

Annual Congregational Meeting - January 28 at noon SAVE THE DATE!

From the desk of

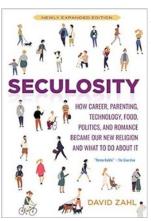


BUSY: Losing the Small 'r' in Religion

When Jesus shows up, you are going to discover where your allegiances lie - and you are (more likely than not) going to be pretty embarrassed about most of what you are doing or striving to be.

When Jesus shows up, your small 'r' religions, the expectations you put on yourself and others, and the thoughts of many hearts are revealed.

That is what God will be doing to us in this new year's worship series. Jesus will show up, as promised, and reveal the secular things in life we have somehow been coned into worshipping other than the Creator of those things. No one is exempt from this struggle.



And in this experience, we will identify with our neighbor who is tempted to define themselves and their children by the same false religions... food, romance, educations, children, technology and so on. Nationalism (7th), Parenting (14th), Work (21st), Fandom(28th), and Technology (4th) to be exact. I encourage you to purchase the book Seculosity (David Zahl) which we will be using as a resource.

No one is exempt from small 'r' religions dominating their life. Getting rid of capital 'R' religion of church family, even with its trappings, has not resolved the problem of humanities self-righteous struggle, it has simply expanded the many and various ways our neighbor will struggle to define themselves and their worth in this world.

Jesus, by name, is redemption and salvation. It is the worship of secular things from which we have been and always will be redeemed.

In Christ,

TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-11

When I was a kid, I lived just a few blocks from my elementary school. While classmates crowded into the noisy lunchroom and ate

room-temperature lunches, I serenely walked home to have my own self-prepared hot lunch.

The best part of my midday meal was that I could watch TV while I ate a grilled cheese sandwich and warm tomato soup. (It was good... really!)

My favorite program during lunchtime featured a young boy's imagination about future space travel, monsters and fighting giant robots. One day, as I chewed my sandwich and slurped soup, the young actor said something eloquent that has stuck with me through the years, "When I grow up, I want to discover new worlds that are so beautiful that they will have to invent new words to describe them."

Wow! What a thought!

As I have grown in the Christian life, I have encountered a Bible verse that seems to resonate with that boy's dream. But instead of talking about planets in our universe, the new world being described is heaven. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

In writing about heaven and the rewards that await us there, the Apostle Paul told us that the experience is too beautiful to describe in terms we can now understand. No human eye has yet seen it, nor have its sounds penetrated a human ear. Even our wildest dreams cannot visualize what God has lovingly prepared for those who know and love Him.

Do you look to the future with hope? The Bible teaches that one day we will journey to a new world. For those who have faith in Jesus, we have the assurance that the place He is preparing for us is so beautiful that words can't describe it.

