

From the desk of



### The Radical Value of Being Empty

They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." John 20:13

Do a quick study of the word "empty" in the Bible and you will see that it has a negative connotation. One of the worst things you could do to another in a nomadic/desert culture is leave them "empty" handed. Job is accused of having "empty" words when, in fact, it was his friends who tried to make a religion out of Job's relationship with God. Paul encouraged the early churches throughout the Mediterranean to not have an "empty" witness.

However, I would like to suggest that the idea of emptiness is actually a positive virtue. After all, if you want to be filled with God's presence, it implies there is an empty space to be filled. If we want our minds opened as Jesus did for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, then there must be a container to open. If we want to be known by God we must let go of our own ideas of what we ought to be. If we are to be dependent on something or someone, we must let go of what we have to offer. And this is precisely how it is God takes our sin and gives us new life, His life. *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)* 

I invite you to join us for our Easter sermon series, April 7-21, "Empty Tomb: Does Resurrection Matter?"

I love the idea of being forgiven. I still marvel that Christ would die to show His love and presence in my life. The meaning of the Cross has always been clear to me. But why the Resurrection? I know I need forgiveness; I am not as easily excited about the change that is required in order for me to have new life. Join us and invite others to dive deeper into the power of the Resurrection, to empty us of ourselves and fill us with the presence of God for others.

In Christ,

Pr. Kurt

From the desk of

### The Heartbreak of Easter

Wait - before you read any further - please take a few minutes and watch this YouTube video: <u>Most - The Bridge</u>.

Pastor David Stier

This clip illustrates, in a powerful way, how the sacrifice of Jesus must have completely broken the heart of God the Father, and how Easter should also

include a time of expressing our gratitude not only to Jesus, but to the Father as well. It is also more than just a video. It's actually based on the true story of a man who made that exact sacrifice. Here's what really happened:

The father's name was John Griffith. He had lost all he had in the stock market crash. He moved to Mississippi where he took a job as bridge operator for a railroad trestle. In 1937, he was involved in a horrible accident. One day his eight year-old son, Greg, spent the day with his dad at work. The boy poked around the office and asked dozens of questions - just like little boys do. The bridge was over a river and whenever a ship came John had to open the bridge to allow the ships to pass. The day the boy was there with his father a ship was coming, so John opened up the drawbridge. After a moment or two he realized his son wasn't in the office and as he looked around, to his horror, John saw his son climbing around on the gears of the draw bridge. He hurried outside to rescue his son but just then he heard a fast approaching passenger train, the Memphis Express, filled with 400 people. He yelled to his son, but the noise of the now clearing ship and the oncoming train made it impossible for the boy to hear him. All of a sudden John Griffith realized his horrible dilemma. If he took the time to rescue his son the train would crash, killing all aboard, but if he closed the bridge, the boy would be crushed in the gears. John would sacrifice his son. He made the horrible decision, pulled the lever and closed the bridge. It is said, as the train went by John could see the faces of the passengers, some reading, some even waving, all of them oblivious to the sacrifice that had just been made for them.

This past month over a billion people will have celebrated Easter. We celebrate the fact that Jesus Christ came back from the dead after paying the ultimate price for our sins. We celebrate the fact that salvation is available through trusting in the risen Savior of the world. But even though we celebrate, sometimes we forget. More than one sacrifice was made on the hill called "The Skull," where Jesus hung on the Cross and poured out His life. There was also a Daddy. He watched in heaven as His precious Son was spit on, insulted, tortured, and finally murdered by people who had no idea who they were killing. The heart of God the Father must have been shattered into a million pieces as the land grew dark and Jesus cried out to His Papa:

Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last." (Luke 23:46)

That's why we need to remember and celebrate not only the earthly side of the gospel message, but the heavenly side as well:

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8) While we were on the train, headed for destruction... while we were addicts and selfish, sinful people... while we were clueless about the destiny of eternal souls... a Daddy chose to love us and choose to let His one and only Son be crushed by the gears of Crucifixion. As we go about the rest of this year, take some time to watch the video again. Let it remind you of the tragedy and triumph of that first Easter, and let it convince you that you have a heavenly Daddy that loves you too much to live without you.

