



The Messenger

Messiah Lutheran Church

228 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland, NJ 07436

July and August 2026

Our Mission

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

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Messiah Staff:

Vice Pastor: Rev. Kimberly Schmidt Cooper,
St. Timothy Lutheran

Office Administrator: Ashley Henion

Council Members: Valerie Nicolosi,
Victoria Boyce, Alex Boyce, Nick
DeRoda, Nancy Krause, Eleanore
Orman, Michele Weintraub, Tom White

Office Hours: Monday: 9am-12pm
Tues.-Thursday: 8am-12pm
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info@messiahoklandnj.org
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[@MessiahOaklandNJ](https://www.facebook.com/MessiahOaklandNJ)

Sunday Worship at 10:00 am et.
on-site, on Zoom and YouTube

From the Vice Pastor

Dear members of Messiah Lutheran Church,
It is my honor to be serving as your Vice Pastor until such a time as you get a pastor of your own. I wanted to take an opportunity to tell you about myself, since I won't be with you on Sunday mornings. I know that it might feel strange to reach out for pastoral care to someone you have never met!

I have been a pastor for 5+ years. St. Timothy Lutheran Church (Wayne, NJ) is my first call. I had never been to NJ before the day I was called to this church, but I definitely see God's hand in bringing me here.

My husband and I have been married for 25 years. He is from Georgia. I am from Ohio. We met in California. And spent the first 15 years of our marriage in Fort Worth, TX. He tells everyone that NJ is his favorite place he has ever lived. He very much enjoys the work he does at Marotta Controls. We have three daughters: Gloria (20), Magdalene (18), and Anya (15).

Before accepting the call here, I worked part-time as a chaplain at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center for four years, while I did my MDiv studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH. Before I began my candidacy for ministry I worked as a children's minister at an Episcopal Church in Texas. And before that, I did refugee and immigration work throughout Texas.

I pursued ordination, because I absolutely love sharing in the word of God and the sacraments. I think Lutheran churches are the best places to do both these things. I am praying that your ministry in Oakland thrives even during this time without a pastor. God will give you all that you need to live the gospel in your community.

Now that you know more about me, please feel free to call, text, or email me, if you find yourself in need of pastoral care. I look forward to getting to know you too!

With the love of Christ,
Pastor Kimberly
pastorkimberly@sttimothynj.org
551-315-7151

A Message from your Council President

In thinking about how to craft my message for this newsletter and scrolling through my phone, Psalm 119:114 popped up in my email today. ***"You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word."*** It seemed like God was sending me a message...truth be told, I'm getting lots of messages lately. We are heading into the summer months with lots of uncertainty to be sure. We are in search of a pastor and an organist too. We all have mixed opinions and feelings about how to move Messiah forward in finding the perfect fit for our congregation. This is an enormous weight on all of us, you, the council and me too. But we can carry that weight knowing that we can turn to God, our refuge, yours and mine, to help with the load. I know and you know, we have God looking over us in this process. He will guide us and the council to make the right decisions moving forward.

I want to update you and keep you all "in the loop". The personnel committee has been diligently interviewing candidates for the organist/music director position here at Messiah. I serve on this committee with Eleanore Orman, Jerri Angermueller and Sue Boyce. We will most likely invite candidates to come play a service for us soon. Special thanks to Jerri for filling in on those Sundays we don't have an organist and to the band for covering services once a month.

Our contact at the New Jersey Synod is Pastor Dean Brown. You will recall he led services on Sunday, May 24, 2026 and met with the council afterwards for well over two (2) hours guiding us through the entire call process. I have been in touch with him via email and telephone calls since then. In our search for a new pastor, the church council has been meeting for the past several weeks to compile a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) for Messiah. This is a document that, once completed, will be sent to the Bishop in the New Jersey Synod office to start the call process. Council members have devoted many hours thus far to compiling this report. We will continue meeting and hope to have the MSP fully executed soon.