In His Awesome Grip,

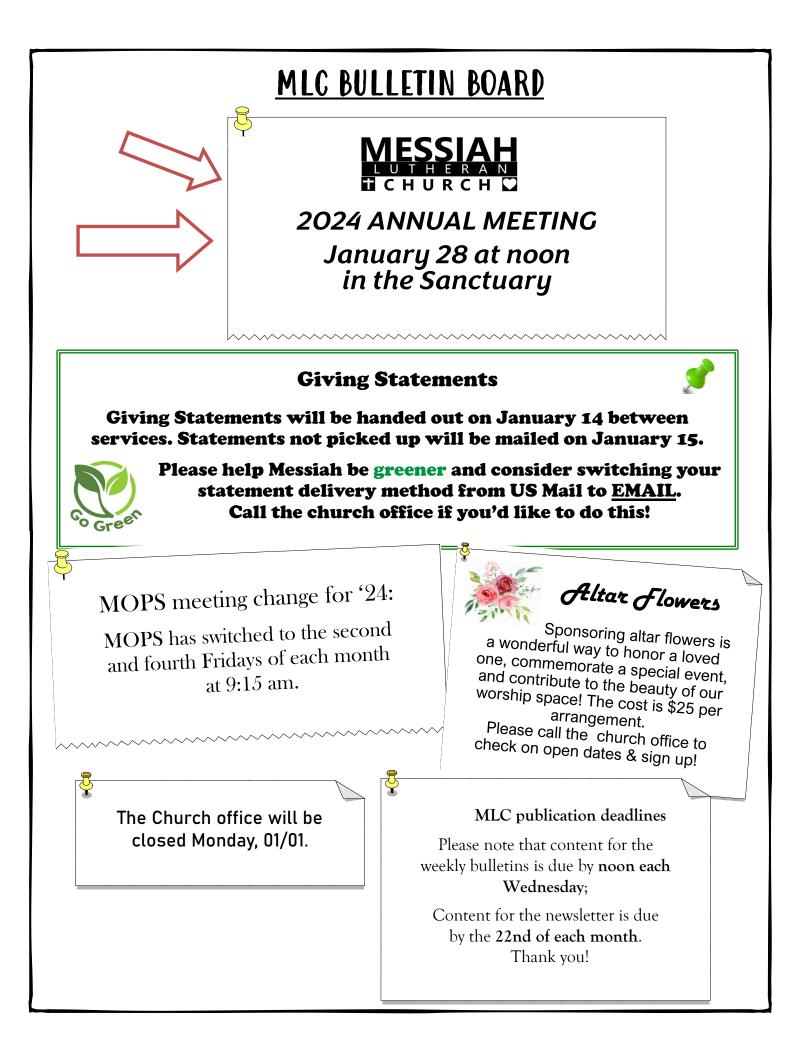
a.Ka. Pastor Dave Stie



From the desk of

Pastor David Stier

2





New sermon series for the new year!

"BUSY!" will be focusing on how God will be using our new year of worship to remove the idols we most often put in His place. As church involvement declines in the US, people are not losing faith... they are switching their faith to other things. God is here giving us a love for life WITHOUT making the things of life our religion!

How will YOU be losing your "r"eligion?

Sermon topics: Dec. 31- Busyness, Jan. 7 - Jesusland, Jan. 14 - Parenting, Jan. 21 - Work, Jan. 28 - Fandom, Feb. 4 - Technology, Feb. 11 - How Religion is Lost



By the grace of God, in 2023 we were still able to tithe 10% of what we received from the congregation to our benevolence partners, while fundraising for the lawsuit.

The Stewardship Committee ended up with \$4,000 that was in a fund that wasn't used in 2023. We distributed this money to five non-profits in December, in addition to our regular tithing.

Listed below is a breakdown of that distribution:

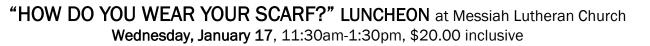
- \$1,000 went to St. Paul Lutheran Church (LCMC), Elma, NY, who had a fire in May 2023. They were repairing their church steeple and the whole wooden church structure caught on fire. They have been established for 170 years.
- \$1,000 to Pastor Paul in Myanmar. There is a need for an expansion or a larger church building. They are bursting at the seams with congregation members.
- \$1,000 to Pastor's Discretionary Fund as the balance was low. This is used for individuals who have a short-term need and nowhere else to turn.
- \$500.00 to Fellowship Bible Church in Joliet. They are a small, older congregation that is struggling. Despite their struggle, they donated \$500.00 to Save Messiah.
- \$500.00 to Morning Star Mission in Joliet. They reach some of our most vulnerable neighbors with nourishing meals and shelter. More then that, they help them rebuild their lives and start fresh.

Pat Burke

Stewardship Director



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



Marilyn Garapolo will show us different ways to wear a scarf. Each of us should bring a square scarf and a long scarf.

Marilyn Garapolo is from Plainfield, IL. When was the last time you had a good laugh? Marilyn shares the story of her childhood dream of traveling the world, and how her life of fashion and retail led her to having her own business.

RSVP by January 10 by contacting Barb at 815-439-2076 or mrs.brutus56@gmail.com, or Sonya at 815-727-1626. "Joliet IL Christian Women's Connection" - Like us on Facebook!

Next luncheon Wed., Feb. 21 www.stonecroft.org



COMING EVENTS FOR YOUTH & TEENS

MILE MARKERS OF FAITH

55

Let's PRAY! (Kindergarten +) January 21 This workshop for kindergarteners and their parent/guardian introduces and explores the gift of prayer; *why* we pray and *how* we pray. Parents will be encouraged in ways they can pray for their child and make prayer a vital part of their family life. The kids' workshop is filled with family fun, games and activities... kindergartener style! Offered once per year on <u>Sunday morning at 9:30</u>. This culminates in a special service of blessing following completion of the workshop. The workshop is January 21 and the presentation is January 28. Invite friends and family to be a part of this special Mile Marker in your child's life! Register at this link:

https://messiahlutheranchurch.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2084684

My New Bible Workshop (2nd grade +) February 4 & 11

This workshop for students and their parent/guardian explores the Bible, God's love letter to the world. Discussion, games, and activities teach Bible basics: how it was written, organized, how we use it, and highlights key stories and truths found within it. The workshop is offered once per year on <u>Sunday mornings at 9:30</u>. This is highlighted by a time during church services when parents place a Bible (a gift from MLC) in their child's hands. The workshop is February 4 & 11 and the presentation is February 18. Invite friends and family to be a part of this special Mile Marker in your child's life! Register at this link:

https://messiahlutheranchurch.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2084703

