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Pastor's Page

I would like to begin by extending, on Carey's behalf as well as my own, our gratitude to all the Messiah folks who contributed to the generous Christmas gift we received from the congregation. This will be very helpful in the near future, when, God willing, we will be flying to Denver to meet our new granddaughter. Thank you so much for your kindness.

Gifts are nice to receive, but sometimes they can be a challenge. *Where will I put this? When will I use this? How do I make this work?* All perfectly natural and reasonable questions for just about any gift, and certainly for the one that is coming to us all soon.

I'm speaking of the Season of Lent. You see, Lent **is** a gift--a gift from God, inspired by His Spirit and handed down by His holy Church. If you have trouble regarding Lent as a "gift," just try to picture your Chris-

tian life without it.

What if there was no such thing as Lent? How would we make sense of Easter? How would we have eyes to see the astonishing love Christ shows for us in His Passion and Death on the Cross? How would we connect **our** lives to the words and deeds of Jesus?

After all, Jesus said: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Imagine if Paul's words were only meant for somebody else when he wrote: *God showed His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

All right, you may be thinking: "Well, I can see that there's *value* in Lent, but I don't know about it being a *gift*." Well, I think there may be a few ladies left in Messiah who remember washboards and hand-cranked washing machines, who wouldn't

think it a stretch to call the modern washing machine a "gift." And washers only clean garments.

Lent provides cleansing for the soul that wraps up in those garments.

Lent is a gift. It provides every Christian with the opportunity to truly connect with the Gospel--God's Good News to sinners. We might think this is a given, but not so. In many congregations today, there is no Brief Order for Confession and Absolution to begin worship. There's just a brief little liturgical bit which essentially says, *We're all baptized, isn't it wonderful!*

Baptism is wonderful--because Baptism is God's washing of regeneration, cleansing us from sin so that we can become bonded to God in a covenant of forgiveness, adoption, and promise. Baptism is a living gift, which God nurtures throughout our

lives by providing us with the means to abide in that covenant--through our active life in the Church, through prayer, through discipleship, through walking with God through His Word, through agape love for our brothers and sisters in faith and our neighbors in need.

If Baptism were a one-time "magic bullet for salvation"--a term used one time by a friend from Seminary who was appalled at the "cheap grace" he heard preached more and more often from Lutheran pulpits--then we'd need none of those means God has provided to nurture our Baptismal identity. Yet they all exist, and have from the time of the apostles. The only conclusion can be: *these are necessary.*

Lent is a gift of reminder and of opportunity: reminder that, yes, these things *are* necessary, and we, being flawed human beings, are skilled at avoidance, denial, and neglect of essentials; and opportunity to do something substantive about that.

Lent is a gift, nice to receive, but a challenge. But there's good news: the challenges can all be met, and God makes it easy for us:

Where will I put this? Answer: On my calendar. Lent takes up no closet space, does not require refrigeration, and is portable. It requires your attention and dedication--in short, your integrity--but you won't need to find a place for it.

When will I use this? Answer: When it begins. Ash Wednesday, the "D-Day" of Lent, this year is on **February 18**. At Messiah, worship is offered at 12 Noon and 7.30 PM. You will continue to use the gift daily until the Vigil of

Easter, the day before Easter Sunday, which this year is **April 5**. You may use the gift of Lent each day at whatever time of day is best for you. Although Lent is important and requires care in its use, it's also flexible.

How do I make this work? Answer: Good news! No batteries required. No tech savvy needed. No updates from Microsoft--EVER! God makes Lent work in us, when we open our hearts and minds and invite Him to do so.