#### God showed His amazing love by sending Jesus to die for our sins.

In His Awesome Grip,

aka, Pastor Dave Stiel





The Napervoice Spring Concert is coming up on Sunday, April 21 at 4 pm at Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville. They will present

"Wonderful World: Great Music from Six Continents."

Go to napervoice.org for more information and to purchase tickets. Please mention Herb Alexander's name so he receives credit for your purchase.



Join the Messiah team and walk for the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) on **May 4** at 9 am at the Judson Church at Black & Infantry in Joliet. The PRC holds only two fundraisers per year to sustain their funding and continue to support mothers and children. PRC is 100% donor-supported, and they offer their services completely free of charge. In 2023, the Will County PRC provided:

- 497 pregnancy tests
- 659 ultrasounds
- 278 spiritual discussions
- 729 HOPE mentorship classes

Please contact me at 815-931-1427 to sign up for the walk.



Stewardship Director



Thank you for being a beacon of hope!



Sunday, **April 21**, 9 am - 1 pm. Register here:





### Parents, mark your calendars!

Messiah's Youth Choir will hold extra rehearsals in April:

April 14 & 21

We perform during the 9:30 service on April 28.

Please be sure choir members wear their choir shirts for our performances! April 28 will be our final performance until we resume in September.



Messiah's newest Life Group, Sing Praise, kicks off on **April 13**! Are you passionate about worship and prayer? Are you seeking a community where you can dive deeper into your faith through blended worship experiences? Look no further!

Sing Praise is dedicated to creating a space where individuals can come together to worship in a blended style, combining contemporary and traditional elements to create a dynamic and uplifting atmosphere. Whether you love to sing, play an instrument, or simply want to soak in the presence of God, you'll find a home here. All are welcome, regardless of background or experience level. For more info, reach out to Justin Brown at worship@mlcjoliet.org.

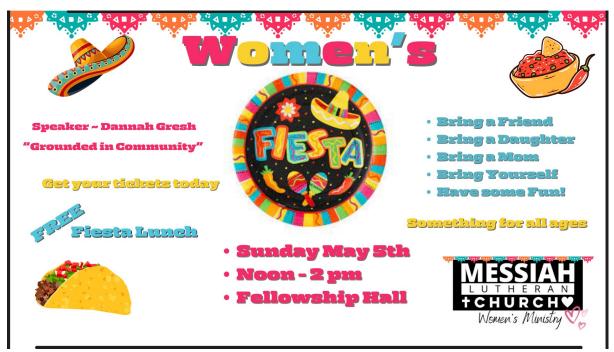


May 17-19, Spring Church Family Camping Trip (this is NOT Memorial Day Weekend). \$50 deposit for RV sites due w/ reservation request.

**Aug. 30-Sep. 2**, 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Labor Day Church Family Camping Trip. \$100 deposit required for RV Labor Day reservations, due by Feb. 28.

Oct. 11-14, Fall Church Family Camping Trip (Columbus weekend).

Our prayer is that all three will be at Mendota Hills Campground. It's just over an hour away from MLC. People can join us just for the day on Sat. or Sun., if they wish. 5



#### Ladies of Messiah - Please mark your calendars!

#### YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE INVITED TO JOLIET AREA CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S



"SURPRISE PARTY!" LUNCHEON at Messiah Lutheran Church Wednesday, April 17, 11:30am-1:30pm, \$20.00 inclusive

Featuring Elwood Gardner Ukulele Strummers bringing euphonious tunes for our pleasure!

Guest speaker Lee Ann Terry from Peru, IL will share how to embrace the unexpected surprises in life with a positive attitude and peace in her talk entitled, "A Surprise Party!".

**RSVP by April 10** by contacting Barb at 815-439-2076 or <u>mrs.brutus56@gmail.com</u>, or Sonya at 815-727-1626.

"Joliet IL Christian Women's Connection" - Like us on Facebook! Next luncheon Wed., May 15 www.stonecroft.org



### **Giving Statements**

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

### **HELP WANTED!**

With the many events and activities in our church building, we are constantly setting up and taking down tables, chairs, and more to fit the varying needs of our own ministries as well as outside groups. We are looking to form a few teams to help manage these needs, as well as a "special events crew" for larger undertakings. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in helping with, please reach out to Kate at stumin@mlcjoliet.org.

