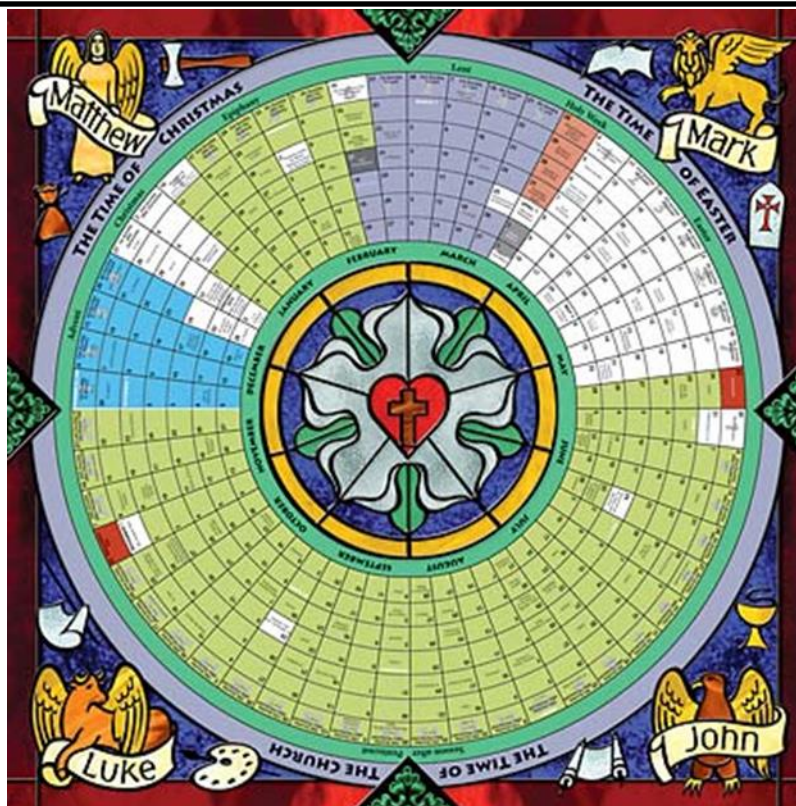




MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH - KELLER, TEXAS

Messiah Messenger



The Christian Church keeps a calendar. It's a calendar somewhat out of sync with the world's calendar, which is no doubt of significance. But as we turn the page on the Church Year once again, and welcome the season of Advent, it seems fitting to consider a bit of the "why?" behind this particular way of counting the days and seasons.

We humans are designed by a God of order, who created us and the entire world in time – 6 days, to be exact, and rested on the 7th. It is God who set in motion the Earth's rotation around the Sun, the Moon's rotation around the Earth, the seasons, the tides, and all of the orderly temporal workings of our cosmos. Science continues to discover more of the wonders inherent in His design, and we observe that if even small details were ordered differently, life as we know it would not, or could not exist. There is a "Goldi-locks" phenomenon. Everything is "just right".

He is a God of order, after all, and not of chaos. This orderliness informs many aspects of our life as Christians, both individually and corporately. He orders our lives by his commandments. He establishes the institution of Holy Marriage, the vocation of Father and Mother, and the office of the Holy Ministry. He ordains the day of our birth and death. He even governs the rise and fall of nations, and establishes every earthly authority that there is (Romans 13).

So it is no surprise that the Christian Church orders its time also in a very careful way. We take our cue, first of all, from the Old Testament people of God

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*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of God, and that by believing
you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

– the Israelites. Already from Mt. Sinai the 12 tribes observed a very orderly system of time – with appointed sacrifices, festivals and observances in their cycles. The three main feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles were marked each year. Jewish observance in Jesus' day continued these and many other customs. Jesus' own family, we are told in Luke 2:41, "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover." Of course that's when 12 year old Jesus stayed behind in "His Father's house."

Early on, the church moved her usual day of gathering and worship from the Old Testament Sabbath (Saturday) to the "Lord's Day", Sunday. This was done to honor Christ's resurrection, and thus makes every Sunday a "little Easter". But it also confesses that in Christ, we know an "8th day" of the week, a New Creation as we are reborn and renewed in Him.

While the Church Calendar has changed and developed over the millennia, the chief festival has always focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus (which coincided with the Jewish Passover). The Triduum of Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday is seen as a single unit. Jesus' death and resurrection go hand in hand.