Sacrament Workshop First Communion (4th grade +) February 25 - March 24 In order to be prepared to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion and all of its benefits, 4th grade students and their parent/guardian are invited to participate in this five-session workshop, normally held during Lent. Older students who were previously unable to complete the workshop are also encouraged to attend. Hands-on activities help families grow in their understanding of God's coming to us in and through the sacraments of both Holy Communion and baptism. Offered once per year on Sunday mornings at 9:30, the workshop culminates in a special first Communion service on Maundy Thursday (just before Easter). The Maundy Thursday/ first Communion service is March 28. Invite friends and family to be a part of this special Mile Marker in your child's life! Register at this link:

https://messiahlutheranchurch.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2084658

Every child develops in their own unique way so, any child of any grade is welcome to attend any Mile Marker Workshop with their parent, if the parent feels this is a benefit to them and their child.

To learn more about Mile Markers of Faith, please go to: Mile Markers of Faith.



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

What is it? Formerly Awana, it's a fun night of worship, lessons, games, crafts, and connection – with the Bible and friends!

Extras Store nights, theme nights, getting to know your Bible.Registration \$15 per child. Maximum of \$45 per family.Questions? Contact Beth Hohisel bhohisel@hotmail.com or 815-735-7897.

NERF GAMES & BINGO - COMING SOON!

Still in the planning stages, but keep an eye out for details very soon!

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 McFarland 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>SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY</u> for 9th-12th graders meets from 9:30-10:30 in the Gathering House to have coffee/tea and fellowship, watch a short video, and discuss the topic of the week. Stop in and check it out!

HEAD 2 HEART

H2H (otherwise known as Youth Group or Confirmation) meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:15. All 6th-8th graders are welcome! Come at 5:30 and join us for Family Dinner (most Wednesdays) in Fellowship Hall. More info on page 5.





Wednesday evenings, High Schoolers meet from 6:30-8 pm. Come early for Family Dinner at 5:30 in Fellowship Hall, followed by games in the FLC, or get your homework done in between – help is available if you need it!

PLEASE NOTE THAT MKW, SALT AND H2H WILL NOT MEET ON JANUARY 3. WE RESUME ON THE 10TH.

MAFIA IS BACK!

Attention 6th-12th graders! In case you missed our awesome November Mafia Night - we'll be doing it again on Friday, **January 19** from 7-10 pm. Tell your friends and mark your calendars for a ton of fun! Also, bring your appetite... we'll be having a meal (usually pizza) and beverages. Please bring \$5 to help offset the cost of your meal.



What is MAFIA, you might be wondering? It's a mixture of tag, hide-and-go-seek, and capture the flag, with lots of running around! **Here's the catch** - It's in the dark with strobes and black lights! What a blast!

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 stumin@mlcjoliet.org or call the church office.



OPPORTUNITIES - GET INVOLVED!

NEW WOMEN'S MINISTRY LIFE GROUP

Would you like to see more Women Ministry events here at Messiah Lutheran? We would like to create a Women's Ministry Steering Life Group to plan for future activities and events. We will have a short informational meeting on Sunday, January 21, from 9-9:30 between services in Room 101 (off the Fellowship Hall). From this meeting we will determine the interest level and time commitment. Please contact Sherri Unyi in the church office if you are interested and can't make this meeting or have any questions.

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.

FAITH & BODY THURSDAYS

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 bookkeeper@mlcjoliet.org.

MESSIAH QUILTERS

We will next meet on Tuesday, **January 16** 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 to see what we do. If you are unable to join us and would like to sew at home, we have kits available.

Our Messiah quilts are sent to Lutheran World Relief and then sent to destinations around the world to be used by those less fortunate who are struggling with chronic poverty, illness, natural disaster, or 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 at 815-953-6601 at scpbklane@aol.com for more information. Hope to see you on **January 16**!

POW! (PRAYER OUTREACH WARRIORS)



You are invited to join a newly organized time of prayer for our church. It is in addition to the Thursday morning Prayer Team. This extra time of prayer will focus on inviting the Holy Spirit to lead and guide our church as we seek to be faithful to Jesus Christ and be known for sharing His love and teachings – both within our church family as well as outside our church walls. We will meet monthly to pray for our pastors and staff, leadership, ministries, life groups, those serving, outreach opportunities as well as

specific events (i.e., VBS, WinterBlast). We hope you will join us. We start in January! Attend either Wednesday evening or Saturday morning. Questions may be directed to Beth Hohisel (815) 735-7897 or Cindi Souza (815) 931-8478.

