

August
2026

Volume 33
Issue 8

In this Issue

- Pr. Jeff's Message
- Visitation Ministry
- Give Families a Lift
- Community Meals
- New Members
- Baptisms
- Family Camp
- Spirit Weekend
- Treasurer's Report
- Adult Ministry
- Bread Breakers
- Mission Trip
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Sunday School
- Art Bags
- Social Justice Ministry
- Community Outreach Ministry
- Backpack Collection
- Divine Yoga
- Ladies Lunch Bunch



A few years ago, I borrowed yet another book from the Pinney Branch Library (a great place to write a sermon:) I had read a review of the book in the New York Times - ***Not by the Sword: How a Cantor and His Family Transformed a Klansman*** by Kathryn Watterson. The book told the story of Rabbi Michael Weissner. In 1991 he had accepted a position as *cantor*, the liturgical leader of South Street Synagogue in Lincoln, Nebraska. He and his wife Julie had moved 1300 miles from their home in Queens, NY along with three young children and he was wondering if this had been the right move.

One Sunday morning, Michael's phone rang: *Hey Jew boy - you should never have come to Lincoln. We'll make you sorry you moved here. The KKK is watching you, scum.* Two days later, he received a package of white supremacist pamphlets, then another message. Each message filled with venomous threats to his life. The police tracked the message and the pamphlets to Larry Trapp, the State Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan who kept a full stock of loaded artillery and pro-Nazi propaganda in his apartment. They advised the rabbi to move his family out of town.

Rabbi Weissner however wasn't frightened. He asked around town and soon he had a different picture of Larry Trapp. He discovered that Larry was 42 years old and mostly bound to a wheelchair. He was nearly blind and had lost both legs to amputation due to diabetes. Hardly the mortal threat that he claimed to be. So Rabbi Weissner found his phone number, called him and waited through the ugly, hate filled outgoing message and left one of his own: *Hey Larry, Rabbi Weissner here. There's a lot of love out there. You're not getting any of it. Don't you want some?* Once a week Michael Weissner would leave a message of love and encouragement on Trapp's voicemail. *Hey Larry, Michael again. Why do you love the Nazi's so much? They'd have killed you first because you're disabled. But God doesn't make junk Larry. God loves you forever.*

Week after week he made these calls until finally Larry Trapp picked up on the other end and in a horse voice asked: *Why do you keep calling me? What do you want?* The Rabbi answered: *I thought you might need a ride to the grocery store.* Trapp shot back: *Quit calling me!* A few nights later, Rabbi Weissner's phone rang. The caller ID told him it was

Office and Contact Information

PHONE 608-222-3833

OFFICE EMAIL

..... ourchurch@messiahchurch.com

OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE DROP BOX

..... outside the main front entrance

WEBSITE messiahchurch.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - office closed

email/phone monitored

Tuesday - Thursday.....8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Friday8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LEAD PASTOR..... Jeff Vanden Heuvel

..... pastorjeff@messiahchurch.com

ASSOCIATE PASTOR Dan O'Brien

..... pastordan@messiahchurch.com

BUSINESS MANAGER.....Tim Coulthart

..... timc@messiahchurch.com

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR.....Judy Armelin

..... ourchurch@messiahchurch.com

WORSHIP AND MUSIC..... Clyde Nyhus

..... music@messiahchurch.com

MINISTRY SUPPORTElizabeth Crummy

..... volunteer@messiahchurch.com

CHILDREN'S MINISTRYBrittany Rusch

..... CFM@messiahchurch.com

YOUTH MINISTRY..... Teresa Palumbo

..... youth@messiahchurch.com

Adult Ministry..... Pr. Renee Kiel

..... adulteducation@messiahchurch.com

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

..... Keith Schlesinger

..... SAM@messiahchurch.com

FACILITIES MANAGERS

..... Dan Battist and John Nerad

..... building@messiahchurch.com

VISITATION TEAM Pastor Dan

MEDIA & AV.....Clark Kellogg

..... AV@messiahchurch.com

JANITORIAL SERVICE..... Chrissy Moore

Larry. *Hi Larry, how are you?* After a moment Trapp answered timidly: *I want to get out of what I'm doing and I don't know how.* Michael and his wife drove to Trapp's apartment and talked through the night. In time they moved Trapp into their home, introduced him to their friends, cared for him, ran errands for him and let him do office work at the temple. He had never wanted to hate people. His father, a towering bully, had taught him by example and constant beatings. Eventually, he renounced the Klan, apologized to the congregation and converted to Judaism. When he died Michael gave the eulogy, and he wept.

