



JULY 2020

Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Dear Messiah,

The building committee has been meeting every other week so far this summer. We are pouring over the details of the plan down to the minutiae of window heights, the placement of interior doors and exterior fixtures. Despite the attention we've been giving to the "small" details of this building design, what has been stirring in my imagination are larger images of the life of Messiah Lutheran in this new location: Church picnics, fundraisers, hymn sings, bible studies, coffee hours and adult forums - images of walking around the place, gathering for worship, greeting seasoned members and new faces alike. The sights and sounds of life together have been coming to life for me as the building plans continue to be refined.

A sign is going up on the land this week that reads "The Future Site of Messiah Lutheran Ministries". When I saw the sign, my imagination was totally re-oriented: The center of what we are building here is not the building itself. The building is important, certainly, as the place where we are formed through the love we encounter in Christ and in each other. But just as that formation is not only for our sake but for the world, what we are building is not only for our sake but for the world. The ministry of Messiah is what this building is about.

These thoughts turned me back to the building: How can we communicate our Christ-centered outward gaze in this new structure? How do we communicate the outward orientation of our calling through this building? The sanctuary cross came to mind - As the central image of our faith, as the central image of our community.

I presented a little slide show of crosses to stir the imagination of our Building committee. Being intentional about the kind of cross we want to have is important, as it is a reflection of the intentional church we want to have. Our self-understanding, who we are, and what we are about as Lutheran Christians, could be represented in the cross we choose. Creation and the natural beauty of this specific place where we find ourselves, where we have been gathered by the Holy Spirit, could be reflected in our cross. Founded in the conviction that our ministry to this place, in this world, starts at the cross of Christ, I want to support Messiah in being intentional about this central element of what it is we are building, and the identity we find in it, as followers of Christ.

If you would like to offer input, send an email with pictures or descriptions to Pastor Ben.

In peace,

Pastor Ben

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So how has the praying gone this week? In last week's newsletter, I called upon you to pray a **500 Mississippi's Prayer** each day asking the Spirit to transform your life, asking God to open your eyes, ears, hearts, bodies, minds and spirits to the real suffering of our indigenous, brown and black siblings in Christ.

As you read that, you might have asked, "what about my own sufferings? I have sufferings too. Can't I pray for God to relieve those?" Of course, you can. Placing our own sufferings before God is one part of our prayer life. But it is not the only part. Another part is praying that God will end the sufferings of your neighbor...and a part of that is praying that God will use you and me to do that difficult work. And in order for God to use you and me to help change the world so that people of color and the poor and the marginalized can live and breathe and seek the fullness of abundant life that God has promised for them too, we pray that the Spirit will transform us to be people of compassion, empathy and love.

But this isn't just any love we're called to be transformed into living. This is *agape* love. "*Agape* love your neighbor as you *agape* love yourself." Whenever Jesus and Paul talk about loving God and loving neighbor as the core of all the law and prophets, they are talking about *agape* love. In fact, *agape* is actually the Greek word for love used throughout the New Testament. Whenever you see "love" in the NT, think *agape*.

What is *agape* love? It is selfless love, lose your self for others love, stand in suffering with your fellow human beings love, limit my rights and take on the responsibility Christ gives us to lift up the rights of those who suffer love. We as followers of Christ are called to *agape* love our neighbors no matter who they are. And today especially we're called to *agape* love those whose rights aren't being respected, especially those who aren't being treated with justice, especially right now our indigenous, brown and black brothers and sisters. *Agape* love is the core of following Christ and is seen most fully in Jesus Christ who suffered and died selflessly so that the whole world might be saved from our sin and its never-ending consequences.

This *agape* love stands against the voices in this world who are telling us that selfishness – focusing only on "me and my own" – is a virtue. These voices of selfishness tell us that our only responsibility is to care for our own selves and our own lives. Other lives are to come second, if at all, and are there for me to use for my own gain. These voices tell us that life is one big game of King of the Hill for scarce resources and that helping and loving others is a waste of our time unless it serves the self.

But for followers of Christ, selfishness is never a virtue. In Christ we are called to self-less love. As Christians, we cannot follow both the voices of selfishness in our culture and the voice of Jesus Christ calling us to *agape* love at the same time. For these voices are going in opposite directions. As followers of Christ, we listen to Christ's voice and follow him away from the bandits who would tempt us with selfishness and toward the *agape* love of our Good Shepherd (John 10). "And I lay down my life for the sheep," Jesus proclaims in pure, selfless, *agape* love. That is the love we are called to live.