Council members have also begun speaking with individuals to inquire about possibly serving on the call committee. At this point we are seeing if you have an interest in serving in this capacity; it does not mean that you are automatically on the committee. We want to have a varied group of people on the call committee...i.e., a new member of Messiah, a member with children (we want input from kids as well), a member who has been with Messiah for many years. We will be looking for men and women from all age groups. The committee will consist of six (6) members, one (1) of whom will be a current council member. If someone speaks with you, please pray for guidance and consider being part of the call committee. The final committee will be assembled after we've spoken to quite a number of congregants. This is an ongoing process and we ask for your continued prayers for God to lead us in the right direction.

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As always, should you have any questions or comments, please speak with me or any council member.

"I have put my hope in your word."

God is not surprised by what we are facing. We must trust in the Lord and rest knowing that He will bring us through this process to find the pastor and organist Messiah needs to head into the future. We may not know how things will turn out. But we know who holds us while we wait.

Yours in Christ,

Valerie Nicolosi, Council President

What's Happening at Messiah

Community Table at Ponds

July 6th and August 3rd

Camp Over

July 11th

Car Wash

July 12th

Council Meeting at 7:00 pm on Zoom

July 12th, 21st and August 18th

Book Discussion at 7:00 pm on Zoom

July 13th "Theo of Golden" by Allen Levi

Bible Study at 12:00 pm

July 16th

Property Work Day

August 1st

Office Closed

July 6th in observation of 4th of July

August 17th-21st Ashley Out of Office

Church Council Highlights

- ✝ Office Administrator Summer Hours & Vacation
Ashley Henion's vacation days (August 17–21) were approved, along with her request for summer hours: Monday–Thursday from June 22 through Labor Day.
- ✝ Organist Search
The personnel committee has been actively interviewing for a new organist.
- ✝ Pastoral Call Process & Parsonage Prep
The Council is currently working on the Ministry Site Profile as the next step in calling a new pastor. Council members will be gathering and organizing congregational input from the recent forum.

The parsonage is being refreshed (painting, kitchen and plumbing updates, general maintenance) so it will be ready to welcome the next pastor.
- ✝ The Council and Ashley are working to ensure pulpit supply and music coverage for all Sundays this summer, including guest pastors, lay leaders, and band Sundays.
- ✝ Upcoming Events: Campout & Car Wash
July 11 – Church Campout at Messiah, led by Linda Axell: open to children, youth, and adults.
July 12 – Girl Scout Car Wash (12–2 PM at Ponds) benefiting the Ponds Food Pantry with a portion also supporting the Girl Scout troop. Final time will be confirmed; watch the Sunday bulletin.
- ✝ Memorial Planting for Departed Members
Council approved moving forward with a memorial planting (tree/bush/flowering plant) in memory of members who have died in recent years so that the planting can honor our loved ones (likely in the spring planting season).

38th NJ Synod Assembly

The Synod Assembly was a strong witness to God with many voices singing Lutheran Hymns and joined in responses to the liturgy. Very inspirational! There were two resolutions that passed.

One, a “Resolution to Encourage Congregational Education and Action to Oppose the Influence of Christian Nationalism in Faith and Politics”. The resolution urges congregational education and advocacy to oppose Christian Nationalism, which fuses Christianity with American civic life, promotes racial and religious exclusion, and threatens secular governance. The resolution emphasizes biblical principles of love, justice, and welcoming others, calls for church-led efforts to counter heresy, and supports local advocacy for church-state separation with resources from the Anti-Racism Team.

Second, a “Resolution Requesting a Social Message on Artificial Intelligence (AI)”. The New Jersey Synod Assembly urges the ELCA to develop a social message on artificial intelligence, recognizing its profound impact comparable to historic revolutions. It highlights AI's promises of efficiency and access versus risks like unemployment, environmental harm, cultural chaos, illegal use, and accountability issues, emphasizing the church's role in addressing truth, vocation, personhood, and idolatry.

Victoria Boyce and I had a good day. They had a special lunch breakout session for younger people to be together which I thought was nice. There were many display tables there. The Beatitudes of Food Waste I particularly liked. I will post in the narthex.

