

The MESSENGER

A faithful, serving community joyfully sharing Christ's love.

Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund, Pastor
Church phone: 201-337-4900
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SUNDAY WORSHIP
Worship Service 10:00 am
In person, live streamed and posted on YouTube
March and April, 2024

NUMBER 2

From Pastor Courtney

When Jesus called the disciples, he invited them into community saying "Come and see" or "Come and join!" When our church began 65 years ago, I tend to think our members were invited into this community in a similar way. Come and see the message of God's love in this place! Come and join this new community that brings people together from near and far to be God's hands and feet in the world!

65 years later we continue to work on how we invite others into this community. I wonder how we can follow the model of Jesus by saying to those around us "come and see" or "come and join!"

Our world and society have moved away from actually engaging with one another. We shy away from the question "How are you?" not wanting to actually share how we are doing because it makes people uncomfortable. We find it easier and faster to make social media posts, announcements and hang sign ups rather than invite one another to "come and see."

I wonder what it would look like to truthfully answer the question "how are you" with an honest response, and to spend time praying together. I wonder how much more engagement and participation we might have if we invite one another to participate in the activities we are excited about. I wonder what our community would look like if we started saying "come and see" or "come and join" to each other.

Two recent examples of this come to mind. We had an amazing turnout at the Community Table hosted by the Ponds Food Pantry in February. It was a great opportunity to meet people in the community and gather around food. I also believe we had such a good turnout because people invited each other to attend the event. It wasn't just a sign or an announcement, but there was a personal invitation behind it. I also think about our ShopRite collection on Super Bowl Sunday. Many volunteers helped to invite people in the community to donate cash or food for the Center for Food Action. The results were incredible – over \$1000 and tons of food. I believe

this event was so successful because we talked to people, invited them to help the community, and thanked them for their consideration whether or not they participated. Come and see. Come and join!

What would it look like to invite friends or neighbors or members of the community to come and join for worship on Sunday or Wednesday, or to participate in our Palm Sunday (3/24) & Easter Sunday (3/31) festivities. That personal ask might mean more to someone than an ad or social media post.

What would it look like to invite friends or neighbors or members of the community to come and join in our Benevolence of the Month projects such as God's Global Barnyard or our collection of baby items for mothers in need? How much more of an impact might we make by talking to people, explaining what we are doing, and inviting them to get involved?

As part of the Discipleship and Witness team for the NJ Synod, I've been exploring what it means to invite people into relationship with God and into community centered on God's love. No matter what books or resources or studies I read, it always comes back to the importance of making that personal invitation or ask. Studies show, people are more likely to come to church or a church event if they're invited by a member than if they're invited by the pastor or see a sign/flyer/social post.

We have had 65 years of ministry here at Messiah. As we look to the next 65 years, I wonder how we might have a stronger community if we focus on asking and inviting people to get involved.

If you made it to the end of this article, then here is your invitation. I invite you to get curious about the ways we can continue to grow our ministry here at Messiah and lay the foundation for many more years of service, faith formation, and community rooted in God's love as we invite others to "Come and See".

+ God's Peace,
Pastor Courtney

What's Happening at Messiah

Saturday, March 2, 9:00am: Property Work Day

Sunday, March 3, 10:00 am Celebrating our Anniversary during worship

Mid-week Lenten Services – 7:30 pm, March 6, 13, and 20 on-site and online

Saturday, March 9, Turn clocks ahead one hour

Sunday, March 17, Council installation during worship service

HOLY WEEK



Palm/Passion Sunday March 24:
Worship at 10:00 am with palms and reading of The Passion According to Mark



Maundy Thursday, March 28:
Worship at 7:30 pm



Good Friday, March 29:
Tenebrae Worship at 7:30 pm



Easter Sunday, March 31:
Worship at 10:00 am

All services are onsite and online.

Monday, April 1, Church Office Closed

Saturday, April 6, 9:00 am Property Work Day

Friday, April 19, 6:30-8:00 pm Service Night at St. Albans in Oakland

Sunday, April 21, Baby Shower following worship

Anniversary Worship Service: Sunday March 3rd

Join us for a special worship service on Sunday, March 3rd as we celebrate 65 years of Messiah.

