



MESSIAH

lutheran church

Sharing the love of Jesus

July 2020

1706 Lee Boulevard
North Mankato, MN
507-387-5537

A Message From Pastor Trish

This month, we will be doing a modified (thanks to the pandemic) version of Vacation Bible School for our Sunday School students and families. The theme is “We Are The Church” and the theme verse is Matthew 18:20 – “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” It’s an appropriate theme for this summer for all of us, as we continue to ponder and experience ways of being church that are new to us all.

As I write this article, we have had a few weeks of successful outdoor worship successfully with more to come as the summer progresses. We are continuing to maintain our on-line presence as well, with Facebook Live at 8:30 and/or pre-recorded services that can be accessed via Facebook or our website. (I keep looking for ways to simplify how to “produce” worship so that it can be less than a lot of work and still reach as many people as possible, but I’m not doing very well in that regard, ha ha!)

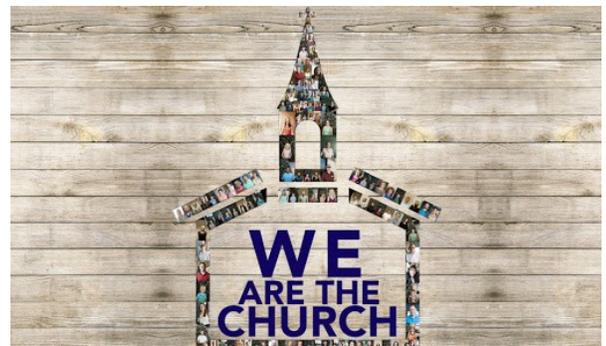
Even as we continue to tweak how we do our worship services in this phase of re-opening, I am thinking about what this fall might look like, and what we will need to do next. In a word, it’s complicated! I say that not because those of us working for you need or want sympathy, but because we DO ask for your continued understanding and patience, virtues you have been so graciously giving us since mid-March.

How we gather together is complicated, not just because of the nature of the coronavirus but also, because of who we are and who we profess to be. First, the virus. We know we are most at risk when we gather together with large groups of people, indoors, for an extended period of time. Like church on a Sunday morning. In fact, there are several well-documented instances where a church gathering has resulted in an outbreak of the virus, and this knowledge definitely keeps pastors awake at night. Here at Messiah, we do not have a large or spacious sanctuary, so we will need to be extra cautious about maintaining appropriate distancing, and we will simply not be able to worship as we were “pre-pandemic.” It’s not just where we sit – it also means no paper of any kind, no singing, no responsive readings – you get the idea. In addition, we are a diverse community, with people of different ages and different levels of vulnerability. Finally, because of who we are – children of God, called to care and love one another – we must make every attempt possible both to keep all of us as safe as feasible while at the same time include rather than exclude all of us to the greatest extent possible. In addition, because of who we are – a community of faith - we yearn to gather and be together. We live out an “embodied” faith where physical community is part of our lifeblood.

I do not yet know what worship will look like this fall. It will depend on public health guidelines, the status of the virus, council decisions and more. I also expect that it is highly likely we will move into and out of various configurations for the coming year. For example, there may be times when we are completely on-line and other times when the size of people that can gather will vary. But I am telling you this now because I want you to be aware of and understand just some of the factors that go into the decisions, and to ask for your patience and your support as we continue to be church together.

Finally, keep in mind it isn’t just worship that we are talking about. There will also need to be discussion about how to do education, especially Sunday School and Middle School Ministries. Again, I’m thinking about all of this; but if there is anything these last few months has taught me is that the best plans will always need to be flexible enough to be changed quickly.

Despite it all, WE ARE THE CHURCH. We will continue to be the church, we will continue to be community, we will continue to gather, to worship, to learn, to care for and love one another. And in the end – that’s what counts, don’t you agree?