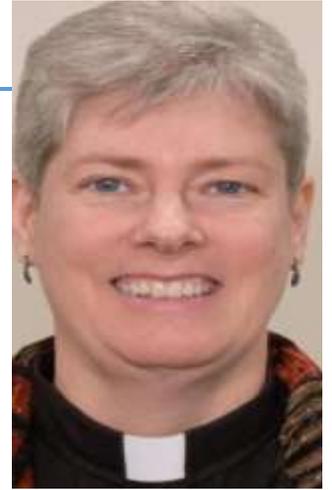
Even for ourselves we practice a self-less self-love that lives in the promise that each and every person is God's beloved, created in God's image. In that knowledge and truth, we care for and love all whom created, redeemed and empowered, other selves and our own, so that we can take this knowledge of God's love of us to heart and turn it around to love our neighbors.

I close today with an old parable. Jesus was giving a woman a tour of heaven and hell so that she could see the difference between the two. First, they went to a room where a large group of people were sitting around a big table. In the middle of the table sat giant pots of delicious smelling soup. The people around the table had long spoons attached to both of their hands, so long and straight that they couldn't bend them to reach their own mouths. As Jesus and the woman watched, the starving people bickered, yelled and screamed, raged and fought, bashing each other again and again with their spoons, demanding entitlement to get the delicious soup for themselves without caring about anyone else. The suffering, weeping and gnashing of teeth was horrible to watch. "This is hell," Jesus told the woman.

Then Jesus took her to another room. A large group of people were sitting around a big table with big pots of delicious smelling soup down the middle. Each person had long spoons attached to their hands, so long and straight that they couldn't reach their own mouths. But these people were happy, well-nourished, and filled with joy, laughing with each other and singing songs and celebrating life. "This is heaven," Jesus said.

The woman said to Jesus, "I don't understand. Why are the people here so happy while the others were so miserable when everything in both rooms is the same?" And Jesus said, "Ah, that's simple. Here they learned how to feed each other."

That is *agape* love.



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Council Minutes

Your Council met on June 16th. Complete minutes are on the bulletin board, but here are some highlights:

- Pastor Ben will be gone July 6th-12th
- There will be a build forum on July 12th after worship
- We will welcome new members on July 19
- Worship on the land will be on July 26, weather permitting
- We will have a farewell to Howard and Karen who are moving to Missoula after worship on July 26.
- How we conduct church in lieu of Covid-19 remains the same for July. All are welcome to the building; masks are required when singing.
- Steve, Brooke, and Pastor Ben will do a first run review of our constitution. If you are interested in being on that committee, please contact the church.
- We have three positions to fill: Council member/Stewardship chair, two representatives to be our St. John's representatives. If you are interested in filling any of these, please contact the church.
- Melinda's hours will now include Fridays from 9-12. She will be responsible for cleaning the church each week to ease the burden for Innkeepers.
- Mason will mow the lawn this summer.
- Our finances are in a good place; Covid-19 slowed giving earlier in the year, but we are now on par with last year.



We will meet again Tuesday, July 21st at 4:30 pm

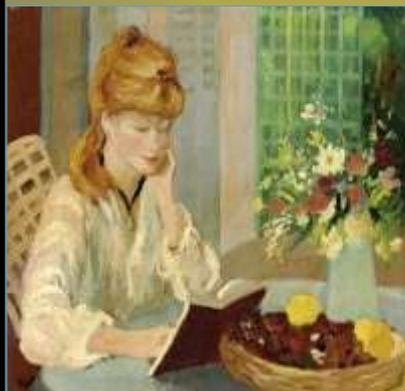
Building Committee Update

Plans are still with builders. We hope to hear something by our July 12th Forum. We will be asking the congregation to weigh in on the exterior siding color and have a discussion about windows in the sanctuary.



JULY 2020

Women's Safari Book Club



Date: July 16th

Time: 7:00 PM

Book: "Hope: A Memoir of Survival in Cleveland"

Author: Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus, et al

Facilitator: TBD

Host: Marla Ebel

Location: Messiah Lutheran

New Members Welcome! Contact Marla Ebel at dmebel@live.com

The 3rd Quarter Offering (July-Sept)



is:

RLACF's Fun Run

INNKEEPERS

PLEASE sign up as an Innkeeper.

