

April
2026

Volume 33
Issue 4

In this Issue

- Pr. Jeff's Message
- Visitation Ministry
- New Members
- Baptisms
- Treasurer's Report
- Messiah's Day of Prayer
- Blood Drive
- Adult Education
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Lenten Soup Supper
- Give Families a Lift
- Community Meals
- Guns to Gardens
- Community Outreach Ministry
- Mountain of Food
- Easter Basket Collection
- Altar Flower "Thank You"
- Ladies Lunch Bunch



Once there was a small village on the edge of a river. One day, a villager noticed a man floating down the river and he quickly swam out to save the man from drowning. The next day, this same villager noticed two people in the river. He called for help and both flailing people were rescued from the swift waters. The following day, four people were seen caught in the turbulent current. And then eight, then more, and then still more!

The villagers quickly organized to rescue those caught in the torrents of the river. Watchtowers were built and swimmers were coordinated into shifts of rescue teams that maintained 24-hour surveillance of the river. They built shelters, made blankets, and increased the amount of food they grew to keep the saved people housed, warm, and fed. Yet the number of folks floating down the river seemed only to increase. And sadly, they could not save them all.

Every day the amount of aid grew. The villagers were so responsive that they created Go-fund me pages, put on bake sales, and sent out fund raising letters to big donors to raise money. Yet no matter how much money was raised, they could not stem the flow of people caught in the river.

One day, the villagers noticed a young man running northward along the bank. They shouted, *Where are you going? We need you to help with the rescue.* He responded, *You help them. I am going upstream to find out why these people keep falling in the river!*

After some time, he found a bridge that spanned the river. It was shadowed by mountains so that he could hardly see his footing. There in the middle of the bridge was a hole opening to the raging waters below. He returned the next day with carpenters who repaired the bridge and no one ever again needed to be saved. **The moral of the story? Charity** is helping the drowning people. **Justice** is fixing the bridge.

Three Chairs and a Holy Presence

Imagine a simple room with three chairs. Two are filled — a visitation minister and a beloved care receiver. The third chair sits gently beside them, intentionally left empty. It is Christ's chair. Always present. Always listening. Always loving.

What does visitation ministry mean to me?

It means dusting off my stoles and returning to pastoral care — a sacred space of ministry that has meant so much to me over the years. On difficult days, one of my most grounding practices was a late-afternoon visit with one of our homebound members. Sitting together, listening, praying, sometimes sharing Holy Communion — it brought me back to our central call: to care, to be kind, to love another.

I have offered our pastors the gift of serving as a "pastor in residence" here in Stoughton. We have several beloved members at Skaalen Nursing & Rehabilitation Center whom I visit during the year, alongside two extraordinary visitation ministers, Claire Gench and Gene Qualman. They are compassionate and faithful caregivers. At times, I simply tag-team with them, offering a pastoral care moment with those they so lovingly serve.

If a care receiver desires one of our pastors, they always have first choice. Yet I am close by and can easily come to offer Holy Communion or sit at a bedside during illness or hospitalization. In Stoughton, I can often be there within minutes. Presence matters.

As Henri Nouwen wrote, *"When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find it is those who... have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand."*

That is visitation ministry. Not fixing, but faithful presence. Not answers, but accompaniment.

The visitation ministry at Messiah is one of the quiet treasures of our congregation. Those who serve in this way are precious. In several instances, when I have presided at a funeral for one of our care receivers, inviting a visitation minister to stand alongside me has brought light and love into that sacred moment.

