

## Empowerment

The words “we are dust, and to dust we shall return” capture the essence of Lent. We are all dust. Regardless of the earthly hierarchies that we place ourselves in, or worse, we put others in, we are all simply dust. In God’s eyes, no speck of dust is greater than the other. We are all equal. These humble words kickoff our Lenten journey as the sign of the cross gets placed on the forehead. By now, those ash crosses have washed away, but our baptismal claim as children of God lasts forever.

As you know, this year was my first Ash Wednesday as a pastor. I found the entire evening to be especially moving, but in the midst of it all, something miraculous took place. After I marked everyone with a sign of the cross, I took my routine position behind the altar. Before we continued with the next phase of worship, there was a slightly awkward pause. In the corner of my eye, I noticed our acolyte step behind the altar and reach for the ashes. With the biggest smile one could possess, Averie Altrichter dipped her thumb in the ashes and went for my forehead. I had forgotten ashes for myself. As she made a sign of the cross she wasn’t sure what words to say, and it didn’t matter. Tears swelled my eyes after experiencing her natural instinct to include me.

The way she barreled past the “barriers” of the chancel and courageously stepped behind the altar taught me a valuable lesson about ministry. People, youth in particular, long to be unleashed. I am not sure why I was surprised, but shame on me for being taken-back by Averie’s eagerness to lead and to do exactly what Jesus would have done. In that moment, there was a shattering of power dynamics and the Holy Spirit overwhelmed the sanctuary.

As a worship community, our task is not about setting parameters or reinforcing traditions that seek to confine. The Gospel mission is one of freedom. We are called to break boundaries, destroy walls, and allow all people to experience the freedom that God offers. By empowering others, we are extending the freedom to create something new and exciting.

The Church is a living, breathing, and ever-changing body of Christ. When our youth are empowered, they will create. The process of creation will provide ownership. And ownership brings value and authenticity. Growth often brings change and change is difficult, but if my experience on Ash Wednesday revealed anything, it’s that the Holy Spirit is leading Messiah in the right direction. As we allow room for God to grow through us, at the end of the day, love will always win. Just how loving we can be, when we are set free, may even surprise us!

With Resurrecting Hope,  
Pr. Lucas McSurley



## Men's Bible Study

The men of Messiah will gather on Saturday Morning, from 8am-9:30am. Be on the lookout for which Saturday in April we will plan to meet. We enjoy breakfast and fellowship with an engaging discussion around our given topic. Currently, we are reading "I Am a Church Member" by Tom R. Rainer. For more information, contact Mark Ludrosky.

## Community Easter Egg Hunt

Spread the word! Messiah is holding our first annual Easter Egg Hunt for the entire community! From 10am-noon, we'll have egg hunts for all ages, share the Resurrection story, and decorate cookies. We could use your help volunteering during the event or donating supplies. We are collecting candy, empty egg cartons with three dimes in each of them, along with plastic eggs. On the day of the event, we need a Set Up Crew, Greeters, Cookie Table Supervisors, Egg Hiders, Egg Hunt Supervisors, Recycling Station Helpers, and a Clean-up Crew. A sign-up sheet can be found in the narthex. Thrivent has graciously provided \$250 dollars for the event. We are excited to see the Holy Spirit work through Messiah as we embark



## Morning Bible Study

Every Tuesday, from 10am-11:30am, we gather in the Social Hall and engage in life-giving discussions that cover a wide-variety of topics. Currently, we are sifting through the devotional resource "The Upper Room." Copies are available in the narthex.

## Summer Picnic

We'll have a lot going on Sunday, June 9th. Join us after worship as we share a Pentecost picnic and celebrate another wonderful year of Sunday School and Christian learning. Bring a side-dish to share and we'll ease into Summer the right way!

## Campus Clean-up!

We'll need all hands on deck on Saturday, April 27th, from 9am-12pm. Join us as we prepare Messiah's grounds for the rejuvenating seasons of Spring and Summer. We have something for everyone to do. From organizing, to painting, to mulching, and everything in between, your help is appreciated.

## Salary Adjustment

In case you missed our congregational meeting on Sunday, March 10th, Messiah voted to approve the Financial Committee's recommendation to appropriately adjust our Music Director's compensation. See Pastor if you have questions.

## Green Good Neighbors

When we work together to do God's work, more of God's children are served. You can serve Green Good Neighbors Wednesday morning from 8am-noon at Greensburg United Methodist. There is always an abundance to be sorted and plenty of new friends to meet.