When: January 3 - the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. January 6 - the following Saturday at 10:00 am in the Gathering House.

MEAL TRAIN

We all know someone who may be overwhelmed during a difficult time. Perhaps an illness, surgery, loss of a family member or a job, or the challenge of a new baby. Messiah has formed a Meal Train for anyone who would like to prepare and deliver a meal to someone in need. To sign up for the Meal Train Team or request a meal, please visit mlcjoliet.org/meal-train.



DAYBREAK SHELTER



Daybreak Shelter



Can you spare 1-1/2 hours once a month to prepare, serve or donate at Daybreak Shelter? 2nd Monday 5:30 -7pm

Sign up to Serve, Prepare, Shop or Donate in the Narthex or online at https://www.mlcjoliet.org/daybreakshelter 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 meets 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 or online at: mlcjoliet.org/life-groups.

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

MESSIAH'S NEW DRAMA TEAM

Curtain call for all would-be thespians! If you would like to be part of a new ministry here at Messiah, here's your opportunity. A drama team is being developed and you are invited to join. No try outs, no experience required. The only requirement is that you must be 14 years of age or older. Just bring your heart for sharing gospel truths through short skits. An informational meeting will be held on **January 7** at 12:15 pm in Fellowship Hall. Contact Mike Brown for more info.



<u>3M MEN'S BIBLE STUDY RESUMES</u>

Men's Bible Study is back starting January 9. Bring your Bible (paper or digital) and join us from 6:30 - 8 pm the second and fourth Tuesdays each month in the Fireside Room. We are going to start in Genesis.

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/lilloves-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!

Lil Loves thanks you for your donations of:

*Diapers and Pull-ups *Baby Lotion

*Wipes *Baby Wash/Shampoo
*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!

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.



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-12:00 pm in

Fellowship Hall. Please call Cindi Souza at 815-931-8478 for more information. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 23.

MICRO PANTRY

Did you know that Messiah has a micro food pantry? This ministry is 100% donationdriven, 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.

INSIGHT ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Insight meets in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings at 9:30. We'd love for you to join us!

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 January 9!

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!

WAYS TO GIVE

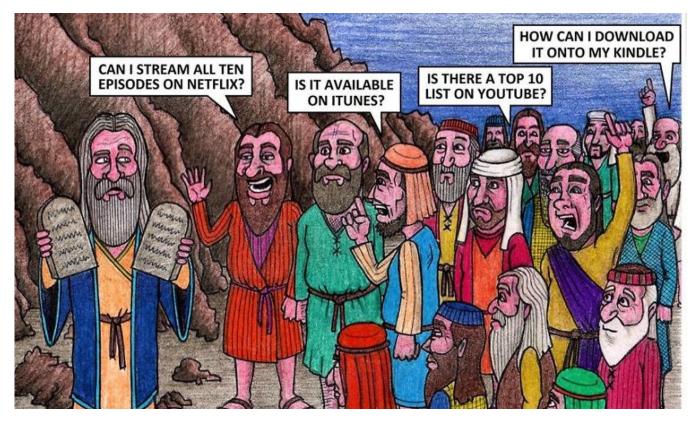
We will have an offering time during the services, but you can give any time during the week using one of the following ways:

- 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

PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER - HIRING ANNOUNCEMENT

PRC is reaching out to their ministry partners to share that they are hiring a new Mobile Nurse Manager. Meanwhile, prayers are appreciated that God sends the next right person for the role. We're hoping to hire in early 2024. Here's a bit about the position:

The Mobile Nurse Manager would serve the mobile clinic that operates in Bolingbrook and surrounding communities, preferably 32 hours per week. It requires a graduate of an accredited nursing program or appropriate sonography training program. Licensure/ Certification: Current Registered Nurse Licensure in the State of Illinois or holds a current RDMS certification with an OB/GYN specialty. CPR/BBP certifications (will provide training). For more information, go to: https://laprc.bamboohr.com/careers/48



A note from Messiah's Evangelism Director... What's It Like To Go On A Mission Trip?

Messiah is in the process of developing an overseas mission trip for 2025. Ever wonder if overseas missions was for you? Well I have good news! If you are a Christian, this is for you. Every Christian has been given a directive (command) by Jesus Himself to go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Therefore, if Jesus has directed us to do so, than He will provide for all we need to make it happen. But only when we step outside the boat like Peter did with our eyes focused on Jesus, will we be able to do what seems, to us, impossible.

