The Messiah

A monthly publication of Messiah Lutheran Church



Web: www.messiah-lutheran.us

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Living Nativity, December 2015









This event couldn't happen without our servants.

Thank you to all of you who made our Living Nativity so real in 2015!



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Pastor's Ponderings By Pastor Rice



As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led by Thee.

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With the new year comes the beautiful church season of Epiphany. This is the season where we focus on how God shows himself in power and might. It is the season that reminds us that He is leading. He led the Magi to see the baby in a Manger. God led Mary and Jesus new disciples to see the first miracle that Jesus performed at the wedding at Cana. God continues to lead us today!

God uses His Word to reveal His plan for us. The scriptures for worship during this January all point to God reaching out to His creation to accomplish wonderful things. This is not just for times past. They are for today as well. May we take the time to be in God's Word to empower us to see God's light shining in our New Year.

Dear Messiah Lutheran Family,

Donna and I wish to thank you for your Christmas cards,
prayers and gifts from last month. I thank God for His
working through you.

With Much Appreciation
+Peace
Pastor Rick and Donna

Insights from Inese, DCE



Can you believe we are in the New Year? What happened to the previous one? Where did it go? It seems that just a week ago we

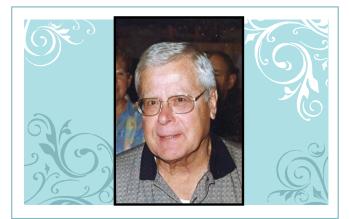
were wishing each other Happy 2015!

So, here we are – standing in the doorway to a new year, new month, new week, new day and the truth is that there is no way of telling what it will be like.

It will surely have its joys, smiles, and laughter. It will probably also have its sorrows, sadness and even tears. It will likely have times when we feel deeply fulfilled and like our life has true meaning and purpose. There might also be times when we just shrug our shoulders and are not quite sure what we are doing here. We will gain and we will lose. We will celebrate and we will grieve. That's life —all of it. That's a gift from God and the promise of His presence and love for us - in all of it. Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, wherever we are.

So, I am not gonna wish you that all your days are filled with joy, laughter and happiness because that is not how real life works. I would like to wish you and pray for you know Christ's presence in all colors and shades of your life. I will wish you and pray for you that in Him you would discover joy and peace that is bigger than circumstances and that can be known even in the midst of sadness and struggles. Jesus loves you, He truly, really does. So, let's enter this New Year with joy, confidence and hope because He is faithful to His promises and He is faithful to us.

Thank you so much for all the cards and generous Christmas gifts. It is a blessing to have such a loving church family. Part of the gift was spent to reserve camping spots in Big Sur, which is one of my favorite places in the world. I plan on being a happy camper. Thank you again!



President's Message

As I sit here preparing to write this column, the celebration of Christmas is over and we look forward to a new year at Messiah Lutheran Church. As you probably know, our finances continue to be a challenge

in the coming months. We need to be prepared for possible changes recommended by the Board of Directors or find new sources of revenue. In accordance with our by-laws, the members of the congregation must approve any changes. The mission and ministry team and the Worship Life Task Force continue to work tirelessly to find new methods and conditions to attract new members, retain current members and reinstate former members.

I ran across an article in a newsletter from the Army Historical Foundation campaign for the National Museum of the United States Army that I would like to share with you:

"It turns out you can buy happiness as long as you don't try to buy it for yourself. According to researchers, making a donation to a non-profit organization can trigger the same pleasurable effect in the brain as eating chocolate.

"Thanks to functional MRI technology which allows monitoring of brain activity in real time, researchers have learned that when a person donates to a worthy cause, the same region of the brain lights up as when one satisfies a particular craving. This pleasure response is the physiological reason behind the 'warm glow' or good feeling you get when you give—and why so many people choose to donate to charities.

"So, does giving really make us happier? According to the survey and study, Prosocial Spending and Happiness: Using Money to Benefit Others Pays Off by researchers Dunn, Aknin and Norton, it does!

"Giving is satisfying, particularly when your donation supports something you care about. As we approach the end of the 2015 tax year, think about how you might give more in ways to maximize your happy 'warm glow' and to help others. It may not be as good as chocolate, but your dentist will be proud."

It is amazing the information researchers can find with all kinds of scientific machines and testing. But, I think I could have told them in the first place that it feels good to give to charitable organizations especially your church. Remember your "warm glow" throughout 2016. Enough said.

The Board of Directors will be meeting often and regularly with Pastor Rick and DCE Inese to discuss any changes suggested by the various teams before bringing the ideas before the congregation. I am confident we can get through these difficult times. The Lord will be with us.

God Bless†



EPIPHANY WORSHIP



Wednesday January 6, 2016 7:00 p.m.

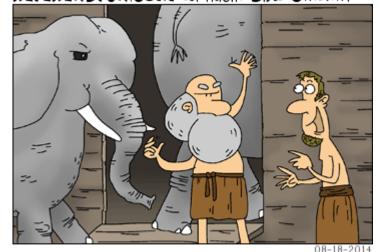
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church

2402 Cabrillo College Dr., Soquel (Between Highway 1 & Soquel Drive)

Youth Events

Baking for Louisiana Purchase Bake Club Saturday, January 9 from 9:00 am to Noon Messiah Lutheran Church

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READY FOR A FUN RIDDLE ... HOW MANY OF EACH ANIMAL DID MOSES TAKE ON THE ARK?