While Christmas wasn't celebrated in the earliest years of the church, it has joined Easter and Pentecost now for a New Testament triad of festivals to mirror the three of ancient days. The preparatory and penitential seasons of Advent and Lent also became widely accepted through the years.

Yet, even in the LCMS today there are some differences in how the seasons are counted, whether a congregation follows the 1-year or 3-year (as we do here at Messiah). These are, of course, matters of Christian freedom. But it is also a question of wisdom to receive the helpful traditions the church has handed down.

Ordering our time in such a way also helps us to teach and learn the "whole counsel of God" and to "observe everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28). We consider, during the "festival half" of the year, the life of Jesus – from the anticipation of his birth in the Advent season, through Christmas and Epiphany which flesh out the wider Christmas cycle. Then, Lent prepares us to observe his passion, suffering and death, followed by the joy of Easter, his Ascension and the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. Holy Trinity Sunday marks the beginning of the "non-festival" or "regular time" in which we focus on the Bride of Christ, the church. Some mark these Sunday after Trinity Sunday, or as we do the Sundays after Pentecost.

We use different colors, also, to symbolize the themes of each season or occasion. White for purity and righteousness (Christmas and Easter), green for growth and life (regular time), Advent blue for the sky – from which we await Christ's return, purple for penitence and preparation in Lent, red for the flame of the Spirit's work in the word, and black for the darkest days of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Throughout the year there are also commemorations and minor festivals, remembering various saints, or important events or themes like Reformation Day and All Saints' Day. You can find a roster of these in the front of our hymnal. The hymnody of the church is also organized according to the calendar and the seasons, with an appointed "Hymn of the Day" for each Sunday.

And many Christians also bring the observances of the church's days and seasons into the home – marking Advent with a calendar or a wreath of candles, Christmas with a tree and various decorations, and so on. Sometimes the secular culture appropriates and de-Christianizes these customs, but that doesn't mean we Christians can't continue to make use of them.

Just as the world marks the years, months, even the minutes of our lives for various purposes – so does the church consider the times and seasons as gifts from the Lord. As the years roll by and we continue to anticipate the conclusion of time at Christ's return, let us continue to grow in the fear and knowledge of God and each day, each season, each year – remain in His life-giving Word.

A blessed Advent, and Happy New Church Year to you!

Pastor Chryst



Lutheran Braille Workers, located in Yucaipa, California, has launched its new Buy-A-Dot campaign to help purchase a new machine which produces the plates used in creating Braille Bibles, as well as related expenses.

As one of Lutheran Braille Workers' Ministry Production Centers, we know how important it is to produce Braille and Large Print materials for people who are Blind or Visually Impaired who may not have other access to God's Word.

Every single volume produced is given away free of charge to tens of thousands of people each year. To make this happen, we rely on volunteers and donations!

If you are interested in learning how to support this campaign through your time or gifts, please contact Barbara or Erasmo Pinero by phone at 682.552.3622 or e-mail at bpinero1scom@gmail.com.

Will you Buy A Dot and help us share God's Word? Look for more information in January.

Thank you and blessings,

Barbara

Music Ministry during Advent

by Vicki Main—Kantor

What a delightful time of year as we anxiously anticipate the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem. And what an incredible amount of music is available for this season as well. We are so blessed to have such an abundance of musical talent within our own congregation—and a willingness to share it. Our annual Sunday of Carols and Lessons will be December 15 at both services. It will be a glorious offering of music between special readings and meditations as we prepare for Jesus' coming. This is a musical gift to you from the Music Ministry of Messiah.

I especially urge you to take advantage of the music that will be presented on Christmas Eve starting one half hour before the five and seven o'clock services as well. Plan to come early and spend that time listening, reflecting, and preparing your hear to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Blessing to you and your s as we worship together this Christmas season!



Church Council Corner

by Bill Brandt—*Secretary*

Notes from the Council Secretary

The Messiah Church Council met on November 20th from 7:00 pm to 9:15. Here are some highlights:

Pastor's Report: Pastor Chryst reports the church office remodeling is almost complete. Vicki Main's retirement is planned Jan 26th. See the website to sign up or come to the office. Our initiative to recover inactive members is bearing some fruit.

