

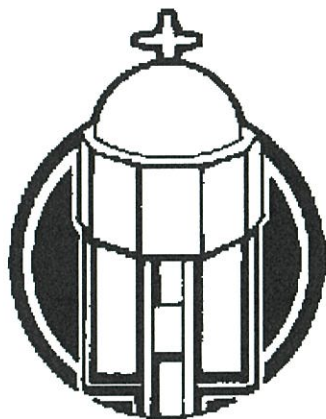
We're continuing what we started last month "FAQ's", that is, "Frequently Asked Questions", based on a series that was published on our synod's website, LCMS.org. Some of these Q & A's are borrowed, some are updated, and some I have written myself over the years along the same format. My hope is to address some of the common questions about doctrine and practice that come to pastors. As is often said, if someone asks a question, chances are good someone else is wondering the same thing. And even if you aren't, perhaps these Q & A's will give you a new perspective.

If you'd like to submit an FAQ topic, simply drop me a line with your question and I'll put it toward the front of the line!

-Pastor Chryst

**Q. The LCMS uses the "sprinkle" method of baptism, if you will. The people of the Bible, including Jesus, were baptized using the immersion method. Why doesn't our church follow the way Jesus was baptized by John?**

A. In the Scriptures no one method of applying water in baptism is required. It does not tell us how to apply the water. We in the LCMS could use the immersion method also. The Bible states that Jesus went down into the River Jordan, but it does not indicate that Jesus was submerged in the water. John could have sprinkled Him. We don't know for sure. But that does not matter. The LCMS accepts any Christian baptism where water was applied by immersion, sprinkling or pouring in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (in the Biblical sense of all that means) as valid.



The following may very well be the reasons why the LCMS and other Christian churches have chosen to "sprinkle" or "pour" the water on the recipient: The Greek word for "baptism" (baptizo) has no indication in itself that the recipient must necessarily be submerged in water. The word is also used in ceremonial washing (Heb. 9:10); pouring on of water to wash cups, pitchers, kettles (and some manuscripts include "dining couches" here) (Mark 7:4 and Luke 1:38); to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11) means to "pour out" the Spirit (Acts 1:5 and Acts 2:17-18) (also see question 239 in Luther's Small Catechism); to baptize into Christ (Rom. 6:3) does not mean "immerse" into Christ, etc. Baptism in Titus 3:5 is called "the washing of rebirth and renewal." There is archaeological evidence that the very early Christian church began the

practice of sprinkling or pouring on water in baptism. And so it has become tradition in the Lutheran church to sprinkle or pour on the water.

We need not get hung up on the method of baptizing. Baptists and others have no right to view only immersed baptisms as valid and sprinkled or poured baptisms as invalid. Those who use the latter method could be witnessing against the thought that unless one is baptized by immersion, one is not baptized.

#### Inside this issue:

Stewards Under the Cross	3
Church Council & Messiah Updates	5
Changes to Services at Messiah	6
Lutheran for Life Ministries	8

*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*

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH - KELLER, TEXAS Messiah Messenger

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

Rev. Jeremy McDonald, Vicar





In looking at Luther's Small Catechism, he repeatedly uses this phrase:

***"As the head of the household should teach his family."***

This is written as an encouragement for those whom God has placed in this most important role.

I myself have been blessed with this task and while I'm not perfect by any means, I do try to take it most seriously. (Now speaking as your "Vicar/Pastor") while Pastors are certainly the main teachers of the Church as part of their office, the instruction of families and in particular our youth, doesn't fall complete-

ly into his hands. It falls into yours.

Why is this so? First, the daily need for God's Word and instruction in it fits into the weekly life spent in the home, not at the church. Daily prayers, personal devotion time, and yes, studying the Small Catechism are great things to incorporate, to be practiced regularly.

***Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go,  
"even when he is old he will not depart from it."***

With so many spheres of influence wanting to have their sway on our children, good, solid, Biblical foundations are a must to be established and by so doing, preserve our families in the Church. God willing this will continue for each generation.

A pastor shepherds a flock, so he must at times leave the 99 behind and seek the one who is lost. Sadly, as we all have experienced, some sheep want to deliberately stay "lost." As head of the household, teaching our children of all ages about who Jesus is and what He does for both them and all people, can give them what they need to keep them in the flock and prevent them from straying.

Some may ask, "Why the Catechism? Don't I have a Bible?" Yes, that's true. And it's wonderful the Word of God has been graciously given us in abundance at this time and place in history. And of course, the Word is given to be read. However, the Word of Truth far too often is misused or abused by others, either intentionally or not. The result is a flawed view and misunderstanding of critical teachings on fundamental things such as original sin, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Even a seemingly small piece of bad doctrine can cause one to question and even doubt what the Bible actually says, and by so doing cause great spiritual harm.

The Small Catechism has the true, correct, teachings from the Bible organized in such a simple way to be able to have the head of the household teach and their families learn them by heart as we say at the Seminary in Fort Wayne. Starting with the Ten Commandments, which shows us God's Law, the Creed, which shows us who God is, and the Lord's Prayer, which shows us how to pray, Luther gives us the tools needed to equip ourselves as head of the family and our children as they grow in their knowledge of the Christian Faith.

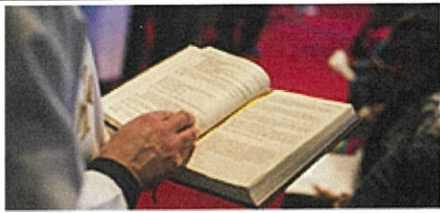
Additionally, Luther gives a section each on Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper. The Sacraments are gifts that God has given to His Church as means by which His Grace is given to us. This understanding is critically important, that one trusts completely in God's Word, His works, and to not be misled into "trusting our hearts" as to how or even if we've "received" Jesus and His forgiveness of our sins earned on the cross. All this is presented in the Catechism.

I've been blessed teaching the Small Catechism to my children as head of the household and as a Seminary student to other children in the Church. The Catechism is a wonderful tool and a great gift that we have as Lutherans, to properly teach our children and our household about Jesus.

Christian education is of great importance to me, so please don't hesitate to ask me how I can be of help to you in learning more about the Catechism, Confirmation, or anything else to provide you support as you teach your families.

***May the Lord Bless all of us as we grow in our knowledge of His Word and teachings.***





## Messiah Lutheran Church – Stewards Under The Cross August 2021

When it comes to stewardship, a favorite Bible verse is the account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1–4). It's a moving account. Our Lord praises the seemingly small gift of two copper coins given by a poor widow above the abundance of gifts given by the rich, saying, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them" (Luke 21:3). And that is usually where we stop. But the text goes on. "For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4).

"She ... put in all she had to live on." She gave everything. She held nothing back. She trusted that the Lord who made her and all creatures; who gave her everything she had; who redeemed her from her own sin, from death, and the power of the devil; who called her by the gospel and enlightened her with His gifts of Word and Sacrament; would continue to do this. He would provide her with all that she needed for this body and life because that is the character of the God she had.

But this is not why we give small gifts. Her gift, though it appeared small, was actually large. When we are tempted to give small gifts, it is precisely because we want them to be small! We don't trust the Lord to provide for us. We give small gifts because we lack faith in the One who created us, redeemed us, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. We give small gifts because we doubt that God will really give us what we need and desire. We give small gifts because we are not content with what God has already given.

We are not slaves, children of the slave woman, under the Old Covenant (Galatians 4). We are adopted sons of the free woman. And since we are sons, we are also heirs. And heirs receive the inheritance. For everything is already ours in Christ. And thus, moved by the willing spirit of adoption, we do the will of God in financial matters far beyond all that done by those under the Old Covenant who were forced by legal demands.

