

MESSIAH MESSENGER

February 2026

A word from



Pastor Kurt Hoover

LEAP!

How is God asking you and your family to take a LEAP of faith in 2026?

*...grant to your servants to continue to speak
your word with all boldness. (Acts 4:29)*

As we walk through the book of Acts in Sunday morning worship, we will be asking the question of what the church looked like then and how we are being asked to do the same. The early church changed the world because it's people lived out of their faith rather than out of obligation to God. Life is more than a rat race for acceptance and success. We get to LEAP into new adventures together as families and as the church.

In 2026, the leadership and I have identified three areas we see God at work in us. First, we are a training ground for future church leaders. God does this with our youth and young adults who are getting their first taste of ministry. We are creating podcasts, teaching Sunday School, providing scholarships and we will advertise for a Seminary Intern in 2026. Part of this investment is remodeling a new youth room and renovating the Gathering House to be a Seminary Greenhouse. We plan to have 2-3 rooms where students can live as they get real experience leading in the church here at Messiah.

Other concrete ways our families might be asked to LEAP are in celebrating 125 years of ministry and getting more involved in our community with our benevolence and ministry partners.

Messiah Lutheran tithes our weekly offerings to local and international charities. What would it look like for your family to make a connection with one of those partners? What a LEAP of faith to spend even one day as a family volunteering at MorningStar Mission or Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center. We have a dozen ministries who use our space throughout the week. What would it look like for your family to welcome and create connections for the families already coming through our doors for *Lil' Loves, Stay-N-Play, YMCA Kid Zone*, or an exciting new ministry that supports foster families: *Love Moves.US?* There are many more!

Finally, throughout the year 2026 we will be celebrating our 125th year of ministry. Part of that celebration will be laying the foundation for our new bell tower. Much like our *Baptism Sunday*, anniversary celebrations are an evangelism moment. Now is the time to invite others into this Holy Spirit movement. What a LEAP it truly is to start that conversation about Sunday morning worship and what it means to you. The next time someone comments on your faith, your positive attitude, your willingness to help... that is God giving you the nudge to LEAP! The same Holy Spirit is at work in the church today as when it first began.

In anticipation of what God does next,

pastor.hoover@mlcjoliet.org

LEAP:

God's church
then and now



MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Sermon series
through Epiphany

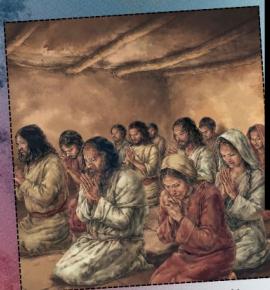
What are the leaps God is asking of us?

LEAP: God's church then and now. What are the leaps God is asking of us as Messiah Lutheran Church? God is supporting the community. God is creating and training new pastors. God is inviting those you know to celebrate 125 years of church family.

MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Lenten Sermon Series

BOLD Prayers



How to engage the tough prayers.

*“...grant to your servants to continue to speak your word
with all boldness.” Acts 4:29*



STEWARDSHIP

Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, and renewal—a season to examine how we live in God's grace. Stewardship during Lent invites us to align our time, talents, and treasures with God's purposes, giving not out of obligation, but as an act of devotion. As we journey toward Easter, let us embrace generosity and service, remembering that everything we have is a gift from God to be shared for His glory.

With God's grace,

- *Gerry Boe*, Stewardship Director, stewardship@mlcjoliet.org



PARISH FELLOWSHIP

February will be a busy month for Parish Fellowship with Lent starting on Ash Wednesday, February 18th. The Soup Supper sign-up board is in the Narthex. If you attend the Wednesday night services, please consider signing up to bring soup, bread, dessert and/or help. The dates are 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18 & 3/25. Parish Fellowship will provide the traditional pizza & salad dinner for the last Wednesday of Lent. Thank you in advance for your help!

On February 21st, Messiah will be hosting the IL District LCMC meeting and luncheon. If you are able to help with that, please contact me. Thank you!