To make Lent work, begin something like this:

1. **Pray:** *God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and help me by showing me the truth about myself.*
2. **Listen:** don't rush right off to something else; clear your mind, put your thoughts in "neutral," and reflect on your life--your recent words; your deeds; your habits; the things which burden you; the distance which exists between you and your neighbor, or you and God.
3. **Take in:** Pay heed to thoughts that come to you, to little truths which "float up" before your awareness like answers in that old "eight-ball" toy we used to play with.
4. **Confess:** Put into words the sins and failings which you come to perceive about yourself. God already knows them. The thing is, He wants YOU to know them, too, so that you and He can work on them together.
5. **Join:** Lent is not a solitaire game. Solitude can be good

for reflection, but so can fellowship. Gather with other believers on the Lenten journey. Participate in the mid-week gatherings this year at Messiah. Commit now to the full Holy Week worship experience, resolving to honor Christ to the fullest for all He endured for your sake.

6. **Be the adult in your self-self relationship:** Lent is not kid stuff, it is for mature, responsible Christians. Don't let that kid who wants to sleep in on Sunday, or find something else to do, have his or her way. God commanded us to "Remember the Sabbath day, **to keep it holy**. Be strict with your inner child and get yourself to worship and learning, every Sunday you possibly can. Period.

Some gifts take very little effort to enjoy--a tin of cookies, a movie pass. Others require an investment to yield their intended return. Lent is such a gift--and the Giver, God, does not bestow gifts lightly, or without purpose. If God gives us this gift, it is given because we need it; because it will bless us; and because He loves us. If you receive the gift of Lent in this way, this year, you will be moved at the end to breathe a prayer to your Heavenly Father, to your Savior, and to the Holy Spirit which enlightens us: *Thank You so much for Your kindness.*



Messiah Lutheran Church

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E-mail

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Web Site: <http://www.messiahluthleb.org>

2014 Statements

The 2014 year-end statements are finished and are available for you to pick up in the narthex. If you have any questions or problems do not hesitate to call Robin in the office.



It's a Boy!

Congratulations to Andrew and Lisa Lutz (and big sister Mia) on the birth of

Beckett Irvin Lutz.

Beckett was born on December 26, 2014. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 3 oz and was 20.5" long. May God richly bless this growing family!



February Birthdays

- 2 Michael Bowman
- Vivian Mayopoulos
- 7 Mary Garrett
- 9 Margaret Shirey
- 10 Kacie Mullen
- Scott Runkel
- 12 Lori Oliver
- 13 Ramona Roush
- 15 Erin Kendall
- 16 Sherri Dolheimer
- 20 Dawn Hummel
- 21 Karen Fox
- Rodney Ledger
- 23 Nancy Cramp
- 24 Marion Bowman
- 25 Kelly Roof
- 27 Pastor Kendall



February Anniversaries

- 15 Frederick & Janet Grun
- George & Terry Wilson



2015 Souper Bowl of Caring

On **Sunday February 1st** 140 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal.

Please join young people around the country as they demonstrate God's love by lov-

ing their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others.

During the **Sundays in January and on February 1st, we will be collecting food items and monetary donations for the Lebanon Rescue Mission** as part of Messiah's Souper Bowl of Caring. Please support our efforts to tackle hunger.

Then on Super Bowl Sunday (February 1) we will travel to the Rescue Mission to deliver our donated items and throw a **pizza party** for the men while we enjoy watching the game. We hope to see you there!



February 2015 Schedules

Assisting Minister

By Sharon Garner

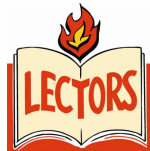
- 1 Michael Bowman
- 8 Nancie Whelan
- 15 Charlotte Varone
- 18 12 PM Ernestine Batdorf
- 7:30 PM Daniel LaRue
- 22 Pam Knouff



Lector

By Sharon Garner

- 1 Pastor James DeLong
- 8 Nancie Whelan
- 15 Charlotte Varone
- 18 12 PM Ernestine Batdorf
- 7:30 PM Daniel LaRue
- 22 Pam Knouff



Greeters

- 1 **NEEDED**
- 8 Dolores Rittle
- 15 **NEEDED**
- 18 12 PM **NEEDED**
- 7:30 PM **NEEDED**
- 22 **NEEDED**