Three chairs. Two visible. One unseen — yet most real.
Grateful to share pews with each of you,

Mark Petersen

Next Sacred Circle: April 26th between the services

If Mark's reflection has inspired you and you feel that you might be called to this important ministry, please contact Pr. Dan by emailing pastordan@messiahchurch.com



Please Welcome New Members

Greg & Nancy Hines

Bill & Kirsten Goetz

Jesus & Susan Covarrubias

Thomas & Renee Matson

Ron & Carol Mach

Linda Palzkill

Bob & Celine Curley

Bob & Linda Frautschy

*We're Glad You Have Chosen Messiah
as Your New Church Home!*

Holy Baptism

Roman Julian James Dell Isola
Child of Anthony and Vanessa Dell Isola

Rebecca Ann Brinkmeier
Child of Karl and Abigail Brinkmeier

*I have called you by name,
you are mine.*



We are two months into the budget year and the Pledged Revenue received to date is \$188,500, the budget for the same time period is \$142,400, so we are \$46,100 ahead of the budget. The entire excess is due to the 29 families that have already met their pledge for 2026.

General Fund expenses were \$134,000 compared to the budget of \$146,000, so we were \$12,000 under budget.

The Gundlach Family Fund assisted 11 families with rent, total spent was \$3,850.

Tim Coulthart - Treasurer

Messiah Day of Prayer - May 7th

Messiah will join in celebrating the National Day of Prayer by holding a prayer vigil on

Thursday, May 7th

from 6:00AM to 10:00PM



Beginning April 1st, there will be a sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in the Gathering Space. Please come and spend some time in quiet reflection in our beautiful Sanctuary.

Please contact Clyde Nyhus at (608) 516-4926, or email music@messiahchurch.com with any questions.

Blood Drive "Thank You" - Next Drive is Wednesday May 6th



**Our February 2026 Blood drive was a success!
We Exceeded our Goal by 3 donations!**

Special thanks to our volunteers who greeted: Jim Alsmo (thank you for the gift cards!), June Nyhus and Dave Lindorff, to those who ran the registration desk: Susan Ashley, Lynn Brandt, Nancy Battist and Barb Herrod, and those who ran the canteen and provided donor support: Grace Kylo, Kathy Lukens, Walt Herrod & Terry Rieck, as well as Sarah Gordon for recruiting donors from Gunderson Funeral Home to partner with us every drive.

Thank you to Dan Battist for help with tables and chairs. Thank you to Judy Armelin who keeps our *Weekly News* and website updated so this information gets out and to Clark Kellogg for posting it on Facebook.

Gift card winners are: Barb Moseley, Dan O'Brien, Susan Krebsbach, Carrie Hinterthuer, Sue Meng and Ray Lux.

Looking for ways to grow in your faith and connect with others? Join us during the week for prayer gatherings, Bible study, and engaging conversations about the Christian life.



Men's Prayer Breakfast

All are welcome to join the weekly Men's Prayer Breakfast every Monday at **9:00 AM** at **Denny's**. This is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, conversation, and prayer as we begin the week together. Come enjoy good food and meaningful connection—

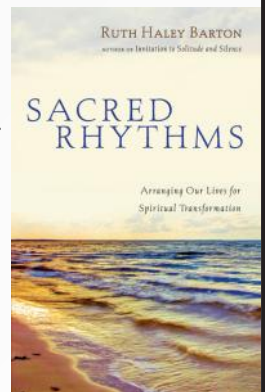
we'd love to have you join us!

Wednesday Morning Adult Bible Study

The Wednesday Morning Adult Bible Study meets **Wednesdays at 7:00 AM** in the **downstairs meeting room** at church. We are currently studying the **Gospel of Mark**, a study that will conclude on **May 6th**. All are welcome to join us for thoughtful conversation and learning as we explore Scripture together each week.

Women's Thursday Morning Book Study

Beginning **April 9th**, the Women's Thursday Morning Book Study will begin a **7-week discussion** of **Sacred Rhythms** by **Ruth Haley Barton**. This thoughtful and accessible book explores spiritual practices that help us encounter God in everyday life, including silence and solitude, prayer, Sabbath, discernment, and spiritual direction. Each chapter encourages meaningful conversation and invites participants to experiment with spiritual practices throughout the week. All women are warmly invited to join us **Thursdays at 10:00 AM** in the downstairs classroom at church.