Treasurer: Herbert Herrmann reports general fund offerings continue strong. Employee benefits will exceed budget plan.

Elders: Pete Hibbs reports that the Elders are conducting a Pastor's workload analysis to determine Call needs. Pete asks for prospective nominees for any church office. Contact Chris Aguilar.

Evangelism: We need people who can help deliver the Angel Tree gifts on December 14th. See Bruce Dana to get involved!

Trustees: Paul Lara notes that the restroom facilities in the MAC need significant refurbishing. Trustees are taking bids on tree trimming and removal for the south boundary of the church parking lot.

Stewardship: Bill Stone reports that Financial Peace University concluded on November 11th. Bill prepared a budget input template for all board chairmen to begin preparation of the 2021 Budget.

School Board: Enrollment unchanged at 84. Clay Brandt reports groundbreaking for the Ninja Course and Chessboard. The K-7 MLCA Christmas Program is December 12th. The Headmaster Search continues to seek and evaluate candidates. Please contact Clay Brandt with questions.

Christian Education: Vacant.

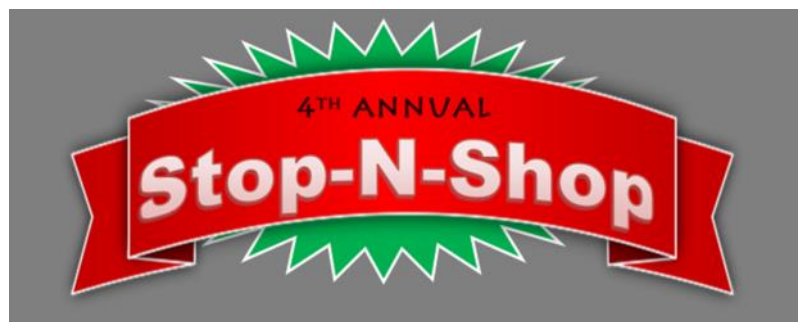
We all look forward to a blessed celebration of Our Savior's birth.

Stop-N-Shop

by Rachel Koreski—*MLCA Executive Admin*

Get a jump start on your holiday shopping at the 4th Annual Stop-N-Shop! Join us on **Tuesday, December 3 from 9am-1pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Over 20 small businesses will be represented...to include:

- -Happy Crafts by Vicki
- -Scentsy
- -Color Street Nails
- -Four Monkey's Candles
- -Bottle This Glass That
- -One Rose Designs
- -Mary Kay
- -Trades of Hope



And many more!



Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday December 8 ☐ 9:30am

Rehearsal is
Saturday December 7



Using online posts from Cambria Stame (CUI) and Christ Academy (FaceBook)



There are many signs around campus of our Christ Academy students—one of which is the sudden influx of backpacks lined up along the Kramer Chapel walls leading into the nave by 9:30 each morning. - Christ Academy FB

<https://www.ctsfw.edu/daily-chapel/>

Imagine this:

You're sitting in a chapel pew on a Thursday night except it isn't midweek service. It's 9:27 PM but there's no preservice music. Instead, all is quiet; seventy high school students all filing in quietly to chapel. You thumb your Lutheran Service Book to page 253—the Order of Compline. Looking across the pews, you see a rather astonishing sight. These high schoolers have their hymnals closed. It so happens that these aren't regular high school students. They are young men and women who know this service by heart because they have prayed it twelve times in twelve days. They are high schoolers who treat God's house with reverence and awe and who elected to spend two weeks of their precious summer peering into *The Good Book* at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The occasion? Christ Academy.⁵



⁵<https://camincam.com/2019/07/12/cam-at-christ-cacademy/> ; Cambria Stame's Blog



For our December community service project, we are teaming up with the Community Storehouse for our "Spread The Warmth" drive.

We are asking that anyone who wants to participate bring in NEW items the week of **December 9**.

Some examples of items to bring in are:

- Hats
- Gloves
- Scarves
- Socks
- Blankets
- Coats



Items will be dropped off at the donation station outside of the sanctuary doors.

Thank you for your donations and Merry Christmas!



God's Own Child

by Pastor Chryst



Pastor Chryst invites you to stop by his office and see his new art piece, **"God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It"**, based on the baptismal hymn. The print is by LCMS artist Ed Riojas, and reminds us how Holy Baptism connects us to the Communion of Saints, both here on earth, and in glory.