Head Usher

Rita Savant

Finance Steward

Charlotte Varone



Altar Guild

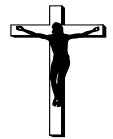
- Ernestine Batdorf, chair
- Holly McGuire
- Louise Scaramuzzino
- Nancie Whelan
- Mary Whelan



Crucifer

By Carol Artz

- 1 Ernestine Batdorf
- 8 Ernestine Batdorf
- 15 Robert Bowman
- 18 12 PM Carol Artz
- 7:30 PM Nicholas Adams
- 22 Robert Bowman



Acolyte

By Sharon Garner

- 1 Michelle Blouch
- 8 Mikayla Bowman
- 15 Mary Whelan
- 18 12 PM none
- 7:30 PM Abbey Hartman
- 22 Joshua Risser



WELCOME TIME Sponsors

(Welcome Time is held the first Sunday of the month at 10:30 AM.)

February 1 — Souper Bowl Committee



Thank You Notes

Thank you notes were received from the Caring Cupboard, the Lebanon Rescue Mission, and Lutheran World Relief. They are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.



I would like to thank the members of Messiah for the most generous Christmas gift you gave me. My husband and I had some plumbing work done in our home recently, so the gift was most appreciated!

I would also like to thank Carol Artz and the *Living in Faith* teachers and students for the delicious box of Christmas cookies. My family and I enjoyed them very much!

It is such a blessing to be working here at this church. Thank you for enriching my life in so many ways!

In Christian love,
Robin Harris



To the members of Messiah:

We take this opportunity to thank you carolers

for visiting and singing to us on a crisp, cold Sunday morning before Christmas. It was a nice surprise to receive a container of delicious cookies from the bakers of Messiah, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Sincerely,
Howard and Dawn Stickler



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your love and kindness this Christmas. Our kids had a really wonderful time at the party. The gifts were perfect. You are all a blessing to us. See you next year!

His by grace,
Cynthia Smith

Director of Agape House

PS—The dog and lamb were very enjoyable to the kids!



Thank you for the use of the wheelchair, and a special thank you to Karen Fox for making sure I had a comfortable one.

Eileen Ledger

January Congregation Council Highlights

The Messiah Congregation Council met on Tuesday, January 20, 2015.

- Due to the Pastor's illness devotions were led by Deb Lutz.
- Seven council members were present, two were excused, and one was absent.
- The 2014 year end financial audit was approved.
- The Christian Education committee reported on the caroling and cookie delivery to the shut-ins.
- The publicity committee sent in the advertisement for Ash Wednesday to Comcast.
- We received information that DOMA International is no longer affiliated with the NALC. DOMA International is a charity that received some of our benevolence dollars. Council approved changing our NALC charity to the Lutheran Bible Translators.
- A letter was received from our insurance carrier, Brotherhood Mutual regarding the new law regarding persons who work with children needing background checks. Action was tabled until more information is obtained.
- The Congregation Council officers and committee chairs for 2015 were re-organized (see page 9).

Nick Adams
2014 Congregation Council secretary

Ministry Plan Report for December, 2014



Budgeted need per week: \$3,605.71

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount received</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
December 7	\$3,273.00	72 + / 9 LiF
December 14	\$3,473.00	60 + / 12 LiF
December 21	\$3,618.00	79 + / 21 LiF
December 24	\$5,471.05	88 + (4 PM)
		58 + (7:30 PM)
December 28	\$2,597.00	58 + / 23 LiF

NOTE: "+" denotes Worship
"LiF" denotes Living in Faith

Received to date: \$163,795.83
Needed to date: \$187,497.00

Upcoming Events

BIBLE STUDY
Thursday, February 12
at 7 PM

We will continue our study of the Gospel according to St. John.



FIRST COMMUNION INSTRUCTION

Sunday, February 15
at 2 PM

For kids in 3rd grade or higher

EVENT NIGHT

Thursday, February 19
at 6:30 PM

Come out for a fun night of games and fellowship!



