

MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Second Sunday after Christmas
January 4, 2026
8:30 a.m.



I
AM
LOVED
FOR
WHO I AM.

Acts 10:34-45

Senior Pastor Kurt Hoover
Guest Preacher Kersten Stier
Guest Pastor Keith Forni
Organist & Pianist Rose Ann Sochan
Sanctuary Choir Director Herb Alexander
Worship Assistants Herb Alexander, Jane Costello

40 Houbolt Rd.
Joliet, IL 60431

(815) 741-4488
www.mlcjoliet.org

Welcome to Messiah Lutheran Church

January 4, 2026

8:30 a.m.

Enter Reverently, Worship Joyfully, Live Faithfully

PRELUDE

Rose Ann Sochan

OPENING HYMN

"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise," #88 v. 1 -4, LCMS



1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to thee we raise;
2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, proph-et, priest, and king su - preme;
3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole weak-ened bod - y, faint-ing soul;
4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, pres - ent in thy ho - ly word;



man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far,
and at Ca - na wed - ding guest in thy God-head man - i - fest;
man - i - fest in val - iant fight, quell-ing all the dev - il's might;
grace to im - i - tate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;



branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem:
man - i - fest in pow'r di - vine, chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine;
man - i - fest in gra - cious will, ev - er bring-ing good from ill:
that we might be - come like thee at thy great e - piph - a - ny,



an - thems be to thee ad-dressed,
an - thems be to thee ad-dressed, God in flesh made man - i - fest.
an - thems be to thee ad-dressed,
and may praise thee, ev - er blest,

THE KYRIE

Leader: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

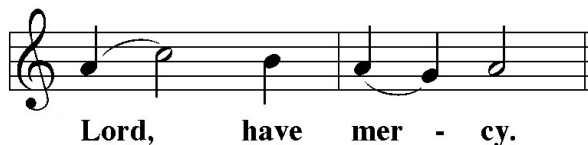
All:



Lord, have mer - cy.

Leader: For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

All:



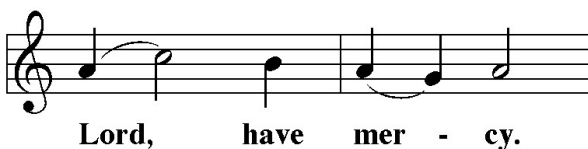
Leader: For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

All:



Leader: For this holy house, and for all who offer here
their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

All:



Leader: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

All:



WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION AND SELF-EXAMINATION

Leader: Most merciful God,

All: **We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

Leader: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a believer in Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

"This Is the Feast"



This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be people of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.



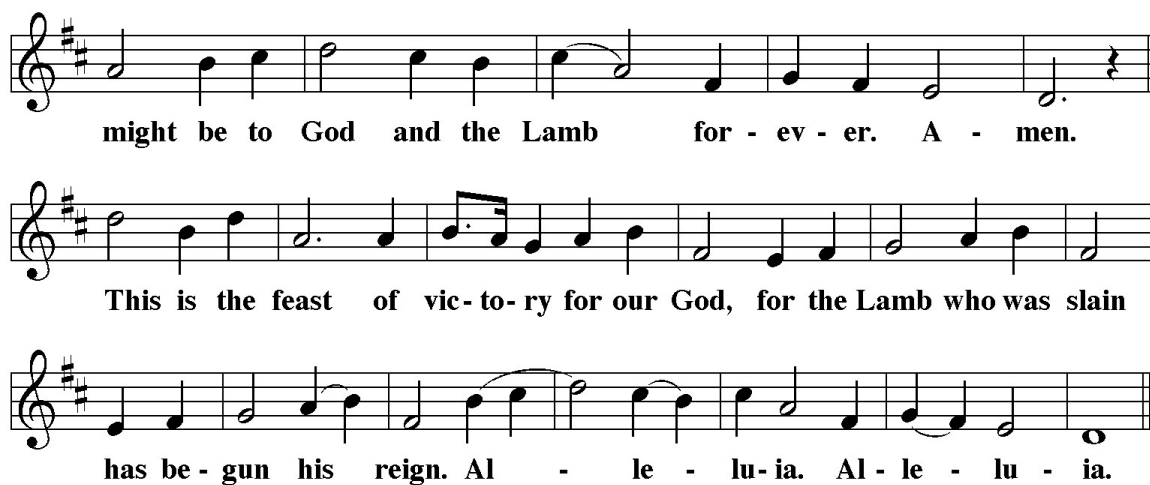
This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Sing with all the people of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love, that we may know the fullness of his joy; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All: **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Leslie McFarland

