

Calendar of Events

Sunday, November 15
8:15 am Sunday School
9:30 am Worship/Communion
10:45 am Congregational Meeting
6:30 pm SW Little League

Monday, November 16
8:30 am – 2:30 pm Preschool
12:00 pm Noon Day Prayers
5:30 pm Sit Happens
6:30 pm Executive Committee

Tuesday, November 17
8:30 am – 2:30 pm Preschool
1:30 pm Missional Outreach
12:00 pm Noon Day Prayers
7:00 pm WELCA

Wednesday, November 18
8:30 am – 2:30 pm Preschool
12:00 pm Noon Day Prayers
5:45 pm SW. LL. District Meeting
6:30 pm Bible Study

Thursday, November 19
8:30 am – 2:30 pm Preschool
12:00 pm Noon Day Prayers
1:00 pm Mountie Backpack
2:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm NA

Friday, November 20
8:30 am – 2:30 pm Preschool

Saturday, November 21
12:00 pm Noon Day Prayers



MESSIAH MESSENGER USPS 342-060
Published each week by Messiah Lutheran Church, 324 South Howard Street, South Williamsport, PA. Publication Office, 324 South Howard Street. Entered as a periodical October 15, 1940, at the Post Office at Williamsport, PA under the Act of March 3, 1879.
POSTMASTER: Send address change to Messiah Lutheran Church, 324 South Howard Street, South Williamsport, PA 17702.

MESSIAH MESSENGER
Published weekly by
MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
www.messiahsouth.org Phone: 570-326-9171
e-mail address: messiahoffice@comcast.net

November 11, 2026 **VOL. 83 – NO. 44**

"Prayer is the center of the Christian life. It is the only necessary thing. It is living with God in the here and now."

Henri Nouwen

When discussing prayer, often someone will ask about "***Centering Prayer.***" "*Centering Prayer*" is a discipline by which one seeks to sit in quiet contemplation, using a simple prayer to focus their attention upon, so that the prayer itself becomes the "*object*" of their time. This is an ancient practice that runs across multiple spiritual traditions—in Judaism, the students of "*Kabbala"* devote themselves to a single word…a single Hebrew letter, even…to try and ascertain God's wisdom. (In Judaism, it is believed that God gave the Hebrew language to Adam and Eve as a gift and then passes it down through the generations as part of the Covenant…) Across the Christian tradition there have always been those hermits and monks who would withdraw into the desert to seek silence and solitude in which to devote themselves to prayer. In monasteries, the motto is still "*Ora et Labora*"—prayer and work—where men and women still devote themselves first and foremost to prayer as the focus of their daily life.

A famous episode of "*Seinfeld*" used a simple phrase—"serenity now!"—as a mantra; a word or two that is chanted rhythmically to still the passions. Whenever a character would get frustrated or angry, they would repeat "Serenity now!" in an attempt to regain composure. This is outwardly similar to "*Centering Prayer*" but it is NOT what we mean when we say "*Centering Prayer.*" A mantra comes from within, "*Centering Prayer*" is intended to draw us out. The idea of "*Centering Prayer*" is to carve out the space for God to be present, not to fill that space with something of our own.

I have already given you some examples of prayers that may be helpful as "*Centering Prayer.*" Take, for example, the ***Jesus Prayer***—*Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner!* If you wanted to use this prayer as a "*Centering Prayer*" you could simply use it as an anchor, a focus: say the Prayer slowly, intentionally, let it be "the center" of your prayer time. Don't worry about anything else. Say the Prayer then let it "be." If you find yourself wandering, then say it again, slowly, unhurriedly. Don't be concerned on "how many times" you have said it. Say it, and let it be.

You can also use ***The Lord's Prayer***, either in whole or in a part, in a similar way. Say the prayer quietly, deliberately, focusing on the petitions, the words. If you wish, you can take an individual petition as your focus—"*Hallowed be thy name*" or "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" Let that be the object of your focus, your "*Center*" for that time. Don't hurry, don't be concerned with anything but that prayer. Whenever you find your attention wander, say that prayer again and let it be the object of your attention.

The devil hates silence. In the *"Screwtape Letters*," a fantasy conversation between tempters, C.S. Lewis has a senior tempter advise his trainee nephew that the most dangerous thing is to let their "patient" stop for too long. "*Keep him busy, distract him."* is the constant advice. *Centering Prayer* is a direct challenge to the devil and his minions. It calls on us to stop and listen for the "*small, still voice*" of God. It dethrones us from "the center of our lives" and reinstalls prayer into that center. It is desperately dangerous to the devil's cause when people stop and pray. So…stop…and pray.