Sincerely,
Nancy Krause

Worship

Every Sunday at 10:00 am et. on-site, on Zoom & YouTube

6th Sunday after Pentecost: July 5

Pastor Wayne Plumstead

7th Sunday after Pentecost: July 12

Valerie Nicolosi

8th Sunday after Pentecost: July 19

Pastor Carol Lindsay

Christmas in July: July 26

Service of the Word

10th Sunday after Pentecost: August 2

Nancy Krause

11th Sunday after Pentecost: August 9

Pastor Fred Lentz

12th Sunday after Pentecost: August 16

Pastor Fred Lentz

13th Sunday after Pentecost: August 23

Service of the Word

14th Sunday after Pentecost: August 30

Service of the Word

Transition Team Update

We have a lot of transitions coming in the next few months, here are a variety of ways you can help!

Come to Church! During this time, it's extra important to keep in touch with the community and take care of one another. A great way to do that is to keep coming to worship and programming events.

Music: Organist interviews are continuing. Many thanks to Jerri Angermueller for playing for us. Please continue to support the job search for a Music Director by sharing the position description. If you need the full document, see the church website or email the office.

Youth and Family Ministry

Sunday School

Thank you to the dedicated team of Sunday School teachers for a great school year which wrapped up on June 21st! Alicia Kurz, Linda Axtell, Megan Rotella, and Michele Weintraub led fun classes for our students each week. Sue and Victoria Boyce were guest teachers leading our ELCA World Hunger project during Lent. We appreciate you teaching and sharing God's love with our youngest prophets.

Campout

July 11th: Church Campover, led by Linda Axtell: open to children, youth, and adults. You may sleep in a tent, on a couch/chair, or just come for the evening activities and head home. Details will follow via email/announcements.

Benevolences of the Month

July: Strengthen Our Sisters

Strengthen Our Sisters shelter for women and children in West Milford is our July BOM. Please watch the weekly bulletin and emails regarding a collection for the shelter. Michele Weintraub will share an update about the shelter during announcements.

August: ELCA Global Mission

The core work of ELCA Global Mission is to walk with the more than 80 companion churches in other countries to participate in God's reconciling mission through proclamation and service. We share our gifts and talents while receiving and learning from the witness of our global siblings in Christ. ELCA Global Mission includes the programs of ELCA Missionaries, ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission, and International Leaders. Messiah directly supports the work of missionary Pastor Kristin Engstrom (serving in Madagascar).

On June 7, Pastor Engstrom led the worship service and joined us for a delightful coffee hour afterwards. She presented the congregation with a lovely handmade thank you note along with a beautifully crafted, two-toned wooden cross with praying hands. This is on display in the church office.

Ponds Food Pantry

Ponds Food Pantry continues to serve approximately three times the number of guests as it did in early 2025. Ponds is blessed to have Messiah Lutheran as a partner for both fresh produce from our Community Garden as well as the generous weekly non-perishable donations our congregation provides. Thank you for your ongoing support!! Toilet paper and toiletries such as soap, shampoo, and deodorant are always needed. Donations of cash or ShopRite gift cards are appreciated if you are not up for shopping. There is an Amazon Wish List that allows you to ship donations directly to the pantry. Please contact Michele Weintraub with questions: pantrydirector@pondsnj.org

Fellowship

Sundaes on Sunday

"Sundaes on Sunday" for graduates and the congregation was held on June 28. Graduates were acknowledged that day with a bulletin insert as well as during the church service.

Mother's and Father's Day

We once again collected for Pastor's discretionary fund for both Mother's Day and Father's Day and included an honor/memory of names in the bulletin.

Book Club

Join us for a lively discussion on Zoom at 7 pm. Please check your local libraries to borrow the books or purchase the books for your home bookshelf. If you have any suggestions for books or questions at all, speak with Valerie.

July 13th: "Theo of Golden" by Allen Levi

Faith Formation

Noontime Bible Study

Join the Thursday Adult Bible Study group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 12:00 p.m. either on-site or on Zoom. The next date will be on July 16th. We will be returning to the book **A is for Alabaster**. If you need a copy, check the church library or let Joan or Eleanore know.

July 16th: J is for Joseph

Outreach

Car Wash

July 12th: Girl Scout Car Wash 12–2 PM at Ponds benefiting the Ponds Food Pantry with a portion also supporting the Girl Scout troop. Final time will be confirmed; watch the Sunday bulletin.