- *Terry Anzalone*, Parish Fellowship Director, 815-531-9781

MESSIAH
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CHURCH



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.

Register here by 02/04:




HELP! We are looking for help in updating our church history. We have the booklets from our 75th and 100th anniversaries, but need to update the last 25 years and maybe even collect more information dating back further! So, if you have any photos, flyers, letters, programs, booklets of the people and events that have transpired over the last 25 years here at Messiah, we would love

to see them. If you have a memory you would like to share, we would love to hear it directly from you or you can write it down for us. If you were part of an event or activity and have a great story or fun memory, we would love to hear that also!

We are gathering this information now. A basket labeled "Messiah Memories" is provided in the Narthex for you to drop your info in. If you have photos (or other memorabilia) and want them back, include your name and phone and we will return them to you. Also, if you are able to identify any or all of the people in a photo, that

Our 125th Anniversary: 1901-2026!

As we celebrate our 125th anniversary as a church this year, this is how it all began:

Messiah Lutheran Church began taking shape in 1898 through the work of Norwegian immigrants as they settled in the Joliet area. Pastors O. Andreason, H.A. Hanson, Theo Hanson and a student pastor, Alte Svanoe, began preliminary work for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church on the corner of Hunter and McDonough in Joliet in the late 1890's. In the fall of 1901, at the home of Alfred Johnson on S. Water Street in Joliet, the first worship was organized. Pastor O.O. Risvold was instrumental in organizing the church and was the first pastor in 1901.

On Thanksgiving Day 1902, the congregation decided to purchase and build a church and parsonage at the corner of Hunter Ave. and McDonough St. The lot cost \$600.00. The initial structure was completed in 1903 and the parsonage in 1912. In 1904, a constitution was drafted and adopted. The first name of our church was

"HAUGE NORWEGIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH"

The Norwegian Language was the language of use in the church. That included worship services, constitution and church records. It wasn't until 1919 that the annual meeting records were written in English and, in 1921, the constitution was translated into English. Transition to English was difficult and lengthy and as the years went by, pressure built within the church to start using the English language. The change was gradual and, in 1924, worship services were held once a month in English. The other services were still in Norwegian until 1937.

The final service was held at the Hunter Avenue Church, 320 Hunter Ave. on June 19, 1980. Church members caravanned to the new church site at 40 Houbolt Rd. for the conclusion of that worship service. From July 8, 1980 to Palm Sunday (April 12, 1981) worship services took place at Troy-Shorewood School. Palm Sunday was the first worship in the new facility. It was far from finished. Members brought chairs from home

Our 125th Anniversary...

for the church service. The floor was still concrete and other furnishings were sparse. But people rejoiced in His name because of what they had done together in the name of God!

Original charter members of Hauge Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Nels Nelson	Jacob Wetteland	Ole Eddy	Iver Eddy	A. Thorson
G. Stnerson	Alfred Johnson	Austen Jones	Christ Erickson	

Are you related to any of these people? Let us know.

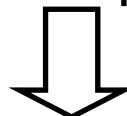
You can contact Kathy Mueller, 815-953-6601 or scpbklane@aol.com for more information or questions on Messiah's 125th Anniversary!



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!

Please note that March 4th will be a Lenten Soup Supper followed by worship.



LENTEWEDNESDAY SOUP SUPPERS & WORSHIP

Join us for Soup Supper and Worship on Wednesdays during Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 18th! Suppers begin at 5:30 p.m., worship at 7 p.m. Please **sign up in the Narthex** to bring a soup/bread/dessert.



Messiah's Daily Devotional Podcast

Word Play!

God has a Word for you!



Hosted by Pastor Kurt Hoover and Nikolai Stier, you'll find a new podcast each weekday morning that delves into the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday, focusing on one word in each passage. We'll also feature occasional guest pastors from our area and other LCMC members.