Young Adult and Campus Ministry Events



Food for Thought
Sunday, January 10 after the 10am worship
Lunch and conversation about God's calling for us for the New Year

Cook It Up Together: Mexican Night
Friday, January 8 at 6pm at Messiah Lutheran Church
Including making your own guacamole

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Servant Event Monday, January 18 Details TBA

Weekly Bible Conversations

Date and time TBA.

If you are interested, please contact DCE Inese with times that would work for you.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



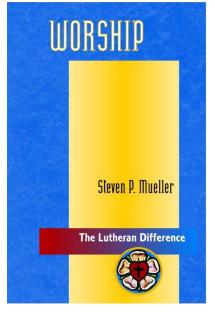
If you signed up for the Louisiana Bake Sale: Please pick up your baked goods for the month of January on Sunday, January 10 and check your name off the list. Thank you for supporting our youth in going to the National Youth Gathering!

You can still sign up for Louisiana Bake Club to support MLC youth going to the National Youth Gathering by contacting DCE Inese. For \$20 a month, you will receive monthly home-

baked goods from Jan. to May. We need 7 more sign-ups to reach out fund-raising goal. If you would like to simply donate (without receiving baked goods), we very much appreciate that. This is our ONLY fund-raiser. Thank you for your support!

Mission & Ministry Meeting Wednesday, January 13 6:00 pm





Pastor's Sunday Bible Study: Worship

Join us on Sunday Morning, from 9:15-9:45 for a Bible Study about Worship. The topics will include:

- † The God We Worship
- † The People Who Worship
- † The Way of the Church
- † Elements of Christian Worship
- † The Bible in Worship

Announcements

Teacher Gretchen's Preschool Kinder Korner

We truly had a delightful December at MLP sharing the Christmas story with the young children we serve. The children enjoyed making a special nativity scene as a gift for their parents.

Many existing and alumni families attended MLC's Living Nativity again this year. What a wonderful night!

Personally I would like to see even more time, energy, prayer and thought put into this important witness to the community and encourage you to join me in planning for next December.

I think the best gift I received this Christmas was the following email from a mother of one of our preschoolers:

12-22-15 Hi Gretch –

I just thought you might appreciate this story: we went to Marini's today to meet Santa. He asked Maggie (who is 3 ½ years old) what she wanted for Christmas, and she said, "I would like to go to

Bethlehem to meet that new baby."



Announcements

MLC Food Pantry is in need of:

Canned meats, hearty stews and soups. Leave donations in the kitchen.





The annual Good Shepherd Boutique & Bake Sale was a big success for the Lutheran Bethesda Homes for the developmentally disabled donation. Orchestrated by Sue Reeves, Darlene Stumpf, Gloria Settle, Ruth Kjaer, Leonard & Helen Damm, Miriam Langum, Susan Kolte, Graeme Smith and many others who brought items.













Quint Meland was seen leaving with the second pecan pie baked by Ruth Kjaer.

Seeking new volunteers for a labor of love with EATING WITH JESUS (EWJ) mission.

Our mission feeds the homeless residences of Santa Cruz Homeless Center (HSC) on weekends due to recent budget cutbacks. Together with other local churches we provide 200 meals for each Saturday Breakfast and Dinner meals.

TWICE a MONTH (EVERY OTHER WEEK) Messiah Lutheran needs volunteers for preparation, cooking, serving and cleanup of 200 meals for each meal at HSC. Excess food from each meal is covered and served the following days (Sunday, etc) by HSC staff.

Thursday night preparation includes Brown Paper Bags (BPB) which are stuffed with Peanut Butter& Jam Sandwich, Hard Boiled Egg, Etc. With a Bottled Water, we inform street homeless of incoming Storms so they can weather the worst weather events. Clean/dry socks, unused salt/pepper and mustard package (2oz), clean plastic trash bags for rain protection.

Two hours labor can:

- Cut and cook potatoes Thursday night (5-8 pm) at Messiah's Johnson Hall Kitchen for Saturday Breakfast. Stuff BPB for street homeless.
- Prepare Saturday Breakfast (5-7am) and/or Dinner (3-5 pm) meals.
- Serve Saturday Breakfast (6-9 am) and/or Dinner (4-6 pm) meals.
- Cleanup Saturday Breakfast (7-9 am) and /or Dinner (4-7 pm) meals.

SEE JULIE OR DEAN OKINS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Phone: (831) 423-2512

Email: okinsjulie@sbcglobal.net

Messiah Lutheran church,

you for always showing UCSC circle K so much sity with regards to inviting us to your events,

"I we use the space, hosting for us all study is we are so gratful for PEACE AND JOY TO YOU AND YOURS presence within our community! On behalf of the entire I wanted to pertonally wish you all a jugous clusteres I wanted to pertonally wish you all a jugous clusteres clearful New Year's! we couldn't be more blessed to now support! we can't wait for what's more to come!!