We are in need of leaders and helpers each month.

The sign up calendar is on the door of the sanctuary.



COVID CORNER:

According to the Montana State government, as of June 30 there are 303 active cases in the state and 90,862 tests have been administered (That is only about 11% of the state population). With 13 confirmed active cases in Carbon County, and 3 of those here in Red Lodge, Messiah will continue to meet during the month of July and broadcast worship over Zoom. We will be sure to announce any changes on the website and over email. (Statistics from Carbon County News 6/30/2020)



Masks and hand sanitizer remain important for us to continue worshipping together. Wearing Masks Helps - but only if you wear them properly.

Here are some tips on mask wearing:

- * - Make sure your mouth *and* nose are securely covered.
- * - Make sure the mask is snug to your cheeks and jaw

Remember: Masks protect others from your germs. Masks are not a political statement. They are a statement of the love we share for each other.

Wear your mask in the light of the love we share for one another!

John 13:34a



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Below are some ways you can serve your church and your community. Please contact the church via phone or email if you are interested in helping out!

St. John's Rep: We are in need of filling two vacancies for St. John's delegates. This position requires you attend the annual St. John's meeting, representing Messiah and reporting back to the congregation. If you are interested, or would like more information on what a St. John's delegate does, please contact the church.



Help us review our church's Constitution. The last review was done in 2009 and ratified in 2010. It is a lengthy process if changes are made, but we feel it is important to review it to make sure we are staying current. This committee will be led by Steve Thuesen. If you are interested in working with this committee, please contact the church via email or phone.

REMINDER: All of us need to register for the 2020 census

For online registration, please visit 2020census.gov.

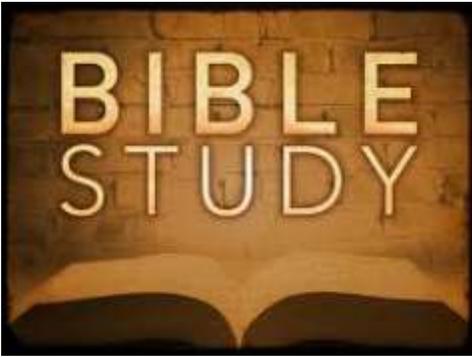
If you want/need help to register, please contact Barb Ostrum at 446-4121. She is available after Sunday church services to complete the registration with you on the computer. Or, you can register by phone at (844) 330-2020 and then following the prompts. You will be asked to give your 12 digit census number but if you don't have it, don't know it, or cannot locate it, just say that you do not have it when prompted. You can still register for the census without that number. Again, please contact Barb Ostrum, with any questions or concerns about how to register for the 2020 census. The results of the census determines the resources and representation Montana will receive for the next 10 years. It would be great if Montana could regain a second House of Representatives delegate.



Interested in making our church a safer place? We are looking for people who know or are willing to learn CPR, how to use a defibrillator, and look at other safety/security concerns. This is not an official committee; but a group of interested people willing to be trained just in case.

Please contact the church via email or phone

JULY 2020



Every Monday

(led by Allen Hansen, LPA)

at The Willows at 1:00 PM

at Cedar Wood Villa at 4:00 PM

(Canceled until further notice)

Every Tuesday

Women's Group

at Messiah

at 9:00 AM

Worship Services

Third Thursday of Each Month

(led by Allen Hansen, LPA)

at Cedar Wood Villa at 2:00 PM

(Canceled until further notice)

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

Keeley Bremer
Manuel Cabanas
Nancy Gasparro
Andrea Holmen
David Jurkovich

Rick Koski
Neil Laird
Karen Manteuffel
Arturo Martinez
James "Bud" Ridenour

DJ Rosekelly
Dick Rosekelly
Bruce Steel
Josh Wilker
Jim Zenz



PRAYER REQUESTS

For prayer requests, contact the church office at

446-2430 or messiahprayers@gmail.com

with accurate information and permission from the person you are adding.