Pax Christi;
Pr. Jerry Kliner, STS

Sunday, November 15

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Fred Harbaugh, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker, Susan Christ; **Lay Assistant:** Carol Waltz **Comm. Assist.:** Mandy Feinberg; **Acolyte:** Malory Klemick**; Altar Guild:** Rita Strickler, Lauren Russell**; Greeters/Presenters:** Georgette Copp, Ray Demarest**; Cantor:** Dave Bausinger; **Flower Delivery:** Paul Weaver

Sunday, November 8 - Attendance: *In Church:* **91;** *Online*: **2; Offering: $6,304.00**

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bill Miller, a loving father, grandfather and husband, with love from Michael, Nathan, Tammy, David, Nathaniel and Linda.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Richard and Dorothy Yeager, by their daughter and son-in-law, Janet and Stosh Wisniewski and grandchildren, Kyle and Jenna.

BIBLE READINGS

Sunday, November 15: *Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30*
Monday, November 16: *Psalm 9:1-14; Zechariah 1:7-17; Romans 2:1-11*
Tuesday, November 17: *Psalm 9:1-14; Zechariah 2:1-5; 5:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18*
Wednesday, November 18: *Psalm 9:1-14; Job 16:1-21; Matthew 24:45-51*
Thursday, November 19: *Psalm 95:1-7a; 1 Kings 22:13-23; Revelation 14:1-11*
Friday, November 20: *Psalm 95:1-7a; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15; Revelation 22:1-9*
Saturday, November 21: *Psalm 95:1-7a; Isaiah 44:21-28; Matthew 12:46-50*



Articles for the* Messenger/Bulletin *are due in the office by Monday at noon!

Eucharistic Ministers will be sent out this Sunday, November 15th. Please let the office know if you are not available to take communion.



This Saturday, November 14, 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm, there will be a Spaghetti dinner fundraiser to help benefit a trip to Honduras. The cost will be $15.00 per person and there will be a basket raffle.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas-at-Sea Project for Mission to Seafarers. Messiah collected 18 satchels plus some extra pieces to add to the bags at the Synod. Great job everyone!



Mountie Backpack Program's collection for November: 18 oz. jars of peanut butter, fruit or pudding cups Tomato or Chicken Noodle soup. Place items in the bin in the elevator alcove marked "Mountie Backpack". If you have any questions, please contact Dianne Larson 570-220-3702.

Our annual Advent Kid's Event will be held on Saturday, December 5th, from 9 AM to Noon. If you are available to help, it would be greatly appreciated. We will do a story, service project, cookie baking, craft and games. The kids really enjoy coming to these events and, as always, your help is essential in making them a success. Without your support, we would not be able to do it! ☺ Please contact me at 570-244-6964. Thank you in advance! Kathryn

Mark your Calendars- Congregational Christmas Dinner will be Sunday, December 6th immediately following worship. More details to come.

Messiah's Congregation Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 15, 2026

Immediately following worship



On the Agenda will be the

- 2027 budget
- Election of 2027 Council
- Election of 2027 Nominating Committee
- Election of 2027 Audit Committee

The 2027 nominees for church council are: **Cindy Bennett, Carl Gee, Kirstin Gist and Mary Schultz.** (re-election for 2nd term).

The 2027 Nominee for nomination committee are: **Sylvia McCarty**

The 2027 nominees for Audit Committee are: **Marlin Cromley, Kyle Nelson, and Lauren Russell.**

You should have received your Annual Report Packet; included in the packet was a 2027 budget proposal, congregation council nominee booklet, time and talent survey and your pledge card. Please return the time and talent survey and pledge cards by **January 4, 2027.** Place them in the offering plate on Sunday mornings or in the church office.

All are invited and are encouraged to attend this important meeting!

Please note: ***We will NOT be accepting donations at Messiah for Daniel's Closet from now through December 20 due to the collection bin being used for White Gifts.***

Daniel's Closet is a ministry of Redeemer Lutheran Church which offers a free clothing giveaway on the fourth Saturday of each month. If you have clothing and accessories that you would like to donate this month, you may take them directly to Redeemer (1101 Washington Blvd, Williamsport) on Thursday, November 19, between 4:00-6:00 p.m. ***All are invited* to *"shop" the closet, regardless of need. Please take only what you can use.*** The next Closet will be held on Saturday, November 21, 8:30-11:00 a.m.

White Gifts Ministry at Messiah

This coming Sunday, November 15, kicks off our annual White Gifts ministry.