Baptism Anniversary Corner

We don't always take time to remember, reflect, or celebrate the anniversary of our baptism so we are including them in our newsletter. The promises made at baptism are a lifelong commitment to help one another grow in the Christian faith and life – not just those baptized, but all those who are part of Christian community. Take time this day, week, or month to say a prayer or give thanks for your baptism.

*Over the years many baptism dates have not been recorded or were lost in records. If your baptism date is wrong in the newsletter, it's wrong in our records! Please let us know and we will update it. If you don't know your date, we will celebrate you on either January 1st or June 1st.

July Baptism Anniversaries

1- Tom W.
Beth Z.
20-Sabrina R.
23- Hailey K.
27- Francesca R.

August Baptism Anniversaries

1- Kenneth A.
21- Natalie B.
25- Ethan B.
30- Jack W.
Allie W.

Budget Report

From the Treasurer

Please continue to support our ministry with your offerings during these summer months.

Regards,
Alex Boyce

May 2026 Finance Report				
	Monthly		Year to Date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income	\$18,479.41	\$18,780.58	\$94,097.13	\$101,197.11
Expenses	\$19,736.06	\$14,122.54	\$98,603.50	\$94,069.79
Total	(\$1,256.65)	4,658.04	(\$4,506.37)	\$7,127.32

Note: Income figures include contributions from the nursery school and investment income.

July



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jun 28 5th Sunday after Pentecost Sundaes on Sunday 10:00am Worship 1:00pm Pride Event at Elks	29 7:00pm Council Meeting on Zoom	30 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Council Meeting on Zoom	Jul 1	2 7:30pm Band Practice	3	4 Property Work Day
5 6th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	6 6:00pm Community Table: Ponds, Reformed Church, 341 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland NJ 07436	7 6:30pm AA Meeting	8	9 7:30pm Band Practice	10	11 Camp Over
12 7th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship 12:00pm Car Wash at Ponds Reformed Church 7:00pm Council Meeting on Zoom	13 7:00pm Book Club on Zoom	14 6:30pm AA Meeting	15	16 12:00pm Bible Study 7:30pm Band Practice	17	18
19 8th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	20	21 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Council Meeting on Zoom	22	23 7:30pm Band Practice	24	25
26 9th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	27	28 6:30pm AA Meeting	29	30 7:30pm Band Practice	31	Aug 1 Property Work Day

August



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jul 26 9th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	27	28 6:30pm AA Meeting	29	30 7:30pm Band Practice	31	Aug 1 Property Work Day
2 10th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	3 6:00pm Community Table; Ponds Reformed Church, 341 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland NJ 07436	4 6:30pm AA Meeting	5	6 12:00pm Bible Study 7:30pm Band Practice	7	8
9 11th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	10 7:00pm Book Club on Zoom	11 6:30pm AA Meeting	12	13 7:30pm Band Practice	14	15
16 12th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	17	18 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Council Meeting on Zoom	19	20 12:00pm Bible Study 7:30pm Band Practice	21	22 Possible International Night
23 13th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	24	25 6:30pm AA Meeting	26	27 7:30pm Band Practice	28	29
30 14th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00am Worship	31	Sep 1 6:30pm AA Meeting	2	3 12:00pm Bible Study 7:30pm Band Practice	4	5 Property Work Day

Reprinted from NEWSLETTER Newsletter

For me, there's nothing quite like taking off my sandals in the summer and walking through the grass. But when our sons were infants, neither shared that love of going barefoot. When we'd attempt to lower them to play outside, they'd raise their legs, trying not to touch the tickly, prickly, green ground.

"Do not come any closer," the Lord warned Moses through the burning bush. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5, NIV). In God's presence, Moses faced a turning point: either resist God's instructions or obey, leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

Maybe taking off my sandals this summer can remind me that I'm standing in God's presence. I may not hear a booming voice, and I might just be standing at the kitchen sink doing chores. Or I might be at a barbecue, with the opportunity to truly listen to my neighbors. God's presence permeates life's big moments as well as the mundane.

How can you "take off your sandals" and enter what God has for you? —Janna Firestone

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

228 Ramapo Valley Road
Oakland, New Jersey 07436

SUNDAY WORSHIP
10:00 am Worship Service

In-person, live-streamed and
posted on YouTube

