

MESSENGER

Volume 25, Issue 11

Special Points of Interest

Worship Committee meeting time change to 12:30 pm for November

Thanksgiving Dinner and Prayer Service—November 1, 6:00 pm

Fall Congregational Meeting Sunday, November 2, 12:00 noon

Veterans Miracle Network Drive-through November 9

OWLs-12:00 noon

Family Tree: Ornaments due by Sunday, November 23

Lifetime Recognition Dinner: Thursday, December 4

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Thanksgiving Dinner & Prayer Service

Saturday, November 1 6:00 pm

Please sign up on the poster in the Narthex or contact the Church Office by October 26 if you plan to attend and indicate what food item you will be providing for the dinner.

Please remember to bring your prepared food item to the dinner.

Fall Back

Don't forget to set your clock's back on **November 1** before bed.

Fall Congregational Meeting

Sunday, November 2

Lunch at **12:00 noon**

Meeting at **12:30 pm** in Fellowship Hall

Veterans Miracle Network Drive

Now through Sunday, November 9

We will be collecting personal care items and monetary donations.

OWLs

Thursday, November 6 Christmas Star at the Planetarium.

Meet in the church parking lot at **9:30 am**. We will car pull due to needed parking passes since school is in session.

Lunch at Perkins afterward. RSVP by **November 2, \$5.00 per person** to Karen Pistner or Bonnie Stearns.

Pastor Out of Town

November 24-30, 2025

Butch Karnes will be preaching November 30.

Family Tree

Ornaments are due to the church no later than **Sunday, November 23**.

Please make sure to place your name and 2025 on each ornament.

Lifetime Recognition Dinner

Thursday, December 4 6:30 pm

Ricardo's Restaurant

Brad Bresee
Dave & Ann Kent
Barbara & Ron Martucci
Jean Parker
Brian Rogala, Jr.



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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

Empathy: A Strength Rooted in Christ

In recent months, there has been a troubling trend in some circles of Christian nationalism that claims empathy is a weakness - something to be resisted rather than cultivated. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we know that empathy is not only central to our humanity, but also to our discipleship.

Empathy is the ability to place ourselves in another's shoes, to see through their eyes, and to feel their joys and sorrows as if they were our own. Far from being weakness, empathy is the very strength by which we love our neighbors, bear one another's burdens, and live out the command of Christ: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another"* (John 13:34).

The Power of Empathy in Scripture

Throughout the Bible, we see empathy modeled as a holy strength.

- **Jesus wept** at the tomb of Lazarus, entering into the grief of Mary and Martha (John 11:35).
- **The Good Samaritan** saw the man left beaten by the roadside and "took pity on him" (Luke 10:33), crossing social, political, and ethnic boundaries to care for his suffering neighbor.
- **Paul reminds us** in Romans 12:15: *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."*

These are not acts of weakness - they are acts of courage. To feel with others, to enter into their pain or joy, requires strength of spirit and the humility to set aside pride.

Disputing the Myth: Empathy as "Weakness"

Those who dismiss empathy as "soft" or "unnecessary" often

From the Desk of Pr. Tom

confuse it with passivity. But empathy is not the absence of strength; it is the very heart of Christian strength. It is easier to harden our hearts, to dismiss the struggles of others, or to retreat into self-interest. It takes true courage to open ourselves to the vulnerability of others, and to allow their lives to change ours.

Christian nationalism's rejection of empathy reveals a dangerous misunderstanding: it elevates power, dominance, and control above the way of the cross. Yet Christ himself shows us a different path: self-giving love, compassion for the least and the lost, and the strength to forgive even those who wrong us.