We are also hoping for a few volunteers to take turns updating the messages on our outdoor sign. This is a small commitment of an hour every month or two and goes smoother if you work with a partner. Please reach out to Vicki at <u>office.manager@mlcjoliet.org</u> or Judi at <u>publicrelations@mlcjoliet.org</u>.



Feel free to call the church office if you'd like more info!



# Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Join the Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir sings at the 9:30 Sunday services, from September through May, with special music at services during Advent, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 7:15-8:45 pm.

When the Children's Choir is performing, we perform at the 8 am service.

We are always looking to welcome new members and hope to continue to grow this ministry at Messiah! There are no formal audition requirements, and being able to read music is not an issue... you will learn your part from practice and from hearing other voices in your section!

> For more information please contact our Sanctuary Choir Director, Herb Alexander, at <u>halex12240@gmail.com</u>.



Volunteers are needed to serve dinner to needy people at Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Joliet. The commitment is from 5:30-7:00 pm on the second Monday of each month.

Food donations are also needed. Sign up in the Narthex or online at: mlcjoliet.org/life-groups.

Messiah members will be serving at Daybreak on Monday, April 8.







### 2024 LITTLE GALILEE CHRISTIAN CAMP SUMMER SCHEDULE

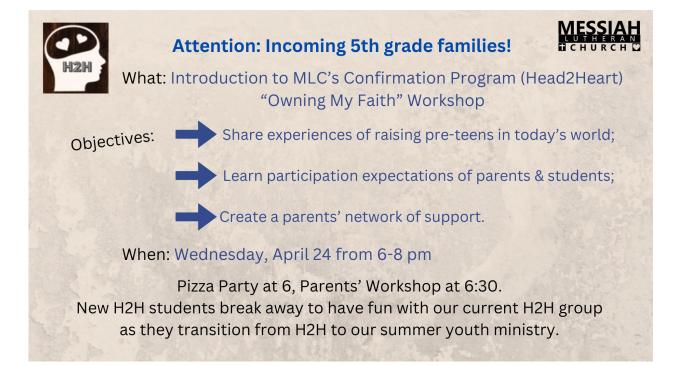
REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 4 Cost increases after June 1, 2024.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, JUNE 23-28 STUDENTS ENTERING 6TH-9TH GRADES IN FALL '24, JULY 7—12



## MYSTERY ISLAND VBS AT MESSIAH JULY 15-19, 2024

Grab your sunscreen and get ready for a taste of paradise as you track down the one true God at Mystery Island! Registration information coming in April.



# **COMING EVENTS FOR YOUTH & TEENS**



Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade: Join us on Wednesday nights, 6:30-8 pm!

**April 17** will be our final Messiah Kids Wednesday as we break for summer. We'll resume in the fall!

Questions? Contact Beth Hohisel <u>bhohisel@hotmail.com</u> or 815-735-7897.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school continues at 9:30 am for ages preK-5th grade.

#### MESSIAH KIDS REMIND GROUP

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

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

It will be used to send reminders and notifications about Sunday school and any events we have planned. Contact Kimber Drummond at cemlcjoliet@gmail.com with questions.

#### MESSIAH KIDS SUNDAY (Sundays at 11:00 am)

Messiah Kids is for all kids, grades K-5th, and takes place during the 11:00 am service! Here's how it works: You will check in like you do for Sunday school at the computer in the Narthex. Then, just before the sermon, the kids will be dismissed and can leave to be with their friends. They will meet leaders in the Narthex and head to the Family Life Center (FLC) for Bible study, worship, and games. **MK11 team members are needed!** Please sign up in the Narthex, or see Leslie or Pastor Dave Stier to get involved.



Stay-N-Play is a weekly playgroup for children five and younger that meets in the Family Life Center (FLC) on Tuesday mornings from 9:30-

11:30. This group is open to everyone in the community. Parents/caregivers must stay to keep an eye on their children. Coffee (for adults) is provided. Please come join us for some fun!