So often in the gospel Jesus speaks about the power of love. Like Rabbi Weisser, Jesus understood that the world was filled with darkness and hate, and yet hatred doesn't work. People do have a vast potential to hate, which can be tapped. We have all seen that, especially in our country today. From the Proud Boys to the Patriot Front; from the evangelical anger of Turning Point USA to the late night posts on Truth Social, we know that hatred can be amplified and tapped to divide and marginalize groups of people. Yet people also have a vast potential to love, which likewise can be tapped. We have seen that too.

Each time we include those who others marginalize, or seek to understand where the anger is coming from, each time we forgive, or build a connection or reach out in hope, we tap into the power of love to transform the world. I share this story of the Rabbi and the Klansman because each of have this choice everyday. We can doom scroll on social media, fume over the idiocies we see around us, dehumanize those that dehumanize others - we can choose to hate, or we can throw ourselves into the vast potential of love. Choose to love my friends. Always choose love.

Pastor Jeff



I recently read a post on Facebook that said God has always chosen the willing hearts. I believe that is very true for this wonderful ministry offered by Messiah. You only need a willing heart that wants to serve for and as Jesus by helping our care receivers remain connected to our Messiah family through a friendly visit to share a devotion and communion. It means very much to them, but I feel I am the one who is truly blessed in this ministry.



Prayer - O Lord, what an amazing opportunity you have spread out before us - a chance to make difference for you in meaningful way. Help us to see the needs you want us to see, to react in a way that honors you, and to bless others by serving them gladly with expressions of your love. Help us to be Jesus hands and feet, and through your Spirit give us the strength and wisdom we need to fulfill your plan for this ministry. In Jesus name, Amen.

Claire Gensch

Next Sacred Circle: August 23rd between the services

If Claire's reflection has inspired you and you feel that you might be called to this important ministry, please contact Pastor Dan at [***pastordan@messiahchurch.com***](mailto:pastordan@messiahchurch.com)

Give Families a Lift

A tremendous "thank you" goes out to all who donated to our Give Families a Lift Campaign. We completed the fabric bus! Over \$61,000 was donated to the van from the funds remaining in the 25-26 Ecumenical Grant, money given by members of Messiah and donations from the community to the Kennedy Family Support Network (KFSN.) Van shopping started in late July!

\$10,000 for "Give Families a Lift" from the Dane County Deputy Sheriff's Association

In addition to the amount above, the KFSN applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the DCDSA! This should at least get them into year 3 and maybe year 4 of gas, insurance and maintenance. The mission of the Cops for Kids program is to enrich the lives of underprivileged children residing within Dane County. Special thanks to Scott Herrem who let us know about this opportunity.

Community Meals at Healing House & Triangle Community Ministry

"Thank you" to the 16 volunteers who baked cookies and/or served the Triangle Community Ministry meal on July 6th. The next opportunity is **October 5th**. You can: help prepare food at Messiah around noon and/or set up/serve/eat with residents/clean up 4:00-6:30 PM, and/or prepare dessert ahead of time - lots of options to be involved! Sign up on the Kiosk.



Thanks to the volunteers who prepared and delivered meals to Healing House in July. Our next week to serve is **August 30th - September 5th**. There is a sign up on the Kiosk to prepare a meal for 12 people and bring it to Messiah to be delivered.

Please contact Elizabeth at [***volunteer@messiahchurch.com***](mailto:volunteer@messiahchurch.com) or call/text 608-235-6910 to be added to the meal groups in REALM to receive updates about these opportunities.

Please Welcome New Members

Justin Kiel

**Chuck Stonecipher &
Kathleen Mallach**

Ben & Theresa Bryan
and their children
Brantley & Harrison

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

Holy Baptism

Harrison Bryan

Child of
Ben & Theresa Bryan

Family Camp in September

Mark your calendars for Messiah Family Camp 2026!

