

Our Mission Statement

Saved by the redeeming grace of God, we proclaim Christ crucified through worship, service and love of neighbor

Our Vision Statement

We have been saved by the grace of God, redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and moved by the Holy Spirit to respond to God's love. We will proclaim to all God's saving Gospel of Christ crucified. We will worship God through Word and Sacrament, serve all in need in our communities and nurture fellow members in Christ.

Our Guiding Principles

Everything we do should incorporate at least three of the following Guiding Principles in support of the Mission and Vision of this Church:

- Pray
- Study
- Worship
- Invite
- Encourage
- Serve
- Give

Inside this Issue:

- Pastor's Message
- Food Basket Fund Raiser
- Update on Christmas Store
- December Calendar



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Happy New Year!

As a Christian, it seems redundant to wish you "Happy New Year" on the first of January because in the church, we already did that on the first Sunday of December. As people of faith, we celebrate the beginning of a new church year as we begin to make preparation for the coming of Jesus in the manger. New beginnings are what Advent is all about. Still, for the rest of society, and indeed, the rest of the world, the calendar turns over on December 31st. So it's hard to ignore the end of 2018 and the start of 2019.

Secular New Year's traditions are a push-pull for me. On the one hand, my wedding anniversary is New Year's Eve. Chris and I were married New Year's Eve, 1987. She came out of the old ALC church tradition, and I came out of the old LCA church tradition so as we Lutherans were merging into the new church—ELCA—that day, my bride and I were having a wonderful merger of our own, and we are glad to celebrate 31 years together this year.

On top of that, as a big college football fan, I enjoy many of the games that happen around the new year. But more than that, I know that as human beings, we need new beginnings and do-overs. We need chances to leave the past behind and have a fresh start without the baggage of days of old mistakes. As Americans, our New Year's celebrations offer us that, or at least they are supposed to. We gather with friends, drink a little bubbly, and begin the new year with a kiss for someone that we care about. What could be wrong with that?

The problem is that the way that we do New Year's doesn't really work for a lot of people because of course, there are the dreaded "New Year's Resolutions." You know what they are: each January first we promise ourselves that we are going to eat better, exercise more, and lose weight. We promise ourselves that we are going to be more organized at work, be better friends, and spend more quality time with family, and almost without fail, by January seventh, the bed feels a whole lot nicer than an early morning run, and by January eighth, we have abandoned our resolutions to another year of deep and abiding guilt!

New Year's, as we celebrate it, is a do-it-yourself-improvement plan, and as Jesus followers, we do not believe in that. I do not mean that we cannot grow, and especially grow in grace, because we can. But we cannot grow BY OURSELVES. We cannot pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and be better. We say every week in worship that we are "captive to sin." That means, the sins of over-eating, over-working, under-exercising, and under-connecting, among others. As people of faith, we confess that our traditional New Year's resolutions are doomed to disappoint us even before we make them.

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God Loves You, and So Do I! Pastor Devin



THANK YOU THANK YOU

People of Messiah, I have been your Pastor for less than two months so far, and I am shocked and overjoyed the way that you have showered Chris and me this Christmas season! For starters, some 40-50 of you were willing to give up some time on a beautiful, warm December afternoon to come and spend some time with us for our Advent Open House. Thank you! We were blessed to share some early Christmas cheer with you.

Then you graciously allowed me to share in the financial gift that Messiah gave to the church staff on Christmas Eve, even though I have been here just a short time. Wow! Thank you!

Finally, there were also numerous other personal expressions of love and care, including Christmas cookies and pound cake (which I will have to work off!), poinsettias (which I will try not to kill!), tickets to see the *Sound of Music* at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, dinner invitations, and more!