*So, what have you decided to give? How do I decide what to give? Let the Scriptures be your guide.*

We are to give proportionally to what we have received from God's giving to us (Luke 12:48; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2, 2 Corinthians 8:12). But you have not been set free to give nothing. See that you excel in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7)!

We are not free to live selfishly outside the Gospel, without regard for God who gives us all good gifts, without generosity for our neighbor who needs us and our gifts, without supporting the community of faith in which we live, without care for our spiritual fathers and those who teach and help raise our children in the faith, and without resources for the poor and needy.

In short, we are not free to live unto ourselves, hoarding what God has given us only for us. For love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). And the sum of the law is this: Love God and love your neighbor (Matthew 22:34–40). We love because He first loved us. We give because He has given to us.

Luther once said, "Possessions belong in your hands, not in your heart" (LW 14:240). There is a reason your 10 fingers spread apart. With your hands you catch God's gifts for what you need and let the rest fall through your fingers to your neighbors – your family, your friends, your community, your church.



VBS 2021 took place July 12 - 15 for ages 3 - 12. Approximately 200 people were involved in VBS consisting of students, volunteers, parents, MLCA families and friends. Daily activities consisted of outdoor games, snacks, crafts, music, chapel and Bible lessons.



On the last day of VBS we learned about "Jesus healing the Blind Man" and grades 3 - 6 went to Messiah's Braille Center and learned how to make Braille Bibles. Pastor/Vicar McDonald conducted daily chapel for students and their parents as well as volunteers. We thank all Messiah members and friends who made VBS 2021 possible.



**From the Pastor:**

Many activities resuming this fall.

**From the Treasurer:**

Church is on budget and planning for the year-end close.

**From the Boards:****Education:**

VBS was a success.

Meredith Sifford is now the new Sunday School Superintendent.

**Elders:**

Vicar has been installed and is getting settled in.

Miguel moved into his new office.

**Evangelism:**

Swaddling Close is operational.

Braille has begun operating again for youth and adults.

New Member Dinner is being planned with September as the likely target month.

QR Codes are being added to the bulletin and the website for Visitors.

**MLCA:**

Mrs. Pinkston hired two new preschool teachers.

Fall enrollment is 67 in K-7 and 20 in the Pre-School. This is up from a total of 70 last year.

**Stewardship:** Current Investment Portfolio value is at \$211,567.85

**Trustees:** Trustees are engaged on the continuing maintenance of our facilities.

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## Upcoming Events and Dates to Remember

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**August 18th** - First Day of School - MLCA

**August 25th** - Church Council 7pm

**August 27th** - Open Braille Workshop 6pm

**September 4th** - Men's Breakfast Bible Study resumes. 7am, 1st & 3rd Saturdays

**September 5th** - (Fall) Sunday School Begins

**September 7th** - JOY group. Tuesdays, 9:30-11am

**September 10th** - Youth - English country Dance Lessons, from 5pm-10pm.

**September 12th** - Sunday School "Rally Day" Picnic.

**September 12th** - Braille Ministry right after 2nd service until 2pm. Bring \$5.00 for pizza.

**September 14th** - Confirmation 1, 2, 3 & and Orientation - 7pm.

**September 16th** - Fall Pastor's Class Begins - Thursdays, 6-8pm

**November 12th** - MLCA Science Fair



Messiah's Board of Elders and pastors have been discussing for several years the possibility of moving toward a more frequent offering of Holy Communion at our Sunday services. This is for many reasons, including the requests of various individual Messiah members, and the growing frequency of "Every Sunday Communion" in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at large. For a longer treatment of this topic, please see the excellent article by Pastor Klemet Preus posted at: <https://tinyurl.com/yjkm77v4>

We have also learned that frequent (weekly) reception of the Lord's Supper has been the standard throughout most of Christian history, even in the New Testament, and that only in (historically speaking) "recent years" have we departed from it. While many of us grew up with "every *other* Sunday" Communion, or even quarterly, the most traditional and historical practice of the church has been simply, "The Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day".