Where: Bethel Horizons Camp

When: Friday, September 11th - Sunday, September 13 12:00 noon

Cost: Friday to Sunday \$150 per person,
Saturday and Sunday \$80 per person,
Saturday only \$40.



Sign up on the Kiosk or visit the Weekly News for the QR Code or form.

Spirit Weekend



The weekend of September 26-27 is Spirit Weekend.

Where is the Holy Spirit calling you to be involved?

Wear your favorite team attire, enjoy tailgate snacks and check out the different ministries to find your niche at Messiah.

Ministry leaders will be available before and after the Saturday service and before, after, and between the Sunday services to answer questions and sign you up.

Stewardship - Treasurer's Report

The Column
AUGUST 2026| page 5



We are six months into the budget year and the Pledged Revenue received to date is \$470,400, the budget for the same time period is \$427,300, so we are \$43,100 ahead of the budget. The excess can be attributed to the 49 families that have met their 2026 commitment. General Fund expenses were \$426,000 compared to the budget of \$438,100, so we are \$12,100 under budget.

The Gundlach Family Fund supported eight rental requests, \$2,584, from Hope Inspired and the Dane County Crime Victim office. In addition, the fund matched the Mountain of Food collection with payments to St. Mark's Food Pantry and St. Stephen's Food Pantry each check was \$9,648.50.

Our July MG&E bill was the lowest it has ever been thanks to the installation of the solar panels; the total bill was \$156; the value of our exported energy was \$695.

Tim Coulthart, Treasurer

Adult Ministry Updates

Men's Breakfast - Will meet at Denny's in Monona, Thursdays through the summer.

Morning Bible Study - Will take a break for the summer and resume Wednesday, September 9th.

Women's Book Study - will resume Thursday, October 1st, more information to follow.

Women's Conversations - will meet in June, July and August, the third Thursday of the month at 10:30 AM. All women are welcome to join this time of fellowship and informal conversation as we seek to integrate our faith with our daily life.

Adult Education on Sunday - will resume in September.

Bread Breakers – Adult Fellowship Opportunity for folks over 18

Return enrollment forms to the office by Labor Day

Enrollment forms are on the Kiosk now. Fill out and return to the specially marked box in the church office by Labor Day. Include your name and the name of any person who will or may regularly accompany you. We'll email your group assignment in mid-September.

If you want the enrollment form sent to you electronically, Barb & Walt will send it to you. Their email is **bwhfam@gmail.com**



Photos from Mission Trip and Mini Mission

The Column
AUGUST 2026 | page 6





SAM Hosts Open House at Food Bank

Have you thought about what it is that SAMies do at Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) and how you can join in on the fun? Well, **September 21st** is your chance to stop by SHFB and see the SAMies in action.

The open house starts at 1:30 PM where you will see SAM in action prepping various foods for distribution to over 300 food pantries in 16 south central Wisconsin counties. At 2:00 PM, we have "recess" with a homemade treat from one of the volunteers. This is your chance to sit down with SAM volunteers in the break room and ask questions about volunteering at the food bank. At 2:30 PM, you will

have the opportunity to take a tour of the food bank. You will be amazed at all the activity behind the scenes!

To sign up for the open house, send an email to [**SAM@messiahchurch.com**](mailto:SAM@messiahchurch.com)

SAM Season Opener Will Be Spectacular

Mark **September 30, 2026**, on your calendar in pen. Do that right now before you forget. Use a pen so you cannot erase it. Move your doctor appointments. This is the date for Messiah SAM's 2026-2027 kickoff! Our catered meal will be provided by Stoddard's Meat Market & Catering, Cottage Grove, WI. We will enjoy a pig roast with all the trimmings. Even dessert and beverages will be provided. Then sit back and enjoy the music of Toco Beach Steelpan. Their music will make you think you are smack dab on the beach in the Caribbean. Advance registration is NOT required. There is NO sign-up. There is NO charge for this event. Your admission ticket is plenty of non-perishable food items for The Empty Table.