## Easter Hymn Festival

Looking for an opportunity to hear some more Easter music? On Sunday, April 28th at 4pm, local congregational choirs are performing glorious resurrection music. It will take place at St. Luke's, 2121 6th street, Cuyahoga Falls.

## Ever-growing!

We are selling pens and notepads following worship and throughout the week. (\$8 a set, \$15 for two sets, \$21 for three sets). The proceeds will go toward some needed evangelistic investments. Some example possibilities include a new road sign, a worship recording system, and several other online advancements.

## Local Mission Trip

We're putting our faith into action this Summer! On June 22-23rd, you can experience a local mission blitz. All are welcome to serve as we support some of the local ministries in our area. We will visit and serve places like the Akron Food Bank, Haven of Rest, and Rotary Camp. Let's roll up our sleeves together and be the hands of Jesus! Keep on the lookout for your opportunity to signup soon.

## Vacation Bible School

Get pumped! And please pray for how God is calling you to help with Vacation Bible School. The week of July 15th-19th we will have an abundance of little ones learning and deepening their faith in our space. We'll hold VBS during the evenings from 6pm-8:30pm. We are hoping you invite all your friends, family, and neighbors. There are plenty of ways you can serve, see Cristy Ludrosky or Jennifer Altrichter to discover the perfect role for you.



## Women's Retreat

Get excited! Mark it in your calendars that the weekend of May 3rd-5th, we will have our Women's Retreat at Camp Wanakee. Surrounded by nature, we enjoy God's creation in the wilderness and amongst friends. Everyone could use a rejuvenating weekend with friends, relaxation, and fun. The cost is generally around \$75, which provides meals and lodging. The offering collected at our Lenten soup suppers will work to offset some of the cost. You can connect with the Church Office for more information.

## Women of the ELCA

The Akron-Wooster Cluster Spring Gathering will be held at Zion Lutheran Church on Saturday, April 6, 2019 from 9am-1:30pm. The Theme is "Called to Serve". We are collecting non-perishable food items and feminine products for "People to People of Wooster." Please contact Beth Haas (330)644-5262 or Joan Robbins (330) 882-6888 if you would like to attend or give a donation.

## Memorial Day Parade

Walking and water, two of Jesus' favorite things! The annual City of Green Memorial Day Parade, Ceremony, & Car Show is Monday, May 27, beginning with a pancake breakfast hosted by the City of Green firemedics at Fire Station No.1. The parade steps off from the Green High School at 10:00 a.m, with a ceremony immediately following the parade at the Veterans Park. Then, the community picnic and car show follows at the John Torok Community Center. Messiah plans to maintain our tradition of passing out water to those gathered.

## Purpose Palooza

It's music festival time! On July 20th, from 12pm-8pm, join us as we head to Buckeye High School for an all-day event of awesome live Christian music. Bands like Lost & Found, Rachel Kurtz, and AGAPE are performing. Tickets are only \$15. Come to find purpose, and leave ready to serve!