THE OFFERING

Rose Ann Sochan

OUR RESPONSE

"Let the Vineyards"



FIRST READING, Acts 2:36-41 (ESV)

Reader: Jane Costello

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

SECOND READING, Acts 3:22-26 (ESV)

²² Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' ²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

THIRD READING, Acts 10:34-45 (ESV)

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

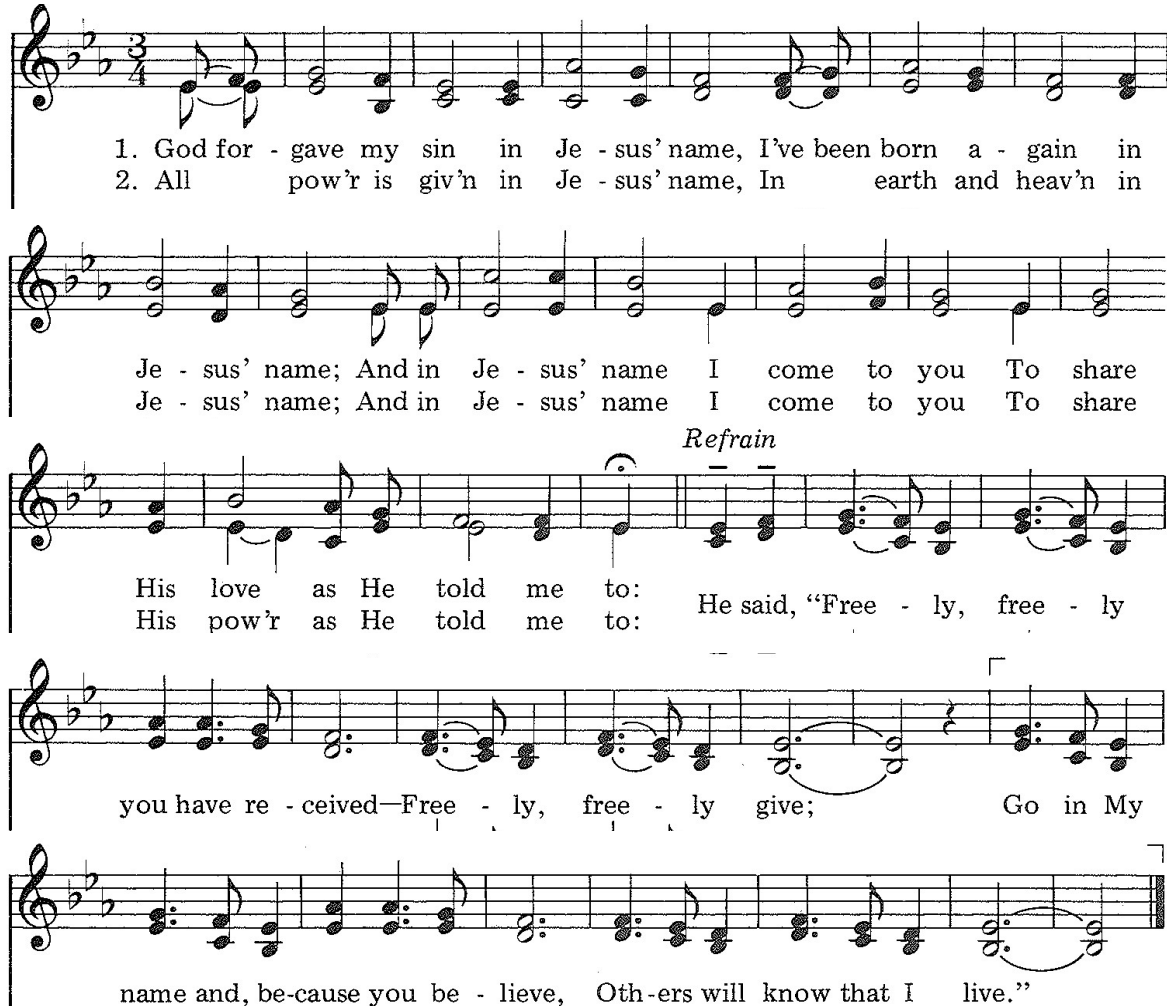
⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

MESSAGE "Repentance: When God Cuts You Through the Heart"
Kersten Stier

A manuscript for this sermon and those previous can be found in the Narthex.