In Case of Wintry Weather...

In the event of wintry weather or power outages on Sunday mornings, please listen to WLBR radio for information on worship schedules. If there is a power failure on a Sunday morning, worship will be held in the Fellowship Hall. The emergency generator provides enough light in that area.

Also, in the event of adverse weather/road conditions, the office will open as soon as conditions allow us to travel safely. On a Wednesday morning, if the Cornwall-Lebanon or Lebanon City school districts have a 2 hour delay or are closed, the Wednesday morning worship service is cancelled.



World Day of Prayer

The annual World Day of Prayer service will be held on **Friday, March 6 at 7 PM** at the Annville United Methodist Church. All are invited!

Weekly Worship Schedule

SUNDAYS:

9 AM THE HOLY COMMUNION
10:30 AM LIVING IN FAITH
(4th Sunday of the month—Joint LiF class)

WEDNESDAYS:

(as noted in the calendar and bulletin)
10 AM Anointing and Holy Communion

Ash Wednesday

The vital penitential season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 18**. On Ash Wednesday, you will have the option of attending either a mid-day liturgy, with proclamation



and the imposition of ashes beginning at 12 noon, or the customary evening liturgy at 7:30 PM.

Both liturgies will feature the same sermon. The noon lit-

urgy is to make the time easy to remember, and to make attendance possible for people who might take time at lunch, for those who do not drive at night, or who must work a late shift.

Lenten Bible Study



Messiah's Lenten discipline will be observed on Sunday mornings as well as **WEDNESDAY** evenings from 6:45 to 8:15 PM with a Bible study series on *the Stations of the Cross*.

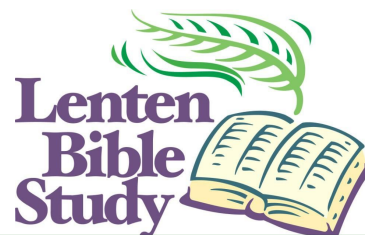
- February 25
- March 4
- March 11
- March 18
- March 25

We will begin our Wednesday evenings with the **"Bread and Soup Supper" meal at 6 PM followed by study and discussion from 6:45 to 8:30 PM**. If the soup schedule does not suit then you are welcome to attend only the study portion of the evening.

In accord with our mission **"to bring Christ to people and people to Christ,"** you are invited and

encouraged to bring friends with you to experience the renewing power of the Season of Lent and its glorious fulfillment in the celebration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord.

Bring your Bible!



Lenten Bread and Soup Meals

Every Wednesday evening in Lent the Fellowship Committee will be sponsoring a soup and bread supper beginning at 6 PM. Everyone is invited to attend.



We need **volunteers** to either make soup or to give a donation to Karen Hatt so soup may be purchased. We would like to have **two varieties of soup per Wednesday**, so we would prefer two volunteers per week. The committee will supply the bread, drinks and paper products.

Sign up sheets will be posted in the narthex for each week so we may get a head count. This sheet will also list the soups that will be provided for that week.

Please consider joining us for nourishment and fellowship prior to our Lenten study series. It's food for the body and soul!



December 2014 General Fund Summary

	December	Year/date
Income	\$17,473.31	\$163,795.83
Expenses	\$14,267.94	\$181,727.87
Income-expenses	\$3,205.37	-\$17,932.04

Income	December	Year/date
Regular giving	\$17,113.05	\$159,871.04
Jesus Tree envelopes	\$225.00	\$1,595.00
Bowl of Blessings	\$50.00	\$760.00
Checking interest	\$0.26	\$2.79
Donations	\$0.00	\$555.00
Other Gen. Fund*	<u>\$85.00</u>	<u>\$1,012.00</u>
Total Income	\$17,473.31	\$163,795.83

*initial envelope, altar guild, communion gifts, etc.