# MESSIAH STUDENT MINISTRIES

**<u>SUMMER CAMP</u>** information on "STAND: Put on the Full Armor of God" can be found on pg. 8.

#### HEY HIGH SCHOOLERS! SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Perhaps you are old enough to start reading fairy tales again? Join us for Sunday Bible Time at 9:30 in classroom 204 upstairs. We will journey into Narnia, get to know the fictional characters, and connect them with the truth of Jesus.

#### HEAD 2 HEART

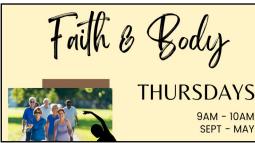
H2H (otherwise known as Youth Group or Confirmation) meets on Wednesday evenings during the school year. All 6th-8th graders are welcome! H2H wraps up on **April 24** with our end-of-season Pizza Party at 6 pm.

#### <u>SALT</u>

Wednesday evenings, High Schoolers meet from 6:30-8 pm. Come at 5:30 and join us for Family Dinner most Wednesdays (Soup Suppers during Lent) in Fellowship Hall, followed by games in the FLC, or get your homework done in between – help is available if you need it!

If you have questions, comments, or are looking to connect regarding youth news, events, ministries for students in 6-12th grades, please don't hesitate to reach out to Kate Richmond via email <u>stumin@mlcjoliet.org</u> or call the church office.

# <u>OPPORTUNITIES – GET INVOLVED!</u>



Our Faith & Body group is dedicated to helping each other to improve our health. We meet September through May in the FLC from 9-10 am for walking, stretching and faith-building time. There is no cost. Please register on the Messiah website under Faith & Body. Questions? Contact Sherri at 815-741-4488 or email <u>bookkeeper@mlcjoliet.org</u>.

#### DAYBREAK SHELTER

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner to needy people at Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Joliet. The commitment is from 5:30-7:00 pm on the second Monday of each month. A team of Messiah members meet at the shelter to set up and serve dinner. Food donation needs include canned fruit cocktail, juice, potato salad, buns, baked beans, and cookies. Sign up in the Narthex. **Messiah members will be serving at Daybreak on Monday, April 8.** 

#### PRAYER TEAM (Thursdays at 10:15 am)

Prayer Team meets in-person in the Fireside Room on Thursday mornings. Come join in the privilege of praying for others! See Pastor Stier for more information.

#### **3M MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

Hey guys need a break from the hassle of life? Join us as we spend an hour and a half in God's Word. Add your voice to the conversation. No judgment. No anxiety. No stress. Just men enjoying the fellowship of other men in the presence of God. Bring your Bible and your questions/comments and join us every 2nd & 4th Tuesday from 6:30-8pm. Need more information? Contact Mike Brown via email @ evangelism@mlcjoliet.org.

#### **MESSIAH QUILTERS**

The Messiah Quilters are meeting Tuesday, **April 16**, with a "bonus day" on May 7 (in addition to our regular May meeting) from 9 am – 12 pm. 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 put a quilt top together.

Our Messiah quilts are sent to Lutheran World Relief and then sent somewhere around the world to be used by someone less fortunate who is struggling with chronic poverty, illness, natural disaster and conflict. The quilts can be used as a shield against the cold and rain or for warm bedding. They can be tent, floor covering or a wrap to hold a baby on a mother's back. The need is great and we could really use your extra hands.

Contact Kathy Mueller 815-953-6601 at <u>scpbklane@aol.com</u> for more information or any questions you may have. Hope to see you on April 16!

#### **INSIGHT ADULT BIBLE STUDY**

Insight meets in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings at 9:30. Tom Bond and Kenyon Gjerde are currently leading the group with a new study series from "Sermon on the Mount." We'd love for you to join us!

#### MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

Calling all moms from pregnancy onward to join a supportive community of moms! Each meeting has a different topic related to parenting, and childcare is provided. We get to know each other more, watch a video of a MOPS speaker, have a discussion, and end with a devotional. In 2024, MOPS will meet the **second and fourth** Fridays every month September through May. Contact Amy at amy12miller@gmail.com with any questions.