Council Installation Orientation

Join us on March 17th as we install our new council members during worship. Following the service, the council will gather for a time of orientation and learning. Please help us welcome and support our 2024 Council Members!

Church Council Highlights

February 20, 2024

- The Council approved the following reorganization:
 - o President: Eleanore Orman
 - o Vice President: Sue Boyce
 - o Treasurer: Karen Bell (off-council appointment)
 - o Secretary: Nancy Krause
 - o The remaining seats on the council are held by Linda Axtell, Nick DeRoda, Valerie Nicolosi, and Ron Rubner.
- Beginning in March, AA will use the Narthex every Tuesday evening for meetings.
- A committee has been formed to plan the 65th anniversary celebration this year. If you are interested in helping, please see Nancy Krause.
- We received letters from the NJ Synod approving our application for the grant for the vegetable garden improvements for \$3,100.

Communion Assistants Needed

We are starting to change how we do communion. Starting on March 3rd – the first and third Sunday of the month, we will offer the option for you to receive communion elements of a wafer and grape juice at the altar rail. The prepackaged elements will still be available and we will continue to offer the opportunity to commune from your seats or using those elements at the altar rail. If you are interested to learn about and help serve as a communion assistant, please talk to Pastor Courtney. If we get enough people, we can start offering it on the other Sundays as well.

Lay Preaching

Have you ever wondered about the art of preaching? Are you interested in learning how to craft a sermon? Talk to Pastor Courtney about upcoming opportunities to learn and practice and even try out preaching for yourself!

Outreach

March BOM: ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger works to provide immediate relief to those who are hungry, as well as work to meet basic needs and recognize universal human rights to food. They seek to connect people with the resources they need to produce food and grain, access to clean water, education, health care, and sources of income, to create long-term sustainable change.

Part of ELCA World Hunger is the program Good Gifts where you can donate animals and tools that will directly benefit families in need around the world. An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell at market.

This year we are asking that you prayerfully consider making a commitment or donation towards the purchase of an animal. Our goal as a congregation this year is to raise \$715, which is the cost of a family farm. Individual options range from \$10 for 10 chicks, \$30 for a piglet, and \$50 for a share of a fish farm.



Please look at the catalog in the narthex and pick up any of the ELCA World Hunger Resources: devotional, calendar, and piggy banks. All donations and animals will be blessed at the Easter service.

April BOM: First Choice Women's Resource Centers

Founded in 1985, First Choice Women's Resource Centers serve over 5,000 women, babies and students each year. They have resource centers located in Jersey City, Montclair, Morristown, Newark and New Brunswick, and they provide interactive Real Talk sexual education at local schools. They provide free services and education at all stages of life from sexual education, pregnancy, and parenting up to age 18 months old.

Messiah's Outreach Committee has several fun opportunities for you to support First Choice Women's Resource Centers, during the month of April.

Monthly Service Night at St. Alban's

Friday, April 19th, 6:30-8 pm

Volunteers will help make mini diaper cakes for the moms-to-be who receive support from First Choice. The service night volunteers may also help pack bagged lunches to benefit St Paul's Men's Homeless Shelter in Paterson.

Baby Shower at Messiah

Sunday, April 21, after worship

Join us after worship for light refreshments and fellowship time. Bring along unwrapped baby items that will be blessed and donated in early May.

We are putting together an Amazon Wish List for those who would like to purchase items that way. You are also welcome to go shopping on your own. We are looking for donations of:

Clothing size 0 to 18 months

Diapers

Toys

Homemade baby items: blankets, hats, booties, etc. (supplies are available at church!)

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

If you are feeling called to generosity, please consider a donation to Pastor's Discretionary Fund. This fund is used to provide support to people who need extra help. Over the last year, the fund has been used to help many both in our congregation and the wider community. If you have questions about donating or if you need extra financial support, please reach out to Pastor Courtney.

Olive Wood for Sale!