Luther's Witness

Martin Luther, in his own writings, often pointed to the call of Christians to bear one another's burdens. Commenting on Galatians 6:2, Luther wrote: *"Christians must have strong shoulders and mighty bones, that they may bear the weakness of their brethren; for the stronger we are, the more we ought to bear the weak. The sun must shine also upon the wicked; and God's creatures must help even the unworthy."*

Notice Luther's framing: empathy and compassion are not frail emotions but the very work of strength, borne out of faith. To "bear the weakness of others" is to imitate Christ Himself. To refuse empathy, then, is not strength at all, but a departure from the Gospel.

How Empathy Shapes Our Life Together

Empathy is not abstract - it shapes the very fabric of our life as a congregation:

- When we listen deeply to each other, we embody Christ's care.
- When we reach out to the lonely or comfort the grieving, we

show the world what love looks like.

When we welcome the stranger, care for the vulnerable, and advocate for justice, we put empathy into action.

Far from making us weak, empathy strengthens the bonds of community and reflects God's kingdom on earth.

A Call to Live Empathetically

Let us be clear: empathy is not an optional extra in Christian life - it is essential. To be people of empathy is to be people of the cross. To show empathy is to show Christ.

So let us resist voices that label compassion as weakness. Instead, let us boldly claim empathy as a strength given to us by God, a gift through which the Spirit binds us together. And may our church be known not for hardness of heart, but for the Christ-like love that sees, listens, and acts with empathy in all things.

Prayer of Empathy

Let us pray, Gracious and merciful God,
You entered our world in Jesus Christ, taking on our joys and our sorrows.

Teach us to see with Your eyes, to listen with Your ears, and to love with Your heart.

When we are tempted to harden ourselves, soften us.

When we are tempted to dismiss the pain of others, remind us of the cross.

When we are tempted to see empathy as weakness, show us again the strength of Your compassion.

Help us to bear one another's burdens with patience and courage.

Make us bold in mercy, steadfast in kindness, and unafraid to love.

Through Jesus Christ, who bore all for us, we pray. Amen.

I love serving you as your Pastor!
Pastor Tom

A Book Review from Pastor's Bookshelf

Have you ever read a book and regretted finishing it? Have you ever finished a book feeling greatly uplifted with a whole new appreciation of life and hope for humanity? I experienced that in high school for the first time when I finished reading Paul Gallico's *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris* (1958). The sweet novel may seem, on the surface, to be a lighthearted story about fashion and travel. At its heart, however, it is a story about kindness, empathy, compassion, and the way ordinary people can reveal the extraordinary grace of God.

The Heart of Mrs. 'Arris

Mrs. Ada Harris, a London charwoman, spends her days cleaning up after others. Widowed, modest, and without great means, she comes across a Christian Dior gown in the wardrobe of a wealthy client. In that moment she feels a yearning, not for wealth or status, but for beauty—something lovely that affirms her own worth as a child of God.

Her dream seems impossible. Yet through years of thrift and determination, she saves enough to travel to Paris and buy the dress. Along the way, what shines most is not the gown itself, but the kindness and compassion her presence awakens in others.

As Gallico writes of Mrs. 'Arris: "*There was about her an aura of the inevitable. She was one of those little people who, by sheer determination and faith, seem to bend events to their own will.*" It is that quiet faith and steadfast goodness that melts the

hearts of strangers.

Kindness Begets Kindness

When Mrs. 'Arris finally steps into the great House of Dior, she meets not only glamour and snobbery but also people whose lives are touched by her humility, honesty, and warmth. From the models and seamstresses to the directors and patrons, many find themselves moved to generosity because she carries herself with dignity and compassion.

One of the loveliest truths in the story is this: kindness and empathy has ripple effects. As Scripture reminds us, "*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*" (Ephesians 4:32) Mrs. 'Arris, without preaching a word, embodies that verse.

The Gospel Woven In

At its heart, *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris* reminds us that God calls us to see the worth in every person—not by their wealth, title, or appearance, but by the love they share. Mrs. 'Arris doesn't covet the dress out of vanity; she seeks it as a recognition that beauty belongs even to the poor, even to the humble.