# Lenten Journey



**Wednesday Soup Suppers**  
**April 3 and 10**  
**6:00pm**



**Palm Sunday**  
**Worship 10am**  
**Process into Jerusalem,**  
**leave in darkness.**

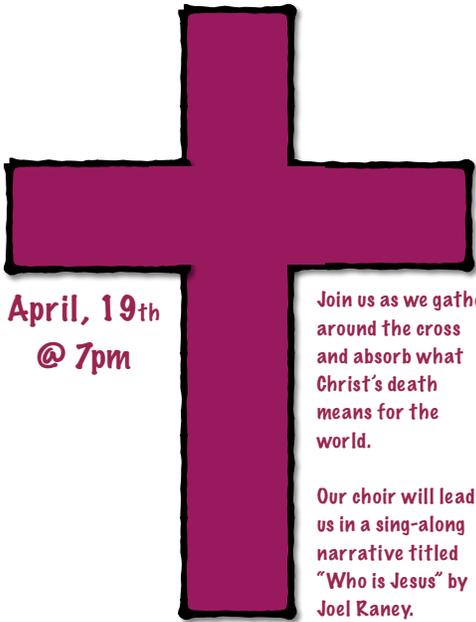


**Maundy Thursday**  
**April 18 @ 6:00pm**  
**Discover and experience Jesus' last meal.**



**Good Friday**

**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
4700 S Main St, Akron, OH

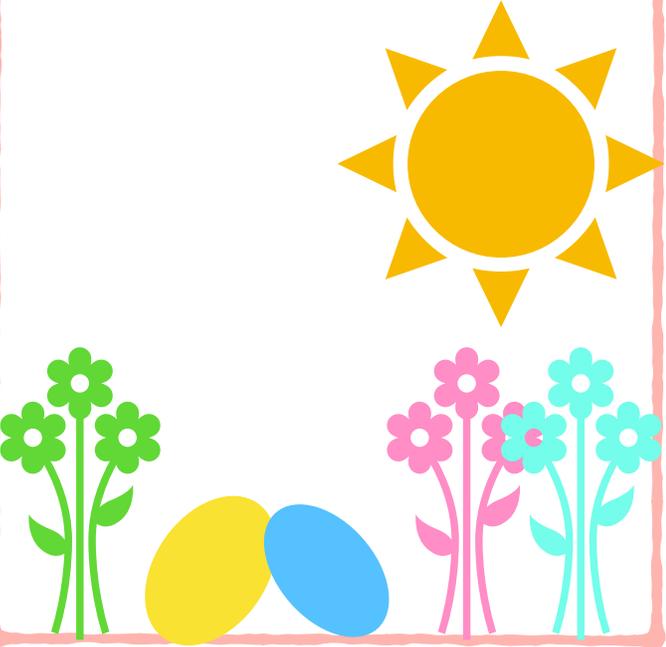


**April, 19th**  
**@ 7pm**

Join us as we gather around the cross and absorb what Christ's death means for the world.

Our choir will lead us in a sing-along narrative titled "Who is Jesus" by Joel Raney.

**Resurrection Sunday**  
**Worship 10am**



# Visioning Together



## Let's start a MOPS ministry!

MOPS stands for "Mothers of Preschools." This support group gathers mothers together and includes mothers of children of all ages. MOPS believes in the simple but revolutionary idea that remarkable things happen when moms come together, face to face. Messiah will play a vital role in rallying women together to help moms through this thing called motherhood. One gathering at a time, Messiah will make a lasting difference in the lives of mothers in our local community.

Mops takes place in over 60 countries and has partnerships with thousands of congregations across our nation. There are over 200 moms actively looking for a MOPS group in our area, and Messiah will be one of the only groups in our zip code.

We will gear up to start this ministry in the Fall and will begin training our leadership this Summer. For now, please help by sharing your support and enthusiasm for this new and exciting ministry!

# Mining for Mission

Six-week Summer Learning Series



## Concept

Your participation is paramount! Messiah plans to engage in a life-changing, cross-generational learning experience that works to apply biblical truths to everyday life.

Somewhere along the way, the broader Church has fallen out of touch with the hearts of God's people outside of the Church. When it comes to evangelism, it's important to remember that God does not call us to make church-goers. We are not called to make Bible-memorizers, or Lutheran scholars. We are called by God to simply make disciples (Matt. 28:19). The purpose of the Church, Luther's Catechism, and even Scripture, is to be a vehicle for deepening our relationship with God.

As Christians, we are stewards of God's message to the world. The Gospel is always relevant, even if the Church has fallen short in explaining how. It is easy to slip into judgement about the surrounding culture, rather than admitting that the decline in Church involvement is a result of our failure to articulate why we love God, ourselves, and our neighbor. We love, because God first loved us! (1 John 4:19).

Many congregations have tried new strategies that seek to improve the method of Christian learning, however, this is a change in mission. Rather than the transfer of information from teacher-to-student being our goal, our mission is to simply build meaningful relationship with God and one another.

By encouraging cross-generational learning, we can cast a wider net of responsibility for our collective calling to form disciples. By incorporating all ages into our moments of learning, we are acknowledging that the deepening of one's faith is a life-long journey that never ends!