Sunday Morning Adult Education

Beginning **April 12th**, our Sunday Morning Adult Education series will explore the **Easter lectionary readings**. Together, we will read and discuss the Scripture texts appointed for the day and reflect on how they speak to the **Easter season**, to one another, and to our lives as people of the resurrection.

All are welcome to join us in the **Social Hall at 9:20 AM**, between services. Bring your Bible and a cup of coffee as we learn and grow together in faith!

The SAM Spring Hike Season Starts Soon

Barb and Walt Herrod are ready to see you at their first SAM hike of the spring season. They have seven hikes planned for April through June. For any SAM hike, you must call or text Barb's cell (518) 567-6816 or email bwhfam@gmail.com.



Leave your phone number so you can be notified of last-minute changes or cancellations.

Below are the April hike dates and locations. Full hike details will be sent via a SAM email. So, check your SAM email often (more than once a week!) so you do not miss critical information.

Thursday, April 9 –Cherokee Conservation Park-North, 6098 N Sherman Ave, Madison, WI

Friday, April 17 – Dr. J.S. Garman Nature Preserve, 701 Fox Lane, Waterloo, WI

Monday, April 27 - McCarthy Park, 4841 County Highway TT, Cottage Grove, WI

SAM's April Potluck Features A Couple of Messiah's Own

We will have a very special program on April 29th as Messiah's own Marian Korth and Mim Jacobson present "Talking with God Through Music". We will start with our potluck in Social Hall. After lunch, we will head upstairs to the Sanctuary for the program. Why are we going to the Sanctuary for the program? Because the organ and piano in the Sanctuary sound much better than the piano in Social Hall.

Producing for the Pantry Benefits the St. Stephens Food Pantry



With recent events in the greater Minneapolis area, and other parts of the country, regarding Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities, there is concern in the Madison community relative to DHS/ICE visits. There is concern among our immigrant neighbors that they have trouble getting groceries. Many Messiah members are engaged in many different ways to prepare for possible visits. SAM is helping by renting a garden plot at Pheasant Hill Community Gardens. The gardens are located on the grounds of St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Monona, Wis. Our goal is to donate 100% of what we grow to the St. Stephens Food Pantry which is located right on the church grounds. The pantry will then get this fresh produce to those neighbors in need right in our greater community.

To date, we have twelve SAM volunteers to plant, mulch, water, weed, and harvest our garden plot. One person signed up to help as they said they like to weed. Another person recently moved out of their house and missed gardening and now they can help! A couple of people cannot garden but are making donations so we can buy plant material, organic fertilizer, and straw.

There is still time to volunteer as this is being written during the March 15-16 blizzard! If you can afford a few hours every other week, send an email to SAM@messiahchurch.com and you will be added to the garden email distribution list. If you wish to donate a few dollars for "seed money" please send a check to the church and write "Pheasant Hill Community Garden" in the memo line.



Bridget Cremin, Kennedy Elementary's social worker, will be a guest speaker April 11-12 telling us about the next phase in the campaign to support transportation to school.

We are supporting a long-term solution for the school to purchase their own van, rather than paying a driver each day. It will be more economical, and will provide increased options and flexibility for other children and families.

The goal is to raise \$60,000 to get the van on the road by September 1, 2026. We already have \$19,000 from last years grant. The rest will be raised by the Kennedy PTO, neighborhood sponsors and Messiah via our Give Families a Lift Campaign.

Just like we did with Give Kids a Lift, we are asking you to sign up on a poster to sponsor a day or multiple days. You are welcome to contribute anything you can. Every time we get to an increment of \$1,000, we will add a piece to a fabric bus poster. You will literally watch our bus being built!

Stay tuned for more information in the Weekly News and future *Column Newsletters*.

Community Meals



Healing House

Thank you to those who provided meals for March 1-7, 2026.