White Gifts have become an important and beloved tradition for the Messiah family. Last year we did some digging through some old Messengers and bulletins to try to find out when we started doing White Gifts. We couldn't find the exact year, but as far as we can tell, this is our 37th year providing gifts for children in need in our community. What you may not know is that the white gifts tradition itself has actually been around quite a while longer and is not unique to Messiah.

Legends abound as to how it got started, but most of them agree that it was inspired by an ancient Chinese tradition where gifts from the people were given to the king during a festival known as the "White Feast," each wrapped in white so that they all looked the same. This ensured that no gift was valued above another and all were welcomed equally by the king.

Centuries later, in 1904, the wife of a Methodist minister in Ohio who was seeking a way to help children in need in the community while at the same time teaching the Sunday School children about humility found her inspiration in this ancient Chinese celebration. The idea caught on and is now observed in many churches across several different denominations.

So … why do we continue to wrap the gifts only in white?

Wrapping the gifts in white signifies the joy of giving to others while also shifting the focus from the *value* of the gift to the *reason* for giving the gift – to celebrate the birth of *our King* by giving our gifts to those He loves. The uniformity of the gifts emphasizes humility and reminds us that we are all one in the mission to assure that the unseen needs of the less fortunate are not forgotten.

We have – at this time – 34 children from 14 families who we will be helping, with the potential for a few more. Some of the families may be able to give their children gifts but not meet all of their needs, while for others, these gifts may be the only gifts they receive. We have at least one family this year who appears to be homeless.

The greatest gift ever known to man was the gift from God of His only begotten Son. This Christmas, may the emphasis of our giving be a response to the gracious gifts of God as we share Love, Joy, Hope and Peace with a waiting world.

~ May the Peace of Christ be with you always, Kathy Wither



White Gifts ~ The Angel Trees will be up this coming Sunday, November 15!



Here's how it works:

1) Each child is given the opportunity to ask for several clothing items and a "WISH" item. Please purchase the item listed on the tag and do not substitute a different item. For instance, if you take a tag asking for a sweater, a sweater is what is needed. Do not substitute a toy or something else in its place.

2) For the "WISH" tags, however, several suggestions may be listed on the tag so that you have choices in case you cannot find an item. You only need to purchase ***one*** of those items. Please be generous, but please also remember that there may be other children in the family for whom someone else has taken a tag.

3) Be sure to securely attach the angel tag to the gift. It is also helpful to write the number/letter code of the tag on the gift so that we can get it to the right child in the event the tag should inadvertently come off.

4) ***Very Important:*** Bring the wrapped gift in and ***place it in the blue bin*** in the alcove ***outside of*** the Chapel. Please do *not* put gifts in the Chapel as they will not be sorted/stored there this year. Volunteers will sort the gifts.

5) ***Cash donations are cheerfully accepted!*** Don't like to shop, or unsure exactly what to get? We'll do the shopping for you! Monetary donations can be sealed in an envelope marked "White Gifts" and placed in the offering plate during worship, or you may send them to the church office. Checks are to be made out to Messiah Lutheran Church with "White Gifts" written in the memo line.

6) **All gifts, including cash donations, are due no later than Sunday, December 13** so that we can prepare them for distribution the following Saturday.

Questions? **Text/call Kathy Wither (570) 651-2802 or Jeanette Green (570) 916-7500.**



Christmas Food Baskets: Our holiday project to fill the baskets we give to families in need at Christmas time is now officially under way!

Christmas Basket recipients are now being identified. If you know someone who could benefit from receiving a Christmas basket, ***please contact the church office by Friday, December 4.*** The baskets will be ready for pick-up Saturday, December 19.

Donations of the following items are needed to fill the baskets: *canned corn; canned green beans; canned yams; cranberry sauce; canned fruit (applesauce, peaches, pears, fruit cocktail); pie crust mix; canned pumpkin; evaporated milk; canned gravy or gravy packets; stove top stuffing; dessert mixes (cake, brownies, jello, pudding, etc.); cash donations.*

Food donations may be placed in the bin in the narthex on Sunday mornings or in the specially marked bin in the elevator alcove during the week. **Monetary donations** are also needed for the purchase of perishable items. Please place your gifts in an envelope marked "Christmas Baskets" and place it in the offering plate during worship or mail to the church office. Checks are to be made out to Messiah Lutheran Church with "Christmas Baskets" written in the memo line. **All donations are due no later than Sunday, December 13.**

Thank you for opening your hearts to help those in need.