Tune in as they exchange insights into the Word of God... along with some nerdy banter!

Each 7–8-minute podcast is available on [Spotify](#) here...



Jesus' words of grace are enough for you (2 Cor. 12:9).
Jesus says, "You have all you need. You are not missing anything."

COMMUNITY EVENTS

JOLET AREA CHRISTIAN WOMEN

You and your friends are invited to Joliet Christian Women's upcoming luncheon in Messiah's Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, **February 18th** at 11:15 a.m. \$22.00 includes a catered lunch, a special guest speaker/presentation and good fellowship. In February, there will be a presentation by Friends Over Fifty Senior Care.

RSVP by Feb 11th by contacting Barb at 815-439-2076 or mrs.brutus56@gmail.com, or call Sonya at 815-727-1626. Check out their website at <https://www.stonecroft.org/>



The Joliet Community YMCA is hosting a **FREE** Sweetheart Dance for families, **February 7th**, 2-4 p.m. at the Salvation Army Community Center (300 3rd Ave. in Joliet), featuring music, dancing, Valentine's crafts, and light refreshments. It's a fun opportunity for families to connect and enjoy time together. Questions may be directed to Keyanna Montgomery, YMCA Youth & Family Director, at 815-744-3939 x362.

FOR THE LADIES OF MESSIAH

Bunco Day!

Join us for a fun-filled day of friendly conversation, laughter, and excitement. Bring a snack to share, and let's roll the dice for some great memories!



February 7th from 1-4 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall.

RSVP appreciated but not required
to Beth at 815-735-7897

SPRING LUNCHEON

Ladies - Mark your calendar for our spring luncheon on Sunday, **May 3rd** at noon!
Details to follow.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED!

ADULT "INSIGHT" BIBLE STUDY EDUCATION HOUR

Join us in Fellowship Hall, Sunday mornings during Education Hour. We are currently studying the Book of Acts, which will continue throughout the Season of Epiphany.

MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Sunday Morning
Adult Bible Study

Join us Sunday mornings during Education Hour for
INSIGHT Bible Study for adults.

ALTAR FLOWERS - Sign up in the Narthex



If you'd like to help beautify our Sanctuary and sponsor Altar flowers in honor of a special occasion, or to memorialize someone important in your life, the sign up chart is on the Connect Wall in the Narthex (outside the Fireside Room). Arrangements are \$25 each and may be taken home to enjoy after Sunday services have ended.

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 THURSDAYS

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.

LIL LOVES MINISTRY

Lil Loves at Messiah aims to come alongside underserved parents and babies in the area by providing **FREE** assistance with diapers and much needed baby supplies. Lil Loves is available on a by-appointment basis, and those requesting assistance may sign up on our website.



Lil Loves thanks you for your donations of:

**Diapers and Pull-ups *Wipes *Baby Wash/Shampoo *Baby Lotion
*Toiletry items for the moms such as deodorant, toothpaste,
feminine hygiene, etc.*



Trial-sized toiletry items are especially appreciated, rather than full-sized. If you'd like to donate, please place your items in the black bin in the Narthex. Our Lil Loves Ministry has helped many, many families in need with care packages thanks to your loving generosity!

WE ARE NOT ABLE TO ACCEPT FORMULA OR USED ITEMS.
Formula and used baby clothes are happily accepted at
Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center
at 903 Infantry Dr., Ste. 600, in Joliet.

MEMORY BEARS

Messiah's Memory Bears Group meets at the church from 9 a.m.-noon, on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Did you know that we make stuffed teddy bears (and dogs) out of the clothing of people who have passed away, to comfort the grieving? We would love to have you join us! We have jobs that do not require sewing. Text Cindi Souza at 815-931-8478 or email regency118@comcast.net for more info. Hope to see you on **February 24th!**



MICRO PANTRY

Did you know that Messiah has TWO food pantries? Our indoor pantry is in the hallway across from the offices and our outdoor "Blessing Box" is on the sidewalk right outside the office! This ministry is 100% donation-driven, and you can help to support it through prayer, monetary and/or nonperishable food donations. Please leave your nonperishable food donations in the bin in the Narthex. **NO EXPIRED ITEMS, PLEASE.**



MLC OFFICE HOURS

The office is staffed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays and evenings are by appointment.