In one poignant moment, Gallico describes her not as a nuisance or a joke, but as a blessing to those around her: "*She gave more than she took, and that is the greatest gift of all.*"

This echoes Christ's teaching: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" (Acts 20:35) Her kindness opens doors in Paris that money alone never could.

A Word for Us Today

In our own lives, we might never cross the threshold of a couture house in Paris, but every day we cross paths with people who need kindness—neighbors, co-workers, strangers in line at the store. Like Mrs. 'Arris, we may find that small acts of compassion, carried out with consistency and faith, ripple outward in ways we cannot imagine.

Perhaps the "dress" we are saving for is not fabric and thread but a moment of grace where God's beauty is made visible in the world. When we share kindness, we clothe ourselves—as Paul writes to the Colossians — "*with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*" (Colossians 3:12)

Conclusion

Paul Gallico gives us more than a charming tale; he gives us a parable of kindness and empathy. *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris* is not just about one woman's dream. It is about the way compassion and empathy transform lives, heal divisions, and point us back to the God who clothes us in mercy.

Soon we will step into the busyness of the year's end with family celebrations, shopping, and gift buying. May we, too, go forth with the determination of Mrs. 'Arris—trusting that with God's grace even our smallest acts of kindness can make Paris bloom in the hearts of others.

What is the Kyrie

The *Kyrie* is one of the oldest and most recognizable parts of the Christian liturgy, especially in Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran traditions.

The word comes from the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον (*Kyrie eleison*), which means “Lord, have mercy.” It is one of the few Greek phrases that remained in the Latin Mass, even after Latin became the dominant liturgical language.

The *Kyrie* is usually sung or recited near the beginning of worship, after the opening greeting and confession.

It is considered a prayer for mercy and forgiveness, preparing worshipers’ hearts before hearing Scripture and receiving Communion.

Traditionally, the *Kyrie* has a threefold pattern (repeated in some traditions to form nine invocations):

1. *Kyrie eleison* — “Lord, have mercy.”
2. *Christe eleison* — “Christ, have mercy.”

Kyrie eleison — “Lord, have mercy.”

Musical Significance

- Many famous composers—like Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven—have written settings of the *Kyrie* as part of the Mass or Requiem.

Its chant-like form is among the oldest surviving pieces of Christian liturgical music.

In the Lutheran tradition, the *Kyrie* is not simply a cry of guilt or a plea of despair—it’s a prayer of hopeful trust in God’s mercy. It comes near the beginning of the service, after the Confession and Absolution (when used), and before the Hymn of Praise.

At Messiah Lutheran Church, the *Kyrie* is usually sung or spoken by the congregation as a communal prayer. It is not heavy or mournful, but instead joyful and confident, acknowledging that God’s mercy is both needed and already promised in Christ.

Often, the worship leader (pastor or assisting minister) will sing or speak lines such as: “*In peace, let us pray to the Lord.*” And the congregation responds: “*Lord, have mercy.*”

This pattern continues with petitions for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

The purpose of the *Kyrie* is...

- It frames the service in humility and reliance on God.
- It reminds worshipers that mercy is at the heart of the Gospel.

It creates a prayerful pause early in worship before the Word of God is read and proclaimed.

At Messiah, depending on the season, the *Kyrie* may be:

- Chanted in a traditional liturgical setting (such as *Setting One or Two* from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*).
- Sung with piano, organ, or guitar accompaniment, sometimes in call-and-response format.

In special seasons like Advent or Lent, it may carry a more contemplative tone, while in Easter it often has a brighter, more uplifting setting.

I hope this helps you understand this aspect of our Lutheran liturgy.