Vacation Bible School

Just like everything else, our summer education opportunities look different this year! Instead of a week of day camp led by counselors from Green Lake Lutheran Ministries, we will be offering Vacation Bible School for kids pre-k to 5th grade. We will use materials from our friends at Green Lake, adapted as needed. Our theme is “We Are the Church” and our theme verse is Matthew 18:20 – “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Here are more details:



1. **VBS will happen on 4 consecutive Tuesdays:** July 21 and 28 and August 4 and 11. Don't worry if you'll miss a week – come on the weeks that you can.
2. **We will do two sessions each day** to try and make it convenient for as many as possible, as well as give us greater opportunity for safety guidelines. A morning session will be from **9:30-11:30 AM** or an evening session will run from **6:00-8:00 PM**.
3. **We will meet at church!** The plan will be to begin our time together in the sanctuary, watching a worship service offered by the camp counselors from GLLM. After that, we will divide up and rotate through the activities for the day.
4. **Children will need a responsible adult or older sibling to accompany them.** This is necessary for a variety of reasons: we don't have camp counselors providing supervision, we need extra help encouraging adherence to safety guidelines, and because we will be moving around the building children will need extra guidance when it's time to move to the next station, where to go, etc. The responsible adult can be a parent, grandparent, babysitter, etc. You may also team up with another family and take turns bringing your children. In other words, we don't need one adult for every child or family group, but recommend that there be a responsible teen/adult for no more than 5 or 6 children.
5. We ask that you **sign up so we can track numbers**, have enough materials, and schedule groups so that we can move around as safely as possible.
6. Speaking of being safe, **we will practice physical distancing** to the greatest extent possible. We will do some of the groups outside and use various parts of the church so we can spread out for the rotations. If your child is willing and able to wear a mask we encourage it, but we also know it depends on the child as well as the particular activity. Disinfectant wipes, sanitizer, etc. is available. Please bring a water bottle for your child as water fountains are blocked off.
7. Questions, concerns, or anything else, please contact Pastor Trish at pastortrish@hickorytech.net. Otherwise, please sign up at signupschedule.com/messiah
8. See you at Vacation Bible School!

MSM Outdoor Game Night

Middle School students – don't forget we will try gathering for an evening of outdoor activity! Tuesday, July 7 at 6:30 PM. Bring a frisbee! If you have any outdoor games that you like to play, bring those along with you! Also, I'm looking for a large plastic playball or two (you know, the kind you get at the Dollar Store....). If you have any items you can and want to bring, let Pastor Trish know. See you on the 7th.



Racism Class

We began an “introductory” class on Racism and Racial Inequality in late June. Gaining a better understanding of what systemic racism is and what it means for all of us is an ongoing topic of conversation as well as work that all of can undertake. If there is additional interest, a second class can be scheduled. Please email Pastor Trish at pastortrish@hickorytech.net if you would like more information or to indicate your willingness.

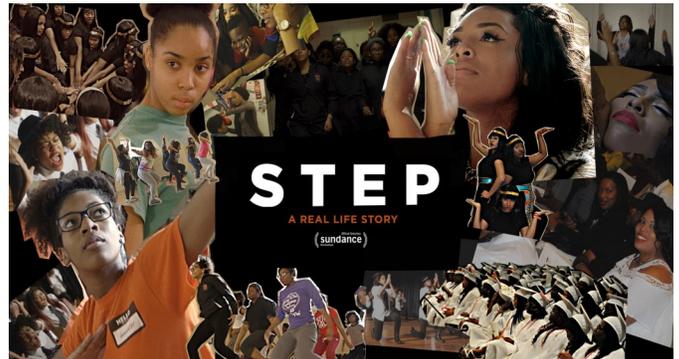
**We're listening.
We're learning.**

Racism Conversation for Youth

Middle school and high school students! We will have an opportunity to gather together to watch “Step”. STEP is the true-life story of a girls’ high-school step team set against the background of the heart of Baltimore. These young women learn to laugh, love and thrive – on and off the stage – even when the world seems to work against them. Empowered by their teachers, teammates, counselors, coaches and families, they chase their ultimate dreams: to win a step championship and to be accepted into college. Here’s a trailer about the show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVN4aVYA2eA>

After the film we will take some time for discussion. When will we do this? Wednesday, July 29 at 6:30 PM. If you are interested, sign up at signupschedule.com/messiah

Please sign up by July 22. Once we know how many are interested in attending we can decide if we can watch the movie together at church or if we will need to meet via Zoom. Either way, we hope you’ll join us for a night of film and conversation about important issues in the world today.