Pastors Courtney and Jonathan will be selling olive wood and olive oil products from Bethlehem. Rooted in traditions handed down through generations, these artisans face a precarious situation amid the current global halt in tourism. Deprived of a means to sustain their livelihoods, there is a looming risk that these skilled artists may be compelled to leave the Holy Land in pursuit of alternative opportunities, potentially leading to the extinction of time-honored handcrafts and traditions. If you are interested in learning more about what is available, talk to Pastor Courtney. More information will be forthcoming.

Calling all Thrivent Members

This year we are going to start a running tally throughout the year of the Thrivent Action Teams we use. As of March 1st, we used two (2) Thrivent Action Teams – that’s an additional \$500 towards ministry! Thank you to the Boyce and Rubner families for getting the Action Teams.

The application is easy and the results are invaluable as they help support Sunday School, Faith Formation, Outreach, Fellowship, or Special Event projects at church. Want to help out or have an idea? Talk to Pastor Courtney.

AA: Wholesale Miracles Group – Tuesday Nights at Church

On Tuesday evenings starting in March, we will open our building for AA meetings. These meetings are open to anyone interested in learning more about Alcoholics Anonymous and who could benefit from the community gathering.

Budget Report

To All Members of Messiah Lutheran Church,

Total Income in January was 14.5K versus expenses of \$16.K, resulting in a deficit of 1.5K. Dedicated Accounts decreased \$1.6K in January with a current balance of \$72.5K. There is a net decrease of \$1.6K since January 1st.

Cash Accounts (Checking and Savings) decreased \$3,600, from \$113.7K to \$110.1K in January. There is a net decrease of \$3,600 since January 1st.

Karen Bell
Treasurer

Year-to-Date January 2024

	Budget	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Income Accounts:			
Ministry at Messiah	16,633.71	13,866.03	14,032.00
Mission Support	758.34	627.00	475.00
Total Income	\$17,392.05	\$14,493.03	\$14,507.00
Expense Accounts:			
Ministry at Messiah	15,761.40	14,026.33	15,878.00
Mission Support	2,170.84	1,968.33	1,778.00
Total Expenses	\$17,932.24	\$15,994.66	\$17,656.00
Income Less Expense	(\$ 540.19)	(\$1,501.63)	(\$3,149.00)

March

3	10:00 am Messiah's Anniversary Worship Service 11:15 am Confirmation Class
4	6:00 pm Community Table at Ponds Reformed Church
5	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
6	7:30 pm Mid-Week Lenten Service
7	12:00 pm Lunchtime Bible Study 7:30 pm Band practice
10	Turn clocks ahead one hour – Daylight Savings Time Begins 10:00 am Worship Service
12	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
13	7:30 pm Mid-Week Lenten Service
14	10:30 am Executive Committee Meeting 12:00 pm Coffee and Conversation 7:30 pm Band practice
17	10:00 am Worship Ser Council Installation during worship service 11:15 am Confirmation Class Orientation after worship
19	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting 7:30 pm Church Council Meeting on Zoom
20	7:30 pm Mid-Week Lenten Service
21	12:00 pm Lunchtime Bible Study 7:30 pm Band practice
24	10:00 am Palm Sunday Worship Service
26	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
28	7:30 pm Maundy Thursday Worship Service
29	7:30 pm Good Friday Worship Service
31	10:00 am Easter Worship Service

April

1	Church Office Closed
2	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
4	7:30 pm Band practice
7	10:00 am Worship Service
9	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
11	11:00 am Executive Committee Meeting 12:00 pm Coffee and Conversation 7:30 pm Band practice
14	10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Confirmation Class
16	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting 7:30 pm Church Council Meeting on Zoom
18	12:00 pm Lunchtime Bible Study 7:30 pm Band practice
21	10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Baby Shower Event
23	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting
25	12:00 pm Coffee and Conversation 7:30 pm Band practice
28	10:00 am Worship Service Baby Shower Blessing During Worship 11:15 am Confirmation Class
30	6:30 pm Wholesale Ministry (AA) Meeting