HYMN

"Freely, Freely," #447 v. 1-2



1. God for - gave my sin in Je - sus' name, I've been born a - gain in
2. All pow'r is giv'n in Je - sus' name, In earth and heav'n in

Je - sus' name; And in Je - sus' name I come to you To share
Je - sus' name; And in Je - sus' name I come to you To share

Refrain

His love as He told me to: He said, "Free - ly, free - ly
His pow'r as He told me to: you have re - ceived - Free - ly, free - ly give; Go in My

name and, be-cause you be - lieve, Oth-ers will know that I live."

WORDS OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All:

And al - so with you.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All:

We lift them to the Lord.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All:

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Leader: It is indeed right and salutary...
we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Leader: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave Your only Son, that all those who believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as He comes to us in His holy supper.

All: Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Servers: Nancy Bertnik, Randy Ling, Angie Mitchka

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN

"Lamb of God"



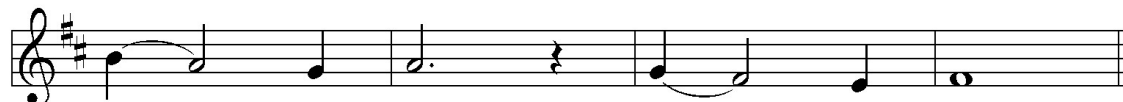
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

"Just As I Am," #342 v. 1-5

"O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," #451 v. 1-4



COMMUNION BLESSING & POST-COMMUNION HYMN



Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

*Grateful
thankful
blessed*

CLOSING HYMN

"Whiter Than Snow," #436 v. 1 & 4



1. Lord Je - sus, I long to be per - fect - ly whole; I
2. Lord Je - sus, look down from Your throne in the skies And
3. Lord Je - sus, for this I most hum - bly en - treat; I
4. Lord Je - sus, be - fore You I pa - tient - ly wait; Come



want Thee for - ev - er to live in my soul. Break down ev - ery
help me to make a com - plete sac - ri - fice. I give up my-
wait, bless - ed Lord, at Thy cru - ci - fied feet. By faith, for my
now and with - in me a new heart cre - ate. To those who have



i - dol, cast out ev - ery foe— Now wash me and I shall be
self and what - ev - er I know— Now wash me and I shall be
cleans - ing I see Your blood flow— Now wash me and I shall be
sought You, You nev - er said, "No"— Now wash me and I shall be



whit - er than snow. Whit - er than snow, yes, whit - er than



snow— Now wash me and I shall be whit - er than snow.

POSTLUDE

Rose Ann Sochan

*God will never lead you to a place
where His grace cannot keep you.*

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NEW SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

begins this morning, **JANUARY 4th**!

8:30 Traditional Worship

9:40 Education Hour

10:45 Family Praise & Worship

NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

ADULT "INSIGHT" BIBLE STUDY

Join us in Fellowship Hall, Sunday mornings during Education Hour.



BAPTISM SUNDAY

Mark your calendar - Baptism Sunday is **January 18th**. This will be an opportunity to be baptized, or to reaffirm the promise made to you in your own baptism... an opportunity to invite family and friends to place that promise upon their children, as well. Please see Pastor Kurt if you or a family member would like to be baptized.

CARING FOR PASTORS INSTALLATION

On **January 11th** we celebrate the mission God has laid upon the hearts of Pastors John and Martha Nelson. We will be installing them for the official calling to care for LCMC pastors. Pr. John will also be preaching and giving us an update on funds raised and the service provided through Pr. John and Pr. Martha's ministry work.

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP TIME



Be sure to join us for coffee & good company on Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall! Coffee will be available beginning at 9:40 a.m. and will continue until after the later service gets out. If you are an 8:30 attender - stay late! If Family Praise & Worship is your service - come early! Make new friends!