#### POW! (PRAYER OUTREACH WARRIORS)

Join us for a time of silent or spoken prayer (as you are lead.) We spend time in adoration and thanksgiving to our Lord, and then pray specifically for our church and the leading of the Holy Spirit. You'll be amazed at how quickly this hour goes by! If you've never joined a prayer group, this is the one to start with. We meet <u>monthly</u> and have two options. We hope you will join us.

When: April 3 - the 1st Wednesday at 6:15 pm in the Sanctuary, or April 6 - the following Saturday at 10:00 am in the Gathering House

> Questions may be directed to Beth Hohisel 815-735-7897 or Cindi Souza 815-931-8478.

#### LIL LOVES MINISTRY



Lil Loves at Messiah aims to come alongside underserved parents and babies in the Tri-county area by providing **FREE** assistance with diapers and much needed baby supplies. Lil Loves is available on an appointment basis, and those interested can sign up at mlcjoliet.org/lil-loves-ministry. Just to give you an idea of how valuable this ministry is to our community, we were able to help **nearly 100 families** from June through December of 2023!

Messiah Gives Back!

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. Please note that we are **no longer able to accept baby formula or used clothing** (these items are happily accepted by Living Alternatives). If you'd like to donate, please place your items in the black bin in the Narthex, and call the church office for more information!

#### MEMORY BEARS

Our Memory Bear group makes teddy bears out of the clothing of people who have passed away, to comfort the grieving. We also make and sell other bears and dogs to raise money for supplies and children's charities.

If you are interested in joining our group, we would love to have you! We always need sewers but not all the jobs require sewing. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December) from 9 am - 12 pm in Fellowship Hall. Please call Cindi Souza at 815-931-8478 for more information. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, **April 23**.

#### MLC OFFICE HOURS

The office is staffed Monday-Friday from 9 am-3 pm. Saturdays and evenings are by appointment. Staff is always available by appointment, so please don't hesitate to ask!

#### MICRO PANTRY

Did you know that Messiah has a micro food pantry? This ministry is 100% donation-driven, and is maintained by the Evangelism Board. You can support this ministry through prayer, and through monetary or food donations. Contact the church office for more info, or leave your donations in the bin in the Narthex. EXPIRED ITEMS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

#### **PRAYER CHAIN**

Messiah uses an email-based (this group does not meet in person) Prayer Chain comprised of people who continually pray for our members, community, and nation in times of crisis. Prayers are confidential and anonymous, as much as possible. You can make a difference through the gift of your prayers! Contact Cindi Souza at regency118@comcast.net or Pastor Dave Stier at pastor.stier@mlcjoliet.org to become a partner.

#### O.W.L.S. (Older Wiser Loving Seniors)

O.W.L.S. meets the second Tuesday of every month from September through May, at noon. Entertainment, entrees, and beverages provided! Please sign up in the Narthex if you'd like to bring a side dish, salad, bread, or dessert. We hope to see you at our next luncheon on **April 9** as we enjoy chicken chunks donated by Chicken-N-Spice, mashed potatoes, gravy, mac'n'cheese, and coleslaw!

#### WAYS TO GIVE

We will have an offering time during the services, but you can give any time during the week using one of the following ways:

- 1) Go to: bit.ly/MLCGiving
- 2) Download the Church Center app on your phone or tablet and follow the instructions given.
- 3) Text your dollar amount (with a dollar sign in front of it) to 84321.
- 4) Mail your check to the church at: 40 Houbolt Rd., Joliet, IL 60431



# APRIL <u>ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS</u>

Lloyd & Summar Evans
Mark & Lori Burnetti
Jo - Jerald & Susan Kavich
Roger & Carol Gordon
Ray & Sharon Anderson
John & Jan Mueller
Richard & Lynn Tapella