Graduation Recognition



We will be honoring our high school graduates on Sunday, July 26 at the 10:00 AM outdoor worship. Normally, we would have celebrated with them earlier this spring, but we needed to wait until we could gather together. During the service we will invite those graduates in attendance forward to receive a blanket and a blessing.

High school seniors – please let us know if we can expect you that morning, or if we need to make other arrangements to get your gift to you. Congregation members – please pray for these young people as they move into their next journeys in the midst of change:

Joshua Landgraff, Malia Lagred, McKenna Malvin, McKayla Malvin, Cole Himmer, Emily Ries, Blake Donkin, Maxwell Pearson, McLean Lee, William Schwamberger, Joshua Benson, Sophie Simonson, Chloe Hebeisen, Ragan Vilt.

Thursday Evening Bible Study

A new Bible Study series on the book of Philippians will be starting in July. This series uses an introductory video and accompanying scripture each week followed by discussion. No homework or prep work. The videos are done by a noted contemporary theologian, NT Wright. Additional details include:



1. We will begin on **THURSDAY, JULY 9 at 5 PM.** It looks like there are about 14 or 15 sessions, so this study will carry us into the fall.
2. There is no cost to the study.
3. At this time, we plan on meeting in person, in the gathering place. In order to do this, we will need to practice our 6 ft. apart rule as well as wear masks. We will have tables and chairs set up to accommodate this protocol. If anyone wants to join via Zoom, either from the beginning or at any time during the sessions, that can be easily accommodated. (If the group becomes too large for this arrangement, watch for changes in our gathering method.)
4. If you are interested in joining the group please email Pastor Trish at pastortrish@hickorytech.net and watch for a follow-up email and confirmation.

Sharing the Love of Jesus in Song

Mark your calendar for Sunday, July 26 at 8:30 am and 10:00 am, for our special summer services of musical praise. We will be featuring Messiah musicians Ryan Rader, Alec Schwartz, Justin Knoepfel, Karen Wright, Julie Olsen, Jana Brix, Amy Kuch, Cara Gorman, and Barb Sorensen, with guest musicians Tristin Rupp and Christopher Rupp (Cindy's children) and Pastor Trish and Liz Zaruba (Pastor Trish's daughter). Directed by Cindy Rupp. Join us as we worship through music and scripture!

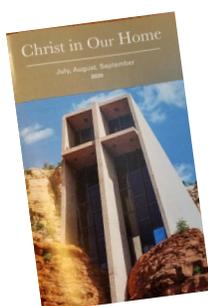


Finance Update

Our May income was \$20,459.34, and our May expenses were \$22,075.30. Our May Income Less Expense was -\$1,615.96. Our Year-to-Date Income Less Expense is positive \$9,434.13.



We want to truly thank everyone for their continued generosity and giving through these times. Your gifts are appreciated and help us continue to Share the Love of Jesus.



Christ in Our Home

Devotionals for July, August, September are here. We'll have them available on Sunday mornings or we would be happy to mail one to you if you're not comfortable coming to worship yet.

DRIVEWAY WORSHIP – THURSDAYS at 7PM

If you are longing for the opportunity to be in community for worship, but are uncomfortable around large groups, a Driveway Worship service might be just right for you! Gathering at 7pm, we will offer praise and thanksgiving to God with a service of Word and Sacrament. Please bring your mask and a lawn chair.