CONNECT WITH MESSIAH

You can use this QR code to let us know you're new, tell us that you're interested in next steps at MLC, submit prayer requests, fill out a Connect Card, and give online.

Scan here to connect with MLC:



Online Giving - There are two convenient ways to do it:

- 1) On our website at <https://www.mlcjoliet.org/give>.
- 2) Through the Church Center app on your phone or tablet, or scan the QR code above.

DAYBREAK SHELTER - WILL YOU HELP SAVE OUR PARTNERSHIP?

For 35 years Messiah has prepared & served dinner once a month to those less fortunate at Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Joliet, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Our long-time coordinator, Karen Rebuehr, has discerned the need to step down and we are looking for a volunteer (or two) willing to take the baton. This would entail coordinating volunteers & food donations, light shopping, and communicating with Daybreak staff as needed. **Please reach out to Karen or call the front office for more information.**

FAITH & BODY

Lace up your shoes and enjoy a walk in the Family Life Center, weekly on Thursdays (Sept-May) from 9-10 a.m. Everyone walks at their own pace and it's a great time for fellowship.

MEMORY BEARS



Messiah's Memory Bears Group normally meets the 4th Tuesday of every month from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. next meeting is **January 27th**. We have jobs that do not require sewing! Text Cindi Souza at (815) 931-8478 or email regency118@comcast.net for more info.

NEW TO MESSIAH? WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Have you been attending and want more info on becoming a member? Please join us at the "**Get to Know Messiah**" membership class on Sundays, **February 8th and 15th** at 9:40 a.m. You will learn our story and about our people and the vision of Messiah. This is also an opportunity for us to get to know YOU and the best way to support your faith journey. Child care is available upon request. Reach out to Pastor Kurt or call the church office for more info.

OWLS (Older, Wiser, Loving Seniors)

OWLS meets on the second Tuesday of every month at noon, September-May. We enjoy a light lunch together, play trivia, and usually feature a guest speaker or entertainment! Our next luncheon is on **January 13th**.

Chili and beverages will be provided in January. We ask that everyone **sign up in the Narthex** so we have a headcount and to let us know what finger food, appetizer, salad or dessert you will bring to share. Questions may be directed to Pat Burke, Pat Buchenau, or Lisa Winters.



PRAYER CHAIN

Messiah uses an email-based Prayer Chain made up of people willing to pray for our members, community, and nation in times of crisis. Prayers are shared amongst the group via email and are kept confidential as much as possible. Text Cindi Souza at (815) 931-8478 or email regency118@comcast.net for more info.

PRAYER TEAM

Our in-person Prayer Team meets Thursday mornings in the Fireside Room from 10:15-11:15 to pray together over our prayer request list. For more info text Cindi Souza at (815) 931-8478 or by email regency118@comcast.net, or reach out to Beth Hohisel at bhohisel@hotmail.com.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Items for the bulletin are due by the end of the day each Tuesday, and newsletter material is due the 20th of each month.

QUILTERS

Messiah Quilters meet the 3rd Tuesday each month from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. We have a lot of quilts ready to complete and if you can tie a knot, you can help us out! We even have jobs you can do sitting down. Think about stopping in and see what we do. If you are unable to join us and would like to sew at home, we have kits available and can show you how easy it is to sew a quilt top together.

We are in need of clean sheets of any size, flat or fitted (no stains or holes) to be used as the backs of our quilts. You can drop them off in the basket provided in the Narthex. Thank you, in advance!

Contact Kathy Mueller at (815) 953-6601 or scpbklane@aol.com for more information or any questions you may have. Hope to see you on **January 20th**!

STAY-N-PLAY

Our FREE weekly open gym play group for kids five and under (along with their caretaker) meets in the Family Life Center every Tuesday morning (Sept-May) from 9:30 -11. Bring the littles for play time! Adults enjoy coffee on us!

WEDNESDAY EVENING FAMILY DINNER & FAMILY PRAISE NIGHT

Wednesday Family Dinner will take place the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Your RSVP is important to us - a sign up list is posted in the Narthex. We can also use help with setup and cleanup. If you are able to assist, please sign up in the Narthex.

Family Praise Night, also the first Wednesday of every month, is from 6-6:30 p.m. (right after dinner) in the cafe area of the FLC. Join our children and student ministries for a time of praise, kids' showcase, and a short message!