Thanks to each and every one of you for your over-the-top love and graciousness! We are humbled and honored to serve among you. I only hope that I can show you half as much love as you have shown us in this brief time.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

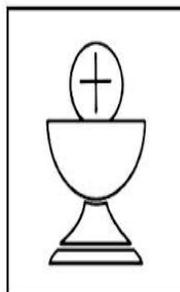
Gratefully,

Pastor Devin and Chris

Messiah Lutheran Worship & Contact Information

SUNDAYS
Worship - 8:00 & 10:45 am
Sunday School
Adults - 9:15 am
Children - 9:15 am
WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS
Meal - 5:30 pm
Worship - 6:15 pm

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Pastor: Rev. Devin Strong
Pastor's Email: pastordevinstrong@gmail.com
Office Staff: Ricky Craig
Office Email: mlcmontg@knology.net
Website: www.messiahlutheranmgm.org



EUCCHARIST EVERY SUNDAY & WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

2018 Nixon Summary

A big THANK YOU to everyone who supported the E.D. Nixon Christmas Store!! Over 2 ½ days and 26 classes, we provided 2 gift items for approximately 520 children! Each child was allowed to select two gifts for their parents or other adults in their life. Once again Christmas items and toiletries were some of the most popular items but we also gave away everything from grill aprons and stadium seats to manicure sets and slippers.

Thanks to Jim Willoughby for transporting all the items to E.D. Nixon on Sunday, Dec 16th and hauling all the remaining gifts and supplies back on Wednesday, Dec 19th. A special thanks to all of our gifted wrappers who came down to the school to box, wrap, bag and beribbon all these gifts!

Kathryn Willoughby

Karen Brow

Peg Walker

Melissa and Eliana Hataway

Pat Riggins and Jya

Lu Ann Marz

Elsa Larson

Tina Ruffa

Alice McMullan

Linda Jones

Dawn Taylor (Kay's friend)

Daniel Istvan (Eliana's friend)

Jacqueline Grimes (school volunteer)

Stephanie Thomas and Wilma (librarian and her sister)

Ms. Crenshaw (school counselor)

Thank you all for your continued support of this pro-

Kay Owens

Hosts Needed: Pastor Strong would like to lead a series of one-time gatherings in people's homes in December and January to get to know members, to learn Messiah's history, and to lead the congregation in a conversation about hopes and dreams for Messiah's future. If you are willing to host such a gathering, please let Pastor Strong or Rick know.

CATECHISM

We will not have Wonderful Wednesday night services until sometime in February. Watch for the upcoming announcements, when Wednesday night services will resume.

There will be Catechism classes as usual. They will be held January 9th, 23rd, and 30th. Pastor will not be here on January 16th and the classes will be canceled on that day.

As usual the classes will begin at 7:00 pm.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9:00 am Quilters	2 9:00 am Quilters	3 9:30 am Marys & Marthas	4 6:00 pm Pinks & Pearls	5 9:00 am Yarnovers 1:00pm Girl Scouts
6 8:00 am Worship w/Eucharist 9:15 am Sunday School 10:45 Worship w/Eucharist 4:00 pm WORG	7	8 9:00 am Quilters 11:30 am Loose Ladies (First Watch Zelda RD)	9 9:00 am Quilters 7:00 PM Catechism	10	11	12 9:00 Art Club
13 8:00 am Worship w/Eucharist 9:15 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship w/Eucharist	14	15 9:00 Quilters 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	16 9:00 am Quilters No Catechism Tonight	17 6:30 Council Meeting	18	19 9:00 am Yarnovers 1:00 pm Girl Scouts
20 8:00 am Worship w/Eucharist 9:15 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship w/Eucharist 4:00 pm WORG	21	22 9:00 am Quilters 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	23 9:00 am Quilters 7:00 pm Catechism	24	25	26 9:00 am Yarnovers
27 8:00 am Worship w/Eucharist 9:15 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship w/Eucharist	28	29 9:00 am Quilters 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	30 9:00 am Quilters 7:00 pm Catechism	31		

January Birthdays

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 01 Sember Gordon | 15 Etahn Hataway | 26 Sandra Bivens-Tutt |
| 03 Willie Tutt, II | 18 David Causey | 29 Mark OConner |
| 05 Van Sievers | 22 Joyce Colburn | |
| 08 Tina Ruffa | Leesa Petrey | |
| 09 David Marz | 23 Debbie Stevenson | |
| 15 Debbie Wagstaff | 25 Michael Escaravage | |