We will be at a different “driveway” each week and are grateful to our Messiah members who have volunteered to host worship in their driveways: Harriet & Merlyn Plotz, lone Barron, Denny & Barb Meier, and Greg & Sarah Suskovic. **The summer schedule is as follows:**

June 25	Harriet & Merlyn Plotz	(Clare Court – upper North Mankato)
July 2	lone Barren	(Simon Trail – upper North Mankato)
July 9	Barb & Denny Meier	(Carney Ave – Mankato)
July 16	Greg & Sarah Suskovic	(Roe Crest – upper North Mankato)
July 23	Harriet & Merlyn Plotz	
July 30	lone Barren	
August 6	Barb & Denny Meier	
August 13	Greg & Sarah Suskovic	

(In case of inclement weather – the service will be cancelled.)

Update from Intern Pastor Janet

My internship with Messiah Lutheran Church began just over a year ago and when I arrived in June, I was excited, nervous, and a bit apprehensive. My anxiety was calmed when you welcomed me with your gracious hospitality.

My coursework at Luther Seminary continues this summer with Greek, Lutheran Confessional Writings, Race and the 21st Century Pulpit, American Theology in the 20th Century, and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). This is a full load, but our professors are invested in seeing us succeed in this experimental learning program. My classmates, who are scattered across the United States, continue to be a supportive presence to me as well.



Never in my wildest dreams did I think that we would be in the middle of an on-going pandemic before the end of my first year of internship. With one year left, I am grateful to have Pastor Reedstrom as supervisor, mentor, and model for how to serve and lead a congregation, especially when all the ways we are “church together” keep shifting and making us adapt.

I also thank all of you, as you continue to provide support, patience, and a wonderful environment in which to learn about parish ministry. Thank you for teaching and modeling how to be the people of God in mission in this specific place and in this particular time. May God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith!

Parking Lot Worship & Communion

As part of our outdoor worship services we are now generally celebrating Holy Communion on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month. If you are watching our services online, please feel free to join us in the meal. As you sit down to worship, bring with you a small piece of bread or a cracker as well as a small glass of wine or juice, or contact the church office about picking up or having us deliver our pre-packaged communion kits to you. As those who are gathered together prepare to celebrate the meal, please join us in the prayers and meal. We recognize that this is certainly a practice different from what we are accustomed to, but we also understand that these particular times call for sometimes radical departures from the way we’ve always done things. We do want to ensure that this sacrament is as inclusive as possible, as we understand God’s grace is a lavish gift meant to be shared far and wide, and we hope you will join the worshipping community in this celebration.





Messiah Lutheran Church
 1706 Lee Boulevard
 North Mankato, Minnesota 56003

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PHONE: 507-387-5537

Trish Reedstrom, Pastor: *PastorTrish@hickorytech.net*

Janet Adams, Pastoral Intern: *PastorJanet @hickorytech.net*

Jan Waller, Office Manager: *messiah@hickorytech.net*

Robin Blasing, Communications Specialist: *messiahcomm@hickorytech.net*

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www.messiahnorthmankato.com



“Sharing the Love of Jesus...”

Please Pray...

In our thoughts and prayers: Darrin P, Ben K, Jan L, Brandy R, Cheech M, Craig V, Dave C, Earl W, Gary Z, Greg S, Jackie W, Jess R, Judy F, Kathryn R, Patrice P, Rosie L, Kip, Beth R, Edith, Barb P.

Those who serve our country: Dan P, Brian M, Derek M, Roger W, Carly, & Alex.

Prayers of Sympathy for Greg & Sarah Suskovic and family on the loss of Sarah’s mother Mary.

God’s Blessings to Garrett (son of Doug & Karna Stock) & Daniella Stock on the birth of their son Wade Douglas Stock.



First Communion Update

Our first communion students didn’t get to celebrate this spring, as originally planned. Therefore, throughout the rest of the summer, these individual students will get to celebrate on a week that works best for their family. We look forward to seeing and celebrating each of you in the weeks to come!