OWLS

OWLS meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at noon, September through May. Be sure to sign up in the Narthex.



Messiah uses an email-based (not in-person) 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 confidential and anonymous 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 at 10:15 in the Fireside Room for approximately one hour, to pray together over our prayer request list. For more info text Cindi Souza at 815-931-8478 or by email to regency118@comcast.net, or Beth Hohisel at bhohisel@hotmail.com.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Just a friendly reminder that **Sunday bulletin** material must be received in the front office by 2 p.m. each Tuesday. Material for the **newsletter** is due the 20th of each month.

QUilters

Messiah Quilters will be quilting twice in this month, on **February 3rd** and also on our regularly scheduled (third Tuesday) **February 17th** from 9-2. 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**, 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.

Contact Kathy Mueller at 815-953-6601 or scpbklane@aol.com for more information or any questions you may have. Thank you to everyone who supports us with time, materials and monetary donations! Hope to see you in February!

SANCTUARY CHOIR

 Our Sanctuary Choir sings on Sunday mornings at the 8:30 service, September through May. Rehearsals take place on Thursday evenings from 7:15-8:45. We are always looking for new members! If you'd like to join in, please contact our Sanctuary Choir Director, Herb Alexander, at halex12240@gmail.com.

STAY-N-PLAY

Stay-N-Play is our **FREE** weekly play group that opens our gym for kids five and under along with their parent/guardian. We meet on Tuesday mornings (September-May) in the FLC from 9:30-11! Please like our Facebook page ([MLC Stay-N-Play Playgroup](#)) for additional information, and share with your friends and neighbors!

Stay-N-Play is in need of hosts! Contact Sherri Unyi if you are available serve as an MLC Stay-N-Play Ambassador to help set up toys, make coffee, greet our guests and answer questions. Guests are required to supervise their own children.

MESSIAH KIDZ CLUB (K-5TH GRADE)

Parents of children (K-5th grade) can join the Messiah Kids group on the Remind app by texting the code mlcmk to 81010, or by going to:

<https://www.remind.com/join/mlcmk>



We'll send reminders/notifications about Sunday School and events!



CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Children's Choir will perform on **February 22nd**, **March 22nd**, and **April 26th** during the 10:45 service. Please contact Season Lawler for more information.

J-CHURCH

J-Church is the 3rd Sunday of every month (except December) at 10:45 in the Family Life Center!



MESSIAH KIDS WEDNESDAYS (MKW)

MKW is Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. beginning (through April 8th, 2026). For more info, contact Beth Hohisel at bhohisel@hotmail.com or (815) 735-7897.

Register here:



MILE MARKER WORKSHOPS

My New Bible (2nd grade) February 1st & 8th; presentation February 15th
First Communion (4th grade) March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th; Communion April 2nd

Register here: My Bible

1st Communion



NERF BATTLE

Dudes (5 and up), you're invited to an epic showdown! Bring your partner and NERF gun and we will provide the ammo and safety gear! We will have target practice, capture the flag, zombie freeze and prizes and treats. The battle will take place on Saturday, **March 14th** from 1-3 p.m. in the FLC.

Free event
Ages 5 and up!

Ready Aim Fire!

March 14th
1-3pm
in the FLC

We will have:
target practice,
capture the flag,
zombie freeze,
prizes and treats!

Dudes, you're invited to an epic
showdown! Bring your partner and
NERF gun and we will provide the
ammo and safety gear!