JULY 2020



7/12 Gina & Stan Farnham
7/29 Bill & Lois Miller



7/8 Beverly Urbaniak
7/16 Jack Ervin
7/19 Jacob Kreatz
7/24 Mary Ames
7/25 Renee Gildehaus
7/29 Sally Gildehaus
7/30 Seth Ebel
7/30 David Jurkovich



NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

We will be welcoming

Herb and Myrna Hunt, David Aaseng, and the Mettes family
as New Members on July 19th!

7

Please support them and welcome them to our congregation!



Christikon Clips

July 2020

Information for our Congregations

To: Campers/Guests registered for Christikon in 2020

Fr: Pastor Mark

Re: Camp Preparation & Travel

COVID-19 changed much in our lives and world. As we prepare to welcome you to camp this summer, we need your help to minimize the risk of infection by following the recommendations below prior to and while attending camp. If you have any illness symptoms before departing for camp, please do not board the bus or travel up to camp until they clear and you have spoken with me.

For 2 weeks prior to arriving at camp:

Please take and record your temperature daily, and bring that log with you to camp. Minimize your exposure to others by staying at home as much as possible and avoiding large group activities (more than 10), and wearing a face-mask when you do go out.

While at camp and/or riding the bus:

Wear a facemask, and bring another with you. We do have a good supply up here, but not enough for all guests all summer.

If you can, please bring your own bottle of hand sanitizer.

Summer staff have followed the same process before they arrived, and commit to spending the entire summer up at camp and not heading to town during breaks.

Our Park County Health Department and camp physician believe that having both staff and guests follow these protocols will greatly minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and will help all campers to arrive at camp healthy and ready to go. We understand they involve some sacrifice on your part, and may affect other summer plans or activities.

As you know all too well, this is no ordinary time. We take these steps in addition to following all other reopening guidelines (local, state, American Camping Association, etc.) as we prepare for the season. Our hope is that by all doing these things we can feel confident everyone is healthy and ready for camp.

Remember to pray for the staff and campers.

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ — exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.

CHRISTIKON • 1108 24th Street West • Billings, MT 59102
406 656-1969 • secretary@christikon.org • www.christikon.org

Messiah Calendar ~ July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Independence Day 
5 9:30 AM Worship At Messiah and online	6 1:00 PM Bible Study at The Willows 4:00 PM Bible Study at Cedar Wood (Canceled until further notice)	7 9:00 AM Women's Bible Study	8	9	10	11
12 9:30 AM Worship Online Pastor Ben gone Build Forum after services	13 1:00 PM Bible Study at The Willows 4:00 PM Bible Study at Cedar Wood (Canceled until further notice)	14 9:00 AM Women's Bible Study	15	16 2:00 PM Worship @Cedarwood Villa (Canceled until further notice) 7:00 PM Safari Book Club	17	18
19 9:30 AM Worship Online	20 1:00 PM Bible Study at The Willows 4:00 PM Bible Study at Cedar Wood (Canceled until further notice)	21 9:00 AM Women's Bible Study 4:30 PM Council Meeting	22	23	24	25
26 9:30 AM Worship On the land (weather permitting) and online Farewell Howard and Karen Young	27 1:00 PM Bible Study at The Willows 4:00 PM Bible Study at Cedar Wood (Canceled until further notice)	28 9:00 AM Women's Bible Study	29	30	31	

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Messiah's Mission:

“Live by Faith, Share Christ's Love, Be a Voice of Hope”



Pastor Ben says: “If you would like to sit down for a visit or invite me to sit on your deck or patio with you I’d be thrilled! Whether we have yet spoken/met or not, I would love to get to know you better. Call me on my cell or at the church to set up a time. “



HOW TO CONTACT US AND STAY IN TOUCH:

Church Office: 406-446-2430

Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Fri 9a-12p

Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday: Off

Tuesday : 9:00-4:00

Wednesday: 9:00-4:00 (Text Study 10:00-11:30)

Thursday: 9:00-4:00

Friday: 9:00-4:00

Saturday: 12:00-4:00

Sunday: 7:30-11:00

Pastor's Cell Phone: (646) 708-1389

Church Address: 723 S. Adams
P.O. Box 1330
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Website: www.redlodgemessiah.com

Facebook: **Messiah Lutheran**

Email: General: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Prayer Requests: messiahprayers@gmail.com

**Choir Practice Canceled until
further notice**

**Sunday Worship Service:
9:30 AM**