Expenses	December	Year/date
Staff	\$10,133.48	\$116,212.84
Administrative	\$238.44	\$4,616.23
Maintenance	\$2,517.08	\$36,519.16
Committee	\$0.00	\$55.70
Additional	\$750.00	\$6,875.00
Benevolence	\$528.94	\$16,248.94
Loan Repayment	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>\$1,200.00</u>
Total expenses	\$14,267.94	\$181,727.87
Income less expenses	\$3,205.37	-\$17,932.04

SPECIAL GIVING ENVELOPES

December 2014	Regular Giving Benevolence	Special Giving Envelopes	Additional Designated Giving	Total Given to Charities
NALC	\$274.16			\$274.16
Atlantic Mission District	\$7.40			\$7.40
North American Lutheran Seminary	\$22.46		\$200.00	\$222.46
Independent Church in India	\$22.46			\$22.46
PACC Caring Cupboard	\$22.46		\$20.00	\$42.46
NALC Partner Ministries	\$0.00			\$0.00
Lutheran World Relief		\$48.75		\$48.75
Lebanon Free Clinic		\$48.75		\$48.75
NALC Disaster Response		\$48.75		\$48.75
Lebanon Rescue Mission/Agape Shelter		\$48.75		\$48.75
Lutheran Bible Translators	\$180.00			\$180.00
Total	\$528.94	\$195.00	\$220.00	\$943.94

Open Flower Dates

There are three dates open this year for sponsoring flowers for worship:

- June 21
- September 13
- December 6

If you are interested in sponsoring flowers for any of these dates please contact Janet Gassert at 272-3757. Thank you!



For Your Information

February 1

FOOD COLLECTION SUNDAY

The first Sunday of each month we collect food and personal care products for our neighbors in need. Unless there is a special request from a specific agency, the schedule is as follows:

February Rescue Mission

PLEASE DO NOT MIX SOAP AND FOOD IN THE SAME BAG. Thank you.



BLANK!!

Please sign up today to be a **Greeter!** The sign up sheet for the rest of the winter season is almost completely

BLANK!! Please consider signing up today!
The **Welcome Time** sponsor sheet for 2015 is posted on the Information Center in the narthex. Did you notice how empty it is?? Sign up today!



Save the Date!

A free showing of **Heaven is for Real** will be held on **Saturday, March 7** at the Allen Theater in Annville. A complimentary breakfast will be served at 8:30 AM followed by a presentation on Habitat of Lebanon. The movie will start at 10 AM. This free event is sponsored by Thrivent.



Easter Egg Hunt



Easter Egg Hunt

A **planning meeting** for the community Easter egg hunt will be held on **Thursday, February 5 at 6:30 PM.** The purpose of this meeting is to select a coordinator, to establish guidelines within the Evangelism Ministry Team's budget, and to find volunteers who will help with the event. The Easter egg hunt will be held on **Saturday, March 28** with a rain/snow date to be determined. If you have any questions or are interested in helping please see Deb Lutz.

Address Changes

George Uhl

New room number—C-215

Mary Lillie

New room number—C-205

Brenda (Miller) Beegle

717-813-0804 (cell number)

diamonds3158@gmail.com (new email)

Please remember to notify the church office if you have **moved**, have a **new email address**, or have a **new phone number**.

2015 Congregation Council

Nicholas Adams, *President & Property chair*

Charlotte Varone, *Vice President & Personnel chair*

Nancie Whelan, *Secretary & Christian Education chair*

Pam Knouff, *Treasurer*

Ernestine Batdorf, *Financial Secretary & Publicity chair*

Brenda Beegle, *Volunteer Resources chair*

Deborah Lutz, *Evangelism chair*

Lori Oliver

Donald Smith, *Stewardship chair*

Non Council Committee Chairs and their positions:

Janet Gassert, *Altar Guild*

Karen Fox, *Worship & Music chair*

Karen Hatt, *Fellowship chair*

Gayle Hoffman, *Strategic Planning chair*

Kathaleen Lilley, *Assistant Treasurer, Finance chair*

Rita Savant, *Assistant Financial Secretary*

♥ Happy Valentines Day ♥