Pastor Tom

Martin Luther’s Thanksgiving Prayer

This prayer blends Scripture verses (*mostly from the Psalms*) with Luther’s own words of thanks. It was included in his *Small Catechism* so families could pray together daily. It is spoken after eating.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens which cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

We thank you, Lord God, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have so graciously given us food and drink to nourish our bodies. Grant us your grace that we may use these gifts thankfully to your glory, honor, and praise. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

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

- Review minutes from the October meeting;
- Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 pm;
- Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 28 will be online only;
- Altar Guild will combine to form 3 teams starting in January;
- Fall Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, November 2, lunch provided;
- Directory pictures are being taken, can call Briana for an appointment if you haven't had a picture taken yet;
- Working on replacing broken TV screen on the lectern side;
- Hoping to replace light for Rose Window before winter;
- Control Panel for the boilers have been installed; praying our heating issues have been resolved;
- Next meeting will be November 20 at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room.

VISION IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

We continue to make the vision which the congregation adopted a reality.

- The TVs are installed, and we are getting them ready to use.
- The children's ministry is coming into shape with the Children, Youth and Family Ministry Teams.

- The School Day-Off Day Camp is still in the development stage.

There are other aspects of our vision, but those are not expected to be implemented until next calendar year. Therefore, we do not have updates yet.

We ask that you continue to keep our congregation in your prayers as

we explore new and exciting ways to do ministry in our ever-changing, fluid, dynamic world.

Committee Meetings	
Altar Guild	
Bible Study	Every Wed.
Oct.-April	6:30 pm
Bound Together	1st Wed.
Sept.-May	1:00 pm
CYFM	1st Thu.
	12:00 noon
Church Life	
Grateful Prayer	Every Thu.
	10:00 am CC
Guided Meditation	Every Mon.
	6:30 pm
Property	2nd Sun.
	9:45 am
Sewing Circle	Every Tue.
	10:00 am
Servant Outreach	1st Sun.
	9:45 am
Stewardship / Finance	3rd Thu.
	5:30 pm
Worship	1st Wed.
	11:00 am
Church Council Leadership	
Art Anderson-President	
Robin Curtis-Vice-President	
Briana Alaniz	
Cyndi Allen	
Laurie Hecht	
Tim Smock	
Blaine Waters-Secretary	
Vacancy	
	<i>Find out what is going on in the ELCA:</i>
Church-wide - www.elca.org	
NWPA Synod - www.northwesternpasynodelca.org	

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH PRELIMINARY 3-YEAR VISION

Approved- 2025 to 2027

WORSHIP

Technology

- Add Screens in sanctuary **(DONE)**
- Update website **(On-Going)**
- Obtain Hearing Assisted Devices **(DONE)**

Music Ministry

- Build out the Band **(2025)**

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

- Bubble Church **(2025-2026)**
- School Day Off Camp **(2025)**
- Milestone Ministry **(Sept. 2025)**

PROPERTY

- Fix Front Electronic Sign **(DONE)**
- Repair/Purchase Boiler **(DONE)**
- Plumbing Upgrades/Restrooms **(2027)**
- Buy New Freezer **(DONE)**

IN-REACH

- Recruit and Train More Volunteers **(2025)**
- Training for in-home communion ministry **(2025)**

EDUCATION

- Bible Study (Adult and Children) - have more options **(2025-2027)**

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)**
- Continue to grow OWLs ministry (spiritually and fellowship) **(On-Going)**
- Lutheran Walkers **(2025)**

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

Wesleyville Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunities

November 4 at 5:00-6:00 pm for Country Fair distribution.

November 10 at 10:00 am to unload senior boxes.

November 17 at 10:00 am to unload food delivery.

November 18 at 10:00-11:00 am & 5:00-6:00 pm for regular food distribution.

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 **November 10-15** 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.

2ND MILE GIVING APPEAL

Recipient for **November** is:

The Christmas Needy Fund

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 **November \$00.00** has been donated for the **Highmark Caring Place**

Thank you for your generosity!

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

The Christmas Needy Fund is used by the pastor to purchase gift cards for families who are in need of a hand up during the Christmas holiday. If you know of a family in need, please submit their name, address, and phone number to the office early in December.

