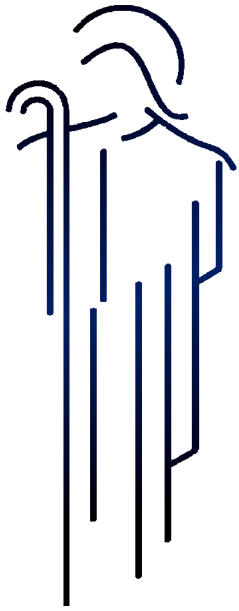
- Day 1: Genesis 8:22
- Day 2: Leviticus 19:9-10
- Day 3: Psalm 126:5-6
- Day 4: Proverbs 10:5
- Day 5: Proverbs 20:4
- Day 6: Jeremiah 5:24
- Day 7: Matthew 9:37-38
- Day 8: Luke 10:2
- Day 9: John 4:35
- Day 10: Galatians 6:9
- Day 11: 2 Corinthians 9:6
- Day 12: James 3:18
- Day 13: Joel 2:23
- Day 14: Hosea 10:12
- Day 15: Luke 12:16-21
- Day 16: Matthew 13:30
- Day 17: Revelation 14:15
- Day 18: Exodus 23:16
- Day 19: Deuteronomy 16:9
- Day 20: 1 Corinthians 9:10
- Day 21: Psalm 67:6
- Day 22: Matthew 13:39
- Day 23: Jeremiah 51:33
- Day 24: Revelation 14:16
- Day 25: Psalm 85:12
- Day 26: Exodus 34:22
- Day 27: Jeremiah 8:20
- Day 28: Isaiah 18:4
- Day 29: Revelation 14:14
- Day 30: Song of Solomon 2:11-12

- 14 Dave and Ann Kent
- 15 Sean and Heather Bartlett
- 28 Shirley and Ronald Damon

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

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

"In the garden of life, every act of kindness and every word of faith sown is a seed of hope, growing into a bountiful harvest of blessings."



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