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

Women's Bible Study will begin a new 6-week session on **January 7th** from 1-2:30 in the Fireside Room! For more information please reach out to Sherri Unyi or Laurel Ling.

YOUNG ADULT "IGNITE" BIBLE STUDY

For those out of high school and older - Join us for coffee and Bible Study in classroom #101 Sunday mornings during Education Hour.

MESSIAH KIDS (pre-K to 5th grades)

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Our Children's Choir will perform during the 10:45 service on January 25, February 22, March 22, and April 26. For more info please reach out to Season Lawler.

J-CHURCH

J-Church is the third Sunday of every month (except December) at 10:45 in the FLC.

MESSIAH KIDS WEDNESDAYS (MKW)

MKW meets Wednesday evenings from 6-8 p.m. in the upper level Kidz Club!

MILE MARKER 2026 DATES

- Let's Pray (Kindergarten) January 18th workshop; presentation January 25th.
- My New Bible (2nd grade) February 1st & 8th; presentation February 15th.
- First Communion (4th grade) March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th; Communion April 2nd.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Pre-K through 5th groups meet upstairs in the Kidz Club, 6th-8th in the Youth Room!

MESSIAH STUDENT MINISTRIES (6th to 12th grades)

BIBLE STUDY (SUNDAY MORNINGS)

Bible Study for high schoolers is in the Fireside Room.

FRIENDS AND MENTORS (FAM) FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

FAM meets on Wednesday evenings from 6-8.

HEAD 2 HEART (H2H)

Our H2H (Confirmation) program for 6th-8th graders runs on Wednesdays evenings from 6-8.

MAFIA NIGHTS

6th-12th graders - mark your calendar for upcoming MAFIA NIGHTS! Fridays, **January 23rd** and **February 27th** from 6:30-10 p.m. Bring \$5 if you'd like to join us for pizza! Invite friends!



*Sundays
February 8th and 15th
9:40 a.m.*

New to Messiah? Want to learn more?

Have you been attending and want more info on becoming a member?
We want to get to know you and connect you with our many groups and ministries!

Please join us at the **“Get to Know Messiah”** membership class where you will learn our story, about our people and the vision of Messiah. This is also an opportunity for us to get to know YOU and the best way to support your faith journey!

Childcare will be available upon request.
Contact Pastor Kurt or call the church office for more info.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor Altar flowers, please sign up in the Narthex or call the office at 815-741-4488. Arrangements are \$25 each.

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

SUNDAY (January 4)

→ NEW SCHEDULE BEGINS!

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
9:40 a.m. Education Hour
10:45 a.m. Family Praise & Worship
1 p.m. Cristo Rey Worship

MONDAY (January 5)

n/a

TUESDAY (January 6)

9 a.m. Stay-N-Play

WEDNESDAY (January 7)

1 p.m. Women's Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Family Dinner
6 p.m. Family Praise Night
6:30 p.m. FAM, H2H, MKW

THURSDAY (January 8)

9 a.m. Faith & Body Challenge
10:15 a.m. Prayer Team
12 p.m. Staff Meeting
7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY (January 9)

n/a

SATURDAY (January 10)

9 a.m. Worship Team Rehearsal

SUNDAY (January 11)

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
9:40 a.m. Education Hour
10:45 a.m. Family Praise & Worship
1 p.m. Cristo Rey Worship

ATTENDANCE

LAST WEEK:

8:30 a.m.: 111
10:30 a.m.: 32
Insight: 20
K-5th: 4
Online: 35

(Winter Blast weekend!)

2025 GIVING

Operating Budget: \$680,068
YTD Operating Budget: \$680,068
YTD Giving Received: \$610,979
Average Weekly Need: \$13,078
Received Last Week: \$13,660

STEWARDSHIP VERSE OF THE WEEK

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you.

Messiah office hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,
otherwise by appointment. Please call (815) 741-4488.



Sanctuary Choir Director Herb Alexander
Worship Coordinator Justin Brown
Office Coordinator Vicki Dallmann
Children's Choir Director Season Lawler
Children's Ministry Director Leslie McFarland
Building Liaison Kate Richmond
Youth Director Kersten Stier
Technology Coordinator Nikolai Stier
Bookkeeper Sherri Unyi