Bound Together Book Review

1st Wednesday at 1:00 pm

November - All the Broken Places by John Boyne (Candy)

December - The Book of Lost Names by Kristen Harmel (Mary)

January - Remarkable Creatures by Tracy Chevalier (Madalyn)

February - Women in War by David Yuzuk (Cyndi)

March - The Glassblower by Peter Benning (Bonnie M.)

April - The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters (Sandy)

May - To be determined

Altar Flowers

\$30.00 for one, \$55.00 for two

Bulletins

\$7.00 each

Vigil Candles

\$3.00 a week

November 2

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Karen Pistner

November 2

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Jean Parker

November 2

Robin Curtis

November 9

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Jean Parker

November 9

Robin Curtis

November 9

Robin Curtis

November 16

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Jean Parker

November 16

Robin Curtis

November 16

Robin Curtis

November 23

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Jean Parker

November 23**November 30**

Robin Curtis

November 30

1. 8:30:
2. 11:00: Jean Parker

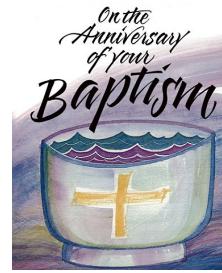
November 30**November 30**

Robin Curtis

Memorials**William "Bill" Voigt**

Candy Sprouse

Bernice FryerCandy Sprouse
Jean Parker



4 *Cynthia Lee*
14 *Thomas Ecke*
20 *Cyndi Allen*

"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."

7 <i>Kristine Edwards</i>	<i>Briana Alaniz</i>
11 <i>Nevaeh Peters</i>	20 <i>Lori Bresee</i>
12 <i>Tammy Johnson</i>	25 <i>Jeff Damon</i>

November Thankful & Content

- Day 1: Psalm 136:26
- Day 2: Colossians 3:15
- Day 3: Hebrews 13:5
- Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- Day 5: 1 Timothy 6:6
- Day 6: Philippians 4:11-12
- Day 7: Psalm 100:4
- Day 8: Psalm 107:1
- Day 9: Luke 12:15
- Day 10: Ephesians 5:20
- Day 11: Psalm 118:24
- Day 12: Psalm 30:11-12
- Day 13: 1 Chronicles 29:13
- Day 14: 1 Peter 5:7
- Day 15: Psalm 37:4
- Day 16: 1 Chronicles 16:34
- Day 17: Matthew 6:25-26
- Day 18: 1 Corinthians 4:7
- Day 19: Psalm 34:8
- Day 20: Psalm 18:32
- Day 21: Psalm 9:1
- Day 22: Psalm 118:6
- Day 23: 2 Corinthians 9:15
- Day 24: Proverbs 15:16
- Day 25: Psalm 34:7
- Day 26: Luke 6:38
- Day 27: Psalm 136:1
- Day 28: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Day 29: Psalm 50:23
- Day 30: Psalm 103:2-5



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

2 *Rich & Briana Alaniz*
8 *Wendi & James Proper*
30 *Eugene & Linda Jones*

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

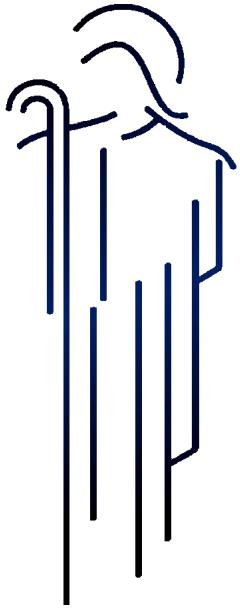
*Please contact the church office to provide us with that
information.*

Thank You

Thank you to Ernie & Carol Ann Wolf and Brian Rogala, Sr. for taking such good care of our lawn!

Thank you to everyone who supported the Heart and Crop Walks.

Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have." — Anonymous".



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
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