Stewardship of Time & Talents for March, 2024

Serving in our Worship

	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24 Palm Sunday	March 28 Maundy Thursday	March 29 Good Friday	March 31 Easter Sunday
Service Time	10:00am	10:00am	10:00am	10:00 am	7:30 pm	7:30 pm	10:00am
Assisting Minister/Lay Reader	Jerri Angermueller	Valerie Nicolosi	Megan Rotella	Brigitte Albrecht	Eleanore Orman	Valerie Nicolosi	Joan Ludke
Communion Assistant(s)	Dom and Sofia Rotella	--	Dom and Sofia Rotella	--	--	--	--
Usher	Cesar Rios	Arnold Ludke	Don Brown	Ron Rubner	Arnold Ludke	Ron Rubner	Don Brown
Greeter	Brigitte Albrecht	Linda Axtell	Amy Ludke	Marilyn Rubner	Brigitte Albrecht	Amy Ludke	Megan Rotella
Altar Guild	Susanne Herbst & Marilyn Rubner	Brigitte Albrecht & Kristen Rios	Nancy Krause & Jerri Angermueller	Grace Slingerland & Amy Ludke	<i>Please volunteer</i>	<i>Please volunteer</i>	Brigitte Albrecht & Susanne Herbst
Flower Guild	Lent	Lent	Lent	Palms	---	---	Easter Flowers
Coffee Hour	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>
Video Tech	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda
Computer Operator/Counter	Cesar Rios & Ron Rubner	Eleanore Orman & Arnold Ludke	Linda Axtell & Joan Ludke	Alex Boyce & Brigitte Albrecht	--	--	Nancy Krause & Tony Baglieri
Coordinating Councilor	Ron Rubner	Eleanore Orman	Nick DeRoda	Linda Axtell	TBD	TBD	Sue Boyce

If you are unable to serve, please switch with someone and let the office know
by email or phone (201-337-4900) or note pad in office. Thank you!

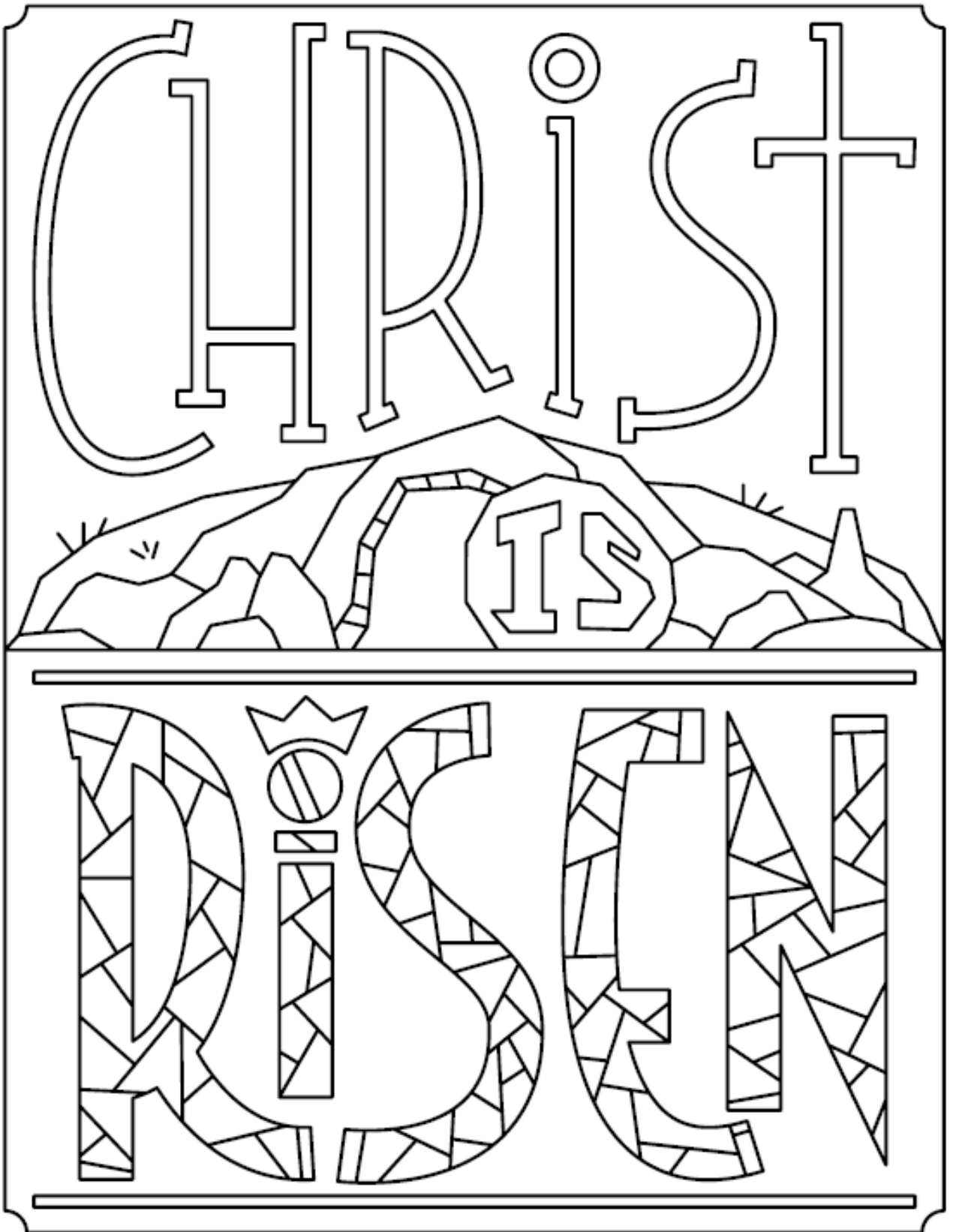
Stewardship of Time & Talents for April, 2024