Our next dates for preparing meals for Healing House are:

April 26 - May 2 - June 7 - 13

Triangle Ministry

April 6th - We will provide and serve the Easter Monday meal at Triangle Community. We deliver the Easter bags that day.

Future dates are **July 6, and October 5, 2026.**

Calling all cooks and non-cooks alike...

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." John 21:17

Food is often the heart of hospitality. As we share meals, we bond in fellowship and community. Messiah would like to revive our tradition of offering a cookbook, "Feed My Sheep." Favorite recipes shared among members and friends as we gather at tables together and apart. We are fed and blessed in so many ways at Messiah.



The team for this project is forming. We will begin meeting in June with the goal of completing the cookbook by the Craft Fair, Nov. 7 and having it available for holiday gifting. Your help is needed! There will be many specific tasks to smoothly organize and complete the project. Contact Shirley Klinkner, sjklink1@gmail.com or Pastor Dan, pastordanmessiah@gmail.com to find out more and to volunteer.



This all came about last year, during Lent, Messiah and St. Paul AME came together for two mid-week Lent services, where Anthony Cooper, the director of Focused Interruption, and Jeff Wild, retired ELCA pastor and local director of Guns to Gardens organization, spoke during the services about their work and their organizations. What came of those nights was a relationship between the four organizations and a dream to host a safe, effective, and impactful Guns to Gardens event together.

And that is just what happened. On Saturday March 21st together we hosted a "Safe Gun Disposal Event" inviting people to come and dispose of any unwanted guns. **Thirteen guns were destroyed.** One came with a heavy story of loss by suicide, others were inherited from family members, others just unused. Some had found out about the event weeks in advance, while others saw our road sign and were beyond grateful that **we were providing a safe, healing place to get rid of their guns.**



And even though we did not make our personal goal of twenty-four guns, the impact was great. The message about this event was known all over southwest Wisconsin, and regardless of how many guns showed up, hundreds of people heard about this event. Simply being confronted with the realities this type of event offers leads to conversation, reflection, and growth.

But none of this could have happened without the **thirty amazing volunteers**, especially our planning team, led by Tracy Frank and Elizabeth Crummy from Messiah, Kay Corbin from St. Paul AME, and Sharla Miller from Focused Interruption.

For all those who were a part of this day, whether it was as a volunteer, as a financial contributor for the gift cards, or showing up with guns of your own to destroy, **we thank you** and are deeply grateful that **you are part of this movement** to eradicate gun violence, and to transform metal that once had the potential to harm, into tools that **support life, provide healing, and bring hope.**



Community Outreach Collection Schedule

Please visit the Community Outreach team's webpage for a list of ongoing collections that we make for The Road Home, Circles of Support, and St. Stephen's Food Pantry. Hard copies of these collection items are available in the Collection Area at Messiah, between the Gathering Space and the Community Room.

Community Outreach Team Collections for 2026

- April** - Give Kids (Families) a Lift Special Collection 2026
- May** - Mountain of Food
- June** -
- July** - Backpacks for Schools
- August** - Dignity at School
- September** -
- October/November** - Virtual Pies for "Share Your Holidays"
(Second Harvest Food Bank)
- November** - Craft/Bake Sale
- November/December** - Christmas Collections for:
The Road Home, YWCA, Triangle
Ministry, East Side Community/
Truax, Madison Area Jail Ministry

Boomerang Bag Workshop

Tuesday, April 21st
10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

In the
Social Hall



The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet

Monday, April 27th
1:00 PM



**LOWER LEVEL
MEETING
ROOM**

Goodman Center Foil Pan Collection



As of this printing we have collected **\$3,390.00** toward the foil pan collection for the Goodman Center. We will collect until Easter.

"Thank you"
to everyone who donated!!!

Messiah will purchase the roasting pans for their Thanksgiving Baskets given out by the Goodman Center each year. Last year they gave away over 4,000 meals which fed about 25,000 Dane County residents.