- 1 Mikey Snider Lina Spielman
- **3** Nancy Bugnits
- 4 Mark Ferenzi
- 5 Jake Mahalik
- 7 Skylar Chaplin
- 8 Susan Kavich Alex Puckett Nathan Puckett
- 10 Patti Anderson Dan Stukel
- 12 Laurel Ling Izak Richmond
- 13 Mike Brown Bob Childers
- 14 Melanie Brozman
- 15 Aidan Cordon Marty Hohisel Doug Potts Dave Torkelson



- 16 Bob Zirzow
- 18 Dan Brozman Katy Hester Dana Stier
- 19 Lyla Luebbing
- 22 Judith Motley Richard Smrekar Bryn Werner
- 23 Bill Unyi
- 24 Marjorie McClure Tom Spielman
- 26 Crystal Harrison Sophie Sleyko
- 27 Carol Smrekar
- 28 Jeff Holmes
- 29 Stephanie Knudsen-Feehan Jack Maser Nathan Southcomb
- 30 Laura Snider



# **APRIL SERVERS**



#### Counters

- 04/07/24 Dan Stukel, Harold Stier
- 04/14/24 Gayle Arko, Wayne Lauffer
- 04/21/24 Stan Buhr, Joy McClintock 04/28/24
- Judy Fowler, Deb Dole

#### Ushers 8:00

- 04/07/24 Jerry Buchenau, Dan Stukel
- 04/14/24 Don Cyborski, Paul Allen
- 04/21/24 Wayne Lauffer, Bob Miller
- 04/28/24 Don Cyborski, Craig Stone

#### Ushers 9:30

- 04/07/24 Bill Unyi, Brandon Fiday
- 04/14/24 Jeff Holmes, Alan Costello
- 04/21/24 Roger Gordon, Brandon Fiday
- 04/28/24 Aimee Gipes, Alan Costello

#### Ushers 11:00

- 04/07/24 Gary Phillips, Brandon Fiday
- 04/14/24 Tom & Tammie Eigenbauer
- 04/21/24 Gary Phillips, Brandon Fiday
- Darryl Hoelscher, Brandon Fiday 04/28/24

#### **Communion Assistants 8:00**

- 04/07/24 Randy & Laurel Ling
- 04/14/24 Nancy Bertnik, Bev Korby
- 04/21/24 Jane Stukel, Bev Korby
- 04/28/24 Paul & Marvina Allen

#### **Communion Assistants 9:30**

- 04/07/24 Rob & Joy Hepburn
- 04/21/24 Rowan Hedden, Doug Potts

#### **Communion Assistants 11:00**

04/07/24 Tom & Lynn Bond 04/21/24 Donna Stier, Jane Costello

#### Readers 8:00

04/07/24 **Beth Hohisel** 04/14/24 Randy Lking 04/21/24 Paul Allen 04/28/24 Randy Ling

#### Readers 9:30

04/07/24 Marcy Vickers 04/14/24 Jeff Holmes 04/21/24 Jane Costello 04/28/24 Doug Potts

#### Readers 11:00

04/07/24	Tom Bond
04/14/24	Matthew Fiday
04/21/24	Donna Stier
04/28/24	Tom Bond

#### Greeters 8:00

04/07/24	Gerry & Pat Boe
04/14/24	Wayne Lauffer, Nancy Bertnik
04/21/24	John & Leah Kewenig
04/28/24	Bev Korby, needed

#### Greeters 9:30

04/07/24 Beth Hohisel, needed 04/14/24 Larry & Marcy Vickers 04/21/24 Darryl & Cindi Souza 04/28/24 two needed

#### Greeters 11:00

04/07/24	Roger & Carol Gordon
04/14/24	Brandon & Aubrey Fiday
04/21/24	Donna Stier, needed
04/28/24	two needed



40 Houbolt Rd. Joliet, IL 60431 (815) 741-4488



Interim Worship Coordinator Justin Brown Interim Tech Coordinator Nikolai Stier Interim Student Ministry Administrator Kate Richmond Children's Ministry Director Leslie McFarland Interim Office Coordinator Vicki Dallmann

8844-147-218

info@mlcjoliet.org

Organist Rose Ann Sochan

Choir Director Herb Alexander

Associate Pastor David Stier

Senior Pastor Kurt Hoover

Children's Choir Director Season Lawler