"Baptism has the strength divine to make life immortal mine."



A Program of Prison Fellowship

What is “Angel Tree”?

Angel tree is an important ministry to help children connect with their parents behind bars. Children and families of prisoners are often hurt, lonely, and feel abandoned.

Through Angel Tree, we offer joy and hope by connecting a child with their parents. When we deliver the gifts we share the message of love and the Good News about Jesus—in the name of the incarcerated parent. Messiah Lutheran Church has been doing this important

ministry for over 34 years. It starts with a gift, and it leads to families restored and lives transformed. Please stop by the Angel Tree in the foyer and pick up an angel today.

Wrapped gifts are due back **Sunday, December 8.**
Deliveries will be made on **Saturday, December 14.**

Why Prisoners?

“Remember those in prison,” the Bible tells us. Why? Because God’s gift of forgiveness and hope extends to those behind bars. No matter what they’ve done, no matter how far they’ve fallen.

“Visit those in prison,” Jesus says. Why? Because that’s where we’ll find Him. “Whatever you do for the least of these brothers of mine, you do for me.” Jesus had this surprising habit of hanging out with the “losers” of society—the ones other people looked down on. He didn’t just see their failures. He saw their pain . . . and their potential. And He offered them what they needed—forgiveness and new life.

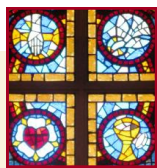
What about you? Are you willing to follow in those footsteps? To forget the stereotypes and help build new futures for those behind bars? To remember that you, too, were trapped in your own kind of prison once, until Jesus came looking for you?

Connect with Prison Fellowship, a national ministry that remembers and serves those that our society often scorns and neglects: prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families.

We will have a tree in the foyer starting November 24th **“Angel Tree Sunday.”** Stop by and find an angel to take home. We will also have some yummy goodies.

Want to help?

Great, we need volunteers to wrap gifts, deliver presents, and write Christmas cards. Please contact Barbara Brewer or Bruce Dana if you would like to help. We are so **thankful** for our Messiah Volunteers that continue to help with this important mission.



Messiah Lutheran Church & School
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Pastor

www.messiahkeller.org

The Mothers of Jesus

Advent is a common season in which to focus on upon the promises of old, the days and years of waiting, and upon the forbearers and ancestors of the Christ in the Old Testament. This year, for our Wednesday evening series, we will consider some of the women of Jesus' own lineage. Each week we'll examine two from our Lord's family tree whose stories help prepare us to receive the Babe of Bethlehem, the long-expected Jesus.

Eve and Sarah – Mothers of Promise

Genesis 3:13-21 and 18:9-15

Rahab and Ruth – Mothers from the Nations

Joshua 2:1-22 and Ruth 1:1-18

Bathsheba and Mary – Mothers of the Son of David

2 Samuel 11:1-5; 26-27 and Luke 1:26-38

Sunday School Happenings

by Elaine Hall—*Sunday School Superintendent*



A Blessed and Joyous New Year to All—It is the New Year in the church. It is a time of preparation. Preparation for Christmas. Preparation for the return of Christ. It is also a time when preparation and teaching God's word continues with the children.

The second quarter of the Sunday School year is about to begin. The first quarter started back in August with Christian Education Sunday with the readings of Deuteronomy 6:4-16, Acts 2:37-41, and Luke 16:15-17 where God commanded teaching the children diligently, baptizing the children, and bringing the children to be touched by Jesus.

The focus passage for the second quarter and following this year will be Acts 1:8. These words of Jesus are recorded as He is about to ascend into Heaven. Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Witnessing needs to be done in Keller, DFW, Texas, the United States and "the ends of the earth". Jesus doesn't put an age restriction on the witnessing. Children are great witnesses.

Our first witness is telling the Christmas story. That will happen on December 8 during the Sunday School/Bible Class hour. Another witness will happen as the children gather with others to fill the Snack Sacks on Friday, January 3 at 10:00am, with pizza and games to follow. The Snack Sacks are for a school in Fort Worth where the students come from difficult backgrounds and need some help even to eat over the weekends. Messiah will provide the Snack Sacks for January and again in May.

There will also be some upcoming social opportunities along with the service. More on that soon.

The day of time of Christ's return are not known to us. In the meantime, teach, baptize, bring and, oh yes, serve!