Sunday School Volunteers Needed

Sunday School resumes September 20th and we are in need of teachers, assistants and substitutes to help educate our children about our faith.

You do not have to be a certified teacher to be a successful Sunday School teacher! Lesson ideas and materials are provided.



Working with our Sunday School Youth is a great way to build connections across generations within our congregation! If you are interested please email Brittany Rusch at. [**cfm@messiahchurch.com**](mailto:cfm@messiahchurch.com).

Therapeutic Art Bags for Safe Harbor

The Column
AUGUST 2026 | page 8

Here are some photos from the Sunday School and YOW kids at work during their mission trip packing therapeutic art bags for Safe Harbor.

Safe Harbor provides a trauma-informed, safe, child-friendly environment for best practice forensic interviews; immediate and ongoing advocacy for affected children and families; coordination and support of multi-disciplinary investigations and responses. They support 400 youth and their families from 13 counties in Wisconsin.

"Thank you" for donating to the funds to purchase these much needed supplies.



Social Justice - Racial Justice Team

Save the date! October 17, 2026



Messiah Racial Justice Team in partnership with St. Paul AME and Focused Interruption is starting to plan for a 2nd Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender event.

This comes after a successful first event at St. Paul AME in March that resulted in 26 surrendered guns.

Please save the date of Saturday, October 17, 2026, 9:00 AM - noon for our next safe surrender event at Messiah this time.

- ▶ We received the Federal Tax Credit of \$29,399 for use of our solar panels!
- ▶ Next time you're at Messiah, please take a look at the signs above the garbage and recycling bins in the Gathering Space, and Social Hall. On our visit to the city dump and last year's presenter from the city recycling program, we learned, "when in doubt, throw it out" rather than risk ruining an entire batch of recycling.

Social Justice Ministry - Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Team

Upcoming Events:

Madison Outreach Magic Pride Festival – August 16th 1:00 - 6:00 PM

Messiah's RIC Team is inviting you to join us at the Madison Outreach Magic Pride Festival. This is a family-friendly event to celebrate our LGBTQIA+ siblings and to be a presence of love in the community. Keep an eye out for a sign-up to volunteer at our table.

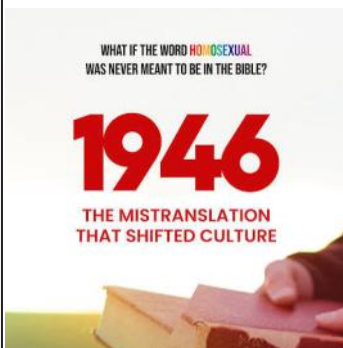
Guest Speaker: Mikah Meyers – August 15th & 16th.

Messiah's RIC team is excited to welcome National Parks Expert Mikah Meyer, a classically trained singer and award-winning filmmaker. Raised as a Lutheran pastor's kid in Nebraska, Mikah is passionate about exploring the outdoors and helping people of divergent backgrounds find joy and common ground through their shared love of nature. This advocacy is seen in his short film *Canyon Chorus*.

Mikah is the creator of the Outside Safe Space symbol (seen here) which is sold at park gift shops and recreation stores including REI, and is currently being worn by over 100,000 people in the United States as a non-verbal signifier of LGBTQ+ allies in outdoor, rural, and active spaces.



Past Event:



"Thank you" to the 35 people who came together on July 14th for dinner and conversation around the movie "1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted a Culture," a documentary about how the word "homosexual" was inserted into the Bible and how it has been addressed since. We began the evening with dinner, followed by an educational LGBTQ+ 101 session presented by DaMontae January and Lynn Currie from *OutReach LGBT+ Community Center* who offer social & supportive services to the LGBTQ+ community in Dane County.

Community Outreach Collection Schedule

The Column
AUGUST 2026 | page 10

Our Next Community Outreach Team meeting is Thursday, September 24th At 10:00 AM.

Please visit the Community Outreach team's page on Messiah's website for a list of ongoing collections that we have 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 Families a Lift Special Collection 2026

May - Mountain of Food

June / July - Backpacks for Schools

August -

September - Dignity at School

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

Backpack Collection

"Thank you" to all who donated to the annual backpack collection.