Some years ago, before I arrived, Messiah made the move toward a more frequent Holy Communion, reserving "First Sundays" for Matins. Over the years, the Board of Elders has continued discussing the right combination of services and when to offer them at Messiah. Covid obviously dominated much of our attention for the past year. But now the Board has determined it is time to move forward again.

**Beginning in October**, Holy Communion (Divine Service) will be offered here at Messiah at both services, every Sunday, except for "Fifth Sundays".

**The typical schedule will now look like this:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month – Divine Service, Setting 1
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month – Divine Service, Setting 2
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month – Divine Service, Setting 3
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month – Divine Service, Setting 4
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month (usually 4 per year) – Matins

**Some further notes:**

On special feast days that fall on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, we may have Divine Service anyway, as will happen this year on Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup>, which is Reformation day. (Reformation Day and Holy Trinity have been the two Sundays a year we use **Divine Service, Setting Five**)

We may, in the future, decide to follow a particular Divine Service setting for an entire liturgical season (For instance, possibly Divine Service 3 for Advent) and make some other changes to the schedule, in Christian freedom and for the benefit of the congregation.

Divine Service 3 is still the "old favorite" of many of us, and arguably the most "festive", and will generally be used for special services like Christmas and Easter. Many of us are still getting used to the newest in our repertoire, **Divine Service, Setting Two**. We've received both positive and negative feedback about it. We plan to continue using it for a while and see how it grows on everyone. We may decide, later, to use it less frequently if it doesn't "catch on".

**Many thanks to the Altar Guild**, who will be tasked with more duties to facilitate these changes. We appreciate the faithful service of these Christian servants!

**Change vs. Stability:**

It is often said that one of the blessings of a traditional church like Messiah is that you know what to expect, and we don't make changes simply for the sake of change. We appreciate the value of repetition. We find comfort in the familiar. We don't cast off the "old ways" simply because they are old. We stand firm against a world of so much shifting sand. And some things, like the Word of God, *do not change* and are never up for a vote. But even the most traditional churches do change with time. And not all change is inherently bad. Change toward more faithful practice, change that will serve our neighbors better, and that helps to strengthen faith and teach the Word of God better – these are the type of changes we want! Even then, it is our goal to make these changes carefully, gradually if possible, and with well-reasoned consideration.

There is great freedom for each congregation regarding *how* to receive the Lord's gifts, even within the bounds of traditional LCMS practice. We could have kept the old hymnal and simply use "page 15" every Sunday (Some congregations still do!) For many good reasons we chose not to. We could use the one-year or the three-year lectionary. We have many choices in how and when to offer the Lord's Supper. And as a congregation we have to decide these things together, with the best interests of our neighbor in mind.

I thank God for our faithful Board of Elders who take seriously their leadership responsibilities, and seek to make these decisions for the blessing of our congregation. Please feel free to continue sharing your observations, suggestions and preferences with your pastor and Elders (and be kind when you do!) We are always hearing feedback and it helps us make changes in a way that is responsive to the congregation. While we certainly can't always bend to every one of these, we pray for the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) would prevail among us. In the end it is the Lord's church, not any of ours.



## Youth Group ~ Great Gatherings, Great Times!

Deaconess Buhler



Our **Youth Garage Sale** was a huge success! Thank you all for your donations, volunteer time, and purchases. With your help, we were able to collect over \$2400 for our youth trips! Some \$1500 went toward reimbursement funds that helped Matthew and James attend Christ Academy last month. The balance of \$900+ went towards the youth "2021 Higher Things" trip to Austin. We thank the Lord for watching over our youth and keeping them safe as they travel to expand their knowledge and faith in Christ!