Dignity Project



Thank you everyone who has played a part in enabling us to send these pads so girls can stay in school with dignity. Including everyone who has donated panties or flannel and batting, cut strips, cut out the pieces for the pads or assembled them. Finally, thank you to the sewers and those who attached the safety pins. The pads are sent to a location in Rockwood, MI and from there they are distributed to over 90 countries in the world.

Another big thank you goes out to everyone who has made a monetary donation to the Dignity Project and those who have donated panties. Your continuing support is really appreciated.

Dignity Project Workshop

Saturday, April 11th
9:30-11:30 AM

In the last Sunday
School classroom
on the right.



Dignity Project

February mailing

536 pads - 79 panties

Grand Total

19,116 pads - 3,953 panties

May is the annual Mountain of Food fundraiser in support of St. Stephen's and St. Mark's Food Pantries. As pantry usage and food needs continue to increase, support from our community becomes even more important. Each contribution, no matter the amount, helps to provide for those in need. Food costs continue to increase which impacts the average cost of providing for a family as shown in these estimates:

- \$230-\$350 can feed a family of 4 for a week
- \$300-\$450 can feed a family of 6 for a week



We know everyone has been impacted by the increase in food prices. Indeed, the above estimates are twice what we had in *The Column* and *Weekly News* last year.

However, as prices increase so do the number of clients in need. Our donations will allow the pantries to support more families with their food needs.

Easter Basket Collection "Thank You"

Thank you to everyone who was able to contribute items for the Easter Basket and Bag Collection organized by YOW, Sunday School and the Community Outreach Team. We provided a total of 277 baskets to St. Stephen's Food Pantry, DAIS, The Road Home, Extended Hands Food Pantry and the Family Shelter. The baskets had candy, fruit snacks, lollipops, gum, coloring books and crayons, sidewalk chalk and bubbles in a reusable bucket or basket with a decorative Easter towel.

We provided candy, notebooks, pens and activity books, cards and personal care items as well as a decorative Easter towel to Triangle Community Ministry. We created bags with candy, a decorative Easter towel and a card for the Visitation Team to deliver.

The YOW youth packed the bags with help from the Community Outreach Team and the Sunday School children decorated the Easter cards and the bags. The Messiah delivery team of Karen Verhagen, Dave Lindorff, Paula Darr and Nancy Battist got them to their designated places on time. SAM pitched in with a special collection of jelly beans and chocolate eggs.

Thank you for providing these treats to those in our community who might not otherwise have had access to this little bit of Easter fun!

Delivery of our regular collected donations plus 30 Easter Baskets was made to The Road Home in early March.



Messiah

LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA
5202 Cottage Grove Rd.
Madison WI 53716

Nonprofit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Madison, Wisconsin
Permit No. 999

Streamed Worship Schedule

Saturdays

5:00 PM Evening Worship

Sundays

8:15 AM Worship Service

10:30 AM Worship Service

You can watch services
anytime from the "Recent
Sermons" on our website.

Office Hours

Monday- Office closed

Tuesday - Thursday

8:00 AM-2:00 PM

Friday 8:00 AM-12:00 NOON

Altar Flowers

"Thank you!"

to everyone who sponsored flowers
for the altar for 2026.

Your donation meant that our worship
space was extra beautiful.
We appreciate your kindness
and generosity.



If you sponsored
flowers and have the
empty vase at home,
please return it to
Messiah and we will
use it again when we
get flowers for another
weekend.

Ladies Lunch Bunch



**Wednesday,
April 8th
at 11:30 AM**

Red Robin

6522 Monona Dr, Monona, WI 53716

Please sign up on the Kiosk.

**Please be there by 11:15 AM
Orders will be taken at 11:30 AM**

For questions call Claire at 920-319-6731
or Mary at 608-716-4600

**The Ladies Lunch Bunch March Gathering
collected \$175.00 for Guns to Gardens.**