Over the next few months I am going to share excerpts from my mission journal about the Dominican Republic mission trip I took with our youth in the summer of 2017. For the most part I am going to share exactly what I had written along with some retrospective thoughts as well. I will attempt to chronicle the days leading up to, including times of training and fundraising. Then we will review what it was like from day one until I returned home, and the days that followed. Hopefully, revealing how God responded when I trusted Him and stepped out of the boat.



My intention is to encourage someone who may be apprehensive about stepping out in faith to answer the call of every Christian to share their faith.

Mike Brown

Evangelism Director

Part One of Mike's Mission Trip Journal will be sent via email under separate cover. Keep an eye on your inbox!



JANUARY <u>ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS</u>



18 - Darryl & Cindi Souza 27 - Roger & Linda Gordon



- 1 Brent Cariveau Lloyd Evans
- 2 Phil Pribnow Brett Robertson
- **3** Cathy Allen Mike Wegemer Jordan Weller
- 5 Juliette Burnetti Cindy Moauro
- 6 Beatrice Winterstein
- 7 Suzanne Prybell
- 8 Haylie Bernhard Wayne Lauffer Roger Liberty Peggy Stone

- 9 Terry Anderson
- 10 Jamie Enix Eldegard Hoffman
- 11 Andrew Kittler Caroline McCauley
- 12 Andy Anderson
- 13 Sarah Prybell
- 14 Eric Bowman
- 15 Terry Anzalone Kathryn Boe
- 16 Alexis Bowman Charles Bugnits
- 18 Gail Crisp
- 22 Logan Gipes Dave Stier
- 24 Debby Gruber
- 25 Kristi Boe
- 26 Olivia Boe Rayna Boe Jamie Bowman Victoria Holmes
- 28 Gayle Arko Debbie Puckett
- 30 Laurel Alexander Judy Fowler

JANUARY SERVERS

Counters

- 01/07/24 Stan Buhr, Joy McClintock
- 01/14/24 Judy Fowler, Norina Schroth
- 01/21/24 Dana Stier, Deb Dole
- 01/28/24 Harold Stier, Dan Stukel

Ushers 8:00

- 01/07/24 Jerry Buchenau, Dan Stukel
- 01/14/24 Paul Allen, needed
- 01/21/24 Wayne Lauffer, Bob Miller
- 01/28/24 Craig Stone, needed

Ushers 9:30

- 01/07/24 Bill Unyi, Brandon Fiday
- 01/14/24 Jeff Holmes, Brandon Fiday
- 01/21/24 Roger Gordon, Brandon Fiday
- 01/28/24 Aimee Gipes, Alan Costello

Ushers 11:00

- 01/07/24 Gary Phillips, Brandon Fiday
- 01/14/24 Tom & Tammie Eigenbauer
- 01/21/24 Gary Phillips, Brandon Fiday
- 01/28/24 Darryl Hoelscher, Brandon Fiday

Communion Assistants 8:00

- 01/07/24 Bev Korby, Nancy Bertnik
- 01/14/24 Randy & Laurel Ling
- 01/21/24 Julie Bajt, Christy Werner
- 01/28/24 Paul & Marvina Allen

Communion Assistants 9:30

 01/07/24
 needed

 01/14/24
 needed

 01/21/24
 needed

 01/28/24
 needed

Communion Assistants 11:00

01/07/24	needed
01/14/24	needed
01/21/24	needed
01/28/24	needed



Readers 8:00

 01/07/24
 Deb Dole

 01/14/24
 Randy Ling

 01/21/24
 Greg Dole

 01/28/24
 Caleb Winters

Readers 9:30

01/07/24Sherri Unyi01/14/24Jane Costello01/21/24Doug Potts01/28/24Marcy Vickers

Readers 11:00

01/07/24	Kate Richmond
01/14/24	Matthew Fiday
01/21/24	needed
01/28/24	needed

Greeters 8:00

01/07/24Nancy Bertnik, needed01/14/24Bev Korby, needed01/21/24Beth Hohisel, needed01/28/24Gerry Boe, needed

Greeters 9:30

01/07/24Larry & Marcy Vickers01/14/24Darryl & Cindi Souza01/21/24Darryl & Cindi Souza01/28/24Beth Hohisel, needed

Greeters 11:00

01/07/24Roger & Carol Gordon01/14/24Brandon & Aubrey Fiday01/21/24Donna Stier, needed01/28/24Donna Stier, needed



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



Senior Pastor Kurt Hoover Associate Pastor David Stier Organist Rose Ann Sochan Interim Tech Coordinator Nikolai Stier Interim Worship Coordinator Justin Brown

Choir Director Herb Alexander Children's Ministry Director Leslie McFarland Interim Student Ministry Administrator Kate Richmond Interim Office Coordinator Vicki Dallmann info@mlcjoliet.org 815-741-4488