Our **Youth Pool Party** at the Sol / Salgado's homestead in Haslet was a very relaxing and fun-filled event. A big thank you to Mr. & Mrs. Soll for hosting and providing the delicious food. You are a blessing! We hope we can do this again before the summer is up.



## Christ Academy 2021

Deaconess Buhler



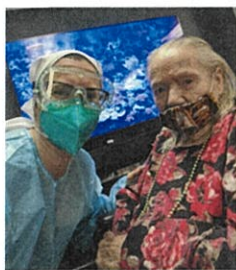
Christ Academy 2021 was a huge success. Sixty-six youth traveled in from all over the US to Fort Wayne, Indiana, for an incredible two-week vacation. Timothy School consisted of forty-two young men and Phoebe School broke its record with twenty-four young ladies. Messiah sent two representatives this summer: James Buhler and Matthew Palmer. Christ Academy consists of three important elements: **confessional catechesis, liturgical worship, and fun activities**.

This was James' fourth year attending. He is still very passionate about attending the CTSFW seminary program after college to pursue the pastoral ministry. This was Matthew's first year attending. While the drive was long, Matthew had a great experience on campus and would love to attend again next summer. He will have to return, so his new friends can show him how to read the Greek New Testament he purchased while at the bookstore! These boys received an array of lessons from numerous Professors of Theology while having a great time serving their neighbor and worshipping their Lord! Check out these smiles.



*Making Christ Centered Friends For Life!*





Wearing a garment of white is a way of keeping the attention on God. An ecclesiastical garment such as a wimple or clerical collar labels a church worker as "approachable" without having the distraction of one's appearance. Some of our members had a difficult time remembering who I was. Would you be able to recognize me in my hazmat suit, let alone that I was representing Christ and ready to share the love of the Lord? Thankfully, my wimple veil stands out no matter how much the world tries to cover me with the disguise of fear or safety. Baptismal garments, confirmation robes, wedding gowns, surplices, wimples, and palls are white to remind us that we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.



**Though our sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.**



## Lutheran for Life ~ Word of Hope (24hr Hotline)

Deaconess Buhler



Deaconess Chrissie Gillet,  
PsyD

Word of Hope Director

- Did you know Lutherans for Life has a hotline? Word of Hope is a Gospel-motivated Lutheran hotline that communicates and shares the abundant love of Christ.

- Our free and confidential services are provided **through the** love and support of Lutherans for Life. Word of Hope exists to bring healing, found in Christ, to those whose hearts have been broken by sin.

At Word of Hope, we know God is a God of mercy and compassion. We are ready to share that message with those who are suffering. Our team strives to lift the burden of guilt from men and women and show them that through Christ, all sins are forgiven.



Deaconess Pamela Buhler

Word of Hope Assistant

**"Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1**

After Abortion Care	Pregnancy Assistance	Spiritual Care
If you struggle with a past abortion decision, we're here for you. Men and women often experience regret, grief, anger, and confusion after an abortion and don't always understand why. We can help. There is forgiveness, grace, hope, and restoration available for you, no matter your past or story.	An unplanned pregnancy can be overwhelming and scary, but support is available to you! We provide relationship, information, and referrals to help ease the burden and cares brought on by an unplanned pregnancy. Don't struggle alone. There's help available!	Through individual hotline calls, emails, or referrals from pastors, we provide supplementary Lutheran assistance to support the spiritual needs of men and women struggling with a present or past life-issue decision. (i.e. Marriage, Fertility, Abortion, Adoption, Miscarriage/Stillbirth, Disability, End-of Life, Suicide and more)

## Angel Tree ~ Restoring Bonds, Strengthening Families

Deaconess Buhler



Angel Tree® is a program of Prison Fellowship that serves incarcerated parents by providing a pathway for strengthening and restoring their relationships with their children and families.

Messiah has applied for the 2021 Angel Tree Program. If you are interested in Coordinating this event, please let Pastor Chryst know.