Serving in our Worship

	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28	May 5
Service Time	10:00am	10:00am	10:00am	10:00am	10:00am
Assisting Minister/Lay Reader	Susanne Herbst	Brigitte Albrecht	Nancy Krause	Eleanore Orman	Joan Ludke
Usher	Cesar Rios	Arnold Ludke	Don Brown	Ron Rubner	Tony Baglieri
Communion Assistant(s)	Susanne Herbst & Valerie Nicolosi	Dom & Sofia Rotella	Nancy Krause & Brigitte Albrecht	Dom & Sofia Rotella	Arnold Ludke & Jerri Angermueller
Greeter	Brigitte Albrecht	Linda Axtell	Amy Ludke	Marilyn Rubner	Megan Rotella
Altar Guild	Marilyn Rubner & Kristen Rios	Nancy Krause & Jerri Angermueller	Grace Slingerland & Amy Ludke	Brigitte Albrecht & Susanne Herbst	Marilyn Rubner & Kristen Rios
Flower Guild	Easter Flowers	Michele Weintraub	Nancy Krause	Brigitte Albrecht	Joan Ludke
Coffee Hour	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>	<i>Please sign up</i>
Video Tech	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda	Alex Boyce/Nick DeRoda
Computer Operator/Counter	Cesar Rios & Brigitte Albrecht	Eleanore Orman & Arnold Ludke	Linda Axtell & Joan Ludke	Alex Boyce & Ron Rubner	Nancy Krause & Tony Baglieri
Coordinating Councilor	Valerie Nicolosi	Nancy Krause	Eleanore Orman	Ron Rubner	Linda Axtell

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Coloring Page



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Reprinted from the NEWSLETTER Newsletter

CHRISTIAN SYMBOL



SHAMROCK — St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead. Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them, “Is this one leaf, or three?” Inevitably, people replied that it was both, prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God: one God in three Persons — the Holy Trinity.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

A faithful, serving community

joyfully sharing Christ's love.

228 Ramapo Valley Road
Oakland, New Jersey 07436

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 am Worship Service

3/28 Maundy Thursday Worship 7:30pm

3/29 Good Friday Worship Service 7:30pm

3/31 Easter Sunday Worship Service

10:00am

All services on site, online and
posted on YouTube