As of this printing, we are still collecting funds and materials, but seem to be well on our way toward reaching our goal of 265 filled backpacks.

They will be blessed and sent on their way in early August to six local schools plus DAIS and The Road Home.

"Thank you" Pam Aldrich for taking on this enormous endeavor each summer!



Boomerang Bag Workshop

**Tuesday, August 18th
10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON**

In the
Social Hall



**The Prayer Shawl Ministry
will meet
Monday, September 28th
1:00 PM**



**LOWER LEVEL
MEETING
ROOM**

Dignity Project Workshop

**Saturday, August 8th
9:30-11:30 AM**

In the last Sunday
School classroom
on the right.



Dignity Project

July mailing

388 pads - 92 panties

2026 Totals

2679 pads - 646 panties

Ronald McDonald House

We collect pull tabs from all
types of aluminum cans.

Our latest collection
drop off was 35 lbs. of
tabs. It totaled \$19.60.



The Community Outreach Ministry Team will be sponsoring a monetary collection during the month of September for Messiah's two projects that focus on dignity for students.

Bernie Hartwig leads a project that involves collecting sweatpants and other clothing items including new underwear for 11 local elementary schools and one middle school.

The Dignity Project, led by June Nyhus, will use the collection money to purchase items to complete the pads. More information to follow in the September issue of *The Column*.

If you would like to make a donation to the Dignity Project in another way, they are in need of flannel and batting to complete the pads they make. Before JoAnn fabrics closed, they were able to buy bolts of flannel and bags of batting. They are now getting to the end of all of that flannel and batting.

If you are a sewer and have usable sized pieces of either darker colored flannel or cotton batting, please consider donating it to the Dignity Project. They have a bin in the Collection Area where you can leave it for them. They would very much appreciate it.

Craft Fair & Bake Sale

St. Stephen's Food Pantry



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH

Messiah Lutheran Church
Main Entrance

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

The Craft Fair & Bake Sale is sponsored by the Community Outreach Ministry Team
All proceeds from this year's event will benefit
Briarpatch, Friends of State Street Family and Madison Street Medicine

Crafts

Handcrafted Glass • Metal • Wood • Stone
Cards and Paper Crafts • Alpaca Wool Items • Jewelry
Textiles • Home Décor • Candles • Holiday Decorations

Baked Goods

Bake Sale - Homemade baked goods including: pies, cakes, cookies, bars, breads, snacks and special international treats

The Book Nook

Gently used books in gift giving condition
Favorite reads for children, teens, and adults

Gift Shoppe

Baskets for a special holiday gift - cash & carry
Chance for a quilt, New Messiah Cookbook

Food

11:00 AM-1:00 PM Lunch Items for sale by Youth Ministry
Proceeds benefit Messiah's Youth Programs

Messiah Lutheran Church

5202 Cottage Grove Rd., Madison
608-222-3833 • www.messiahchurch.com

St. Stephen's Food Pantry Monthly Collection Items

We will be collecting different items each month for the food pantry.

Clear plastic soda bottles will still be collected all year round.

August - toothbrushes & toothpaste

September - unscented laundry soap

October - hot cocoa, teas & coffee

November - canned cranberries & pumpkin

December - baking supplies - flour, sugar, etc.

January - hot cocoa, teas & coffee

February - cake & brownie mixes

March - unscented laundry soap

April - salad dressings

May - BBQ sauces

June - relish & pickles

July - ketchup & mustard

Thank you for your support of St. Stephen's Food Pantry

Messiah

LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA

5202 Cottage Grove Road
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

Divine Yoga



Save the Date for Divine Yoga

We will have
Divine Yoga
Fall and Advent
sessions.

All Messiah folks and their friends are
invited to attend on Tuesdays from
6:00 - 7:15 PM in the Community Room.

Bring your own mat.

Fall Series: October 6, 13, 20, 27 and
November 3

Advent Series: December 1, 8, 15, 22

Ladies Lunch Bunch



**Wednesday,
August 12th
at
11:30 AM**

Breakwater

6308 Inland Way, Monona, WI
By Buck and Honey's

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 262-716-4600.

**The Ladies Lunch Bunch July Gathering
donated \$106.00 to the Backpack Collection**