Questions? Contact Megan Kuhn
christianed@MLCJoliet.org

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Registration opens 02/12:



SWEETHEART DANCE



MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

YOU'RE INVITED TO A

DJ AND DANCING
PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES
LIGHT SNACKS AND REFRESHMENTS
CRAFTING
RAFFLE

Daddy & Daughter
SWEETHEART DANCE

REGISTER ON THE CHURCH CENTER APP
OR USE THE QR CODE
IN THE SUNDAY BULLETIN.

REGISTER HERE:

Feb 21st 6:30-8:30 p.m.
in the Family Life Center
Questions? Reach out to Megan Kuhn
christianed@MLCJoliet.org

REGISTER HERE: 

SUNDAY SCHOOL EDUCATION HOUR

Pre-K through 5th grade groups meet at 9:40 upstairs in the Kidz Club, 6th-8th in the Youth Room!

Register here: 

VBS 2026

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for **Emerald Crossing VBS: June 22-26, 2026**

*...an Irish adventure through Psalm 23,
providing hope to an anxious generation.*



Get this on
your
calendar
and tell
friends!



MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

HOP ON OVER FOR OUR

Easter Egg Hunt

on

March 28th, 1-3 p.m.

Free Event!

Bring a basket and a friend!

Ages pre/k -5th

1-2 p.m. story walk in Fellowship Hall

2-3 p.m. egg hunt, outside (weather permitting)

Questions ? Reach out to Megan Kuhn, christianed@MLCJoliet.org

For more info on ministries for kids pre-K through 5th grade, email
Leslie McFarland, Children's Min. Director, at childrensmin@mlcjoliet.org
or Megan Kuhn, Christian Ed. Director, at christianed@mlcjoliet.org.

MESSIAH STUDENT MINISTRIES (6TH-12TH GRADE)

BIBLE STUDY EDUCATION HOUR (SUNDAY MORNINGS)

- 6th-8th grade Bible Study meets in the Youth Room at 9:40!
- Bible Study for high schoolers is in the Fireside Room!

FRIENDS AND MENTORS (FAM) FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

Mid-week Bible Study and much more! Connect with peers, play games, learn life skills, pray, sing praise and enjoy fellowship! FAM runs Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m.!

HEAD 2 HEART

Our H2H (Confirmation) program for 6th-8th graders Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m.!

MAFIA NIGHT

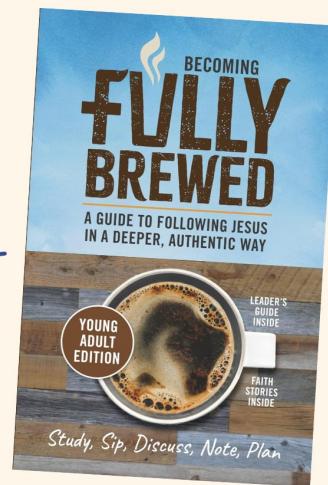
6th-12th graders - mark your calendar for our next MAFIA NIGHT! Friday, **February 27th** from 6:30-10 p.m. Bring \$5 if you'd like to join us for pizza! Invite friends!



For more info on ministries for students 6th through 12th grade, email Kersten Stier, Youth Director, at stumin@mlcjoliet.org.

IGNITE!
YOUNG ADULT
BIBLE STUDY
FOR THOSE POST-HIGH SCHOOL
AND OLDER

SUNDAY MORNINGS DURING
EDUCATION HOUR IN
CLASSROOM #101



VIRTUAL WORSHIP **AND** **SUNDAY BULLETINS**

Can't make it to church this week? The 8:30 a.m. service is live-streamed online on our Facebook and YouTube pages. Links to both are at mlcjoliet.org/worship (please scroll to the bottom of the page). You can also view or print the bulletin, if you'd like to follow along!



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

ONLINE *giving*



Two convenient ways to give online:

- 1) On our website at www.mlcjoliet.org/give.
- 2) Church Center app on your phone or tablet.



Fast Simple Secure

Download the Church Center app! It's not just for online giving.
You can also: · View our church calendar!
 · Receive event notifications & reminders from MLC
 directly to your phone (with notifications enabled)!
 · Register for events that request sign-ups!



Giving Statements

Please help Messiah be *greener* and consider switching your statement delivery method from US Mail to EMAIL.
Call the church office if you'd like to do this!

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS



1 -	Haley Endebak	14 -	Ezren Lawler	19 -	Kurt Christensen
3 -	Jackie Zite	15 -	Chris Pribnow	21 -	Michele Christensen
4 -	Michael Holmes	16 -	Waylon Johnke		Kristen Michalski
6 -	Kersten Stier	17 -	Gene Gruber	23 -	Erin Eldred
10 -	Brody Liebermann		Michael Prybell	24 -	Maven Lawler
	Andrew Wiley	18 -	Jean Cleary	25 -	Tegan King
11 -	Abigail Burke		Ellen Parnell		
			Roger Zuehl		



17 -	Kurt & Michele Christensen
21 -	Doug & Janet Potts
26 -	Nikolai & Kersten Stier
28 -	Roger & Diane Zuehl

FEBRUARY SERVERS

Counters

02/01/26	Ken Skinner, Dan Stukel
02/08/26	Gayle Arko, Bob Miller
02/15/26	Stan Buhr, Joy McClintock
02/22/26	Judy Fowler, Zach Hoelscher

Ushers 8:30

02/01/26	Jerry Buchenau, Dan Stukel
02/08/26	Bill Unyi, Alan Costello
02/15/26	Wayne Lauffer, Bob Miller
02/22/26	Craig Stone, Paul Allen

Ushers 10:45

02/01/26	Gary Phillips, Jeff Holmes
02/08/26	Tom & Tammie Eigenbauer
02/15/26	Jeff Holmes, Josh Johnke
02/22/26	Darryl Hoelscher, Gary Phillips

Communion Assistants 8:30

02/01/26	Nancy Berdnik, Randy Ling, Angie Mitchka
02/08/26	Tom Bond, Doug Potts, one needed
02/15/26	Paul Allen, Bev Korby, Doug Potts
02/22/26	Marvina Allen, Tom Bond, one needed

Communion Assistants 10:45

02/01/26	Terry Anzalone, Pat Burke, Darryl Hoelscher
02/08/26	Terry Anzalone, Pat Burke, one needed
02/15/26	Terry Anzalone, Pat Burke, one needed
02/22/26	Terry Anzalone, Pat Burke, one needed

Readers 8:30

02/01/26	Marcy Vickers
02/08/26	Jane Costello
02/15/26	Angie Mitchka
02/22/26	Paul Allen

Readers 10:45

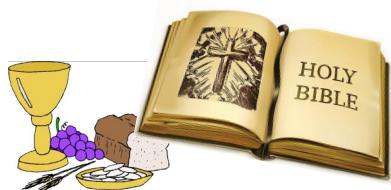
02/01/26	needed
02/08/26	Molly Hoover
02/15/26	Molly Hoover
02/22/26	Kate Richmond

Greeters 8:30

02/01/26	Nancy Berdnik, one needed
02/08/26	two needed
02/15/26	Marty Hohisel, Bev Korby
02/22/26	two needed

Greeters 10:45

02/01/26	two needed
02/08/26	Lynn Tapella, one needed
02/15/26	two needed
02/22/26	Lynn Tapella, one needed



Senior Pastor Kurt Hoover
Bookkeeper Sherrri Unyi
Building Liaison Katie Richmond
Children's Ministry Director Vicki Dallmann
Children's Choir Director Leslie McFarland
Youth Director Kerseten Stier
Tech Coordinator Nikolai Stier
Sanctuary Choir Director Herb Alexander
Organist Rose Ann Socban
Worship Coordinator Justin Brown

info@mlcjlilte.org
815-741-4488