## Dates

Sunday, July 14th  
11am - 12:30pm

Sunday, July 21st  
11am - 12:30pm

Sunday, July 28th  
11am - 12:30pm

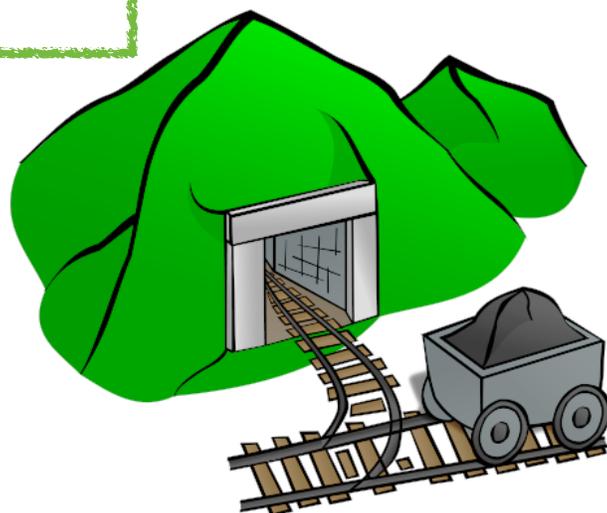
Sunday, August 4th  
11am - 12:30pm

Sunday, August 11th  
11am - 12:30pm

Sunday, August 18th  
11am - 12:30pm

## Topic

What does it mean to be mission-minded? By exploring our values as a worshipping community, we will seek to more fully understand how God is uniquely calling Messiah to participate in what God is up to in the world. As a congregation, where do we put biblical emphasis in defining our mission? What does Luther say about vocation? Together, we'll explore!



## Birthdays

April	
2	Florence Putz
3	Don Spear
5	Brittany Zager
7	Susan Levers
9	Allison Hughes Avery Sanders
10	Presley Reed
14	Tyler Pelican
15	Jaclyn Cain
17	Kelly France
19	Courtney Bennet
20	Seth Sennett
23	Kelly Ward Jordan Pellikan
24	Kayla Levers Eric Johnson
25	Jody Hentosz
26	Owen Cain
29	Kelly Sanders
30	Bill Freund Bob Porter

## Anniversaries

April	
8	Dr. David & Stacey Jackson
13	Jim & Janis Hughes
27	Bill & Vikki Schmeidel

## Pastor's Continuing Ed.

ELCA Region 6 First Call Conference on evangelism held March 31-April 2nd in Angola, IN.

Generosity Transformed: a conference on stewardship held April 30th-May 3rd in Indianapolis.

The Festival of Homiletics: a conference on preaching held May 13th-17th in Minneapolis.

## Serving in Worship

April

Reader	
7	Becky Pataki
14	Laura Conley
21	Kathy Wagner
28	Kim Sanner
Greeter	
7	Fred & Mary Chrien
14	Karen & Ray Tait
21	
28	Patty & Mark Ondecker
Usher	
7	Steve McCloskey Don Spear
14	Youth Group
21	Mike Unger Bill Wagner
28	Kent Downing Lori Koehler Eric Johnson
Banker	
7	Shandell Mooney
14	Joan Robbins
21	Betty Goodwin
28	Jim & Liz Six
Flowers	
7	Bettie Goodwin
14	Irma Studer
21	Steve & Marlene McCloskey
28	

## Tech Communication

Recently, Messiah has joined the world of Instagram and Twitter. We are looking to gain administrative rights for our Facebook page, and more website upgrades are just around the corner. Stay tuned!

## In Our Prayers

Adam	Bill	Jim
Steve	Marsha	Lauren
Liam	Brenda	Nancy
Alex	Lexi	Mark
Arlene	Eric	Kathy
Misty	DJ	Angie
Kris	Brylynn	Bear
Susie	Bridgette	Luis
Richard	Connie	Anne
Diane	Tony	Gladys
John	Mitch	Becky
Karen	Cathy	Sam
Natalie	Michelle	Lois
Dennis	Carol	Larry
Gary	Caitlin	Cody
Barbara	Vince	Tom
Family of Ernest Leska		

## Youthers

Sunday, April 7. 11am-2pm.  
Regular Youthers Meeting

Saturday, April 13. 9am-noon.  
Community Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 14. 11am-5pm.  
Game Day, bring friends!

Sunday, March 21. Happy Easter!  
No Youthers Meeting

Sunday, April 28. 11am-2pm.  
Regular Youthers Meeting

## ELCA Synod Assembly

A couple people from Messiah, including the pastor, will attend Northeast Ohio's Synod Assembly on June 14-15th. This year's theme is "who is my neighbor." We look forward to sharing with you all that is learned and discussed.

# April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Property Maintenance 9am	6
7 Worship 10am Youthers 11am-2pm AA 4pm, 6pm	8 Warm Up Portage Lakes 10am	9 Bible Study 10am Children of Alcoholics 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm	10 Lenten Soup Supper 6pm	11 Steps Beyond 6pm Church Council 7pm Venturing Crew 7pm	12 Property Maintenance 9am	13 Community Easter Egg Hunt 10am-noon
14 Palm Sunday Worship 10am Cookie Sunday Youthers 11am-2pm AA 4pm, 6pm	15 Warm Up Portage Lakes 10am	16 Bible Study 10am Children of Alcoholics 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm	17 Not by Choice 11am	18 Steps Beyond 6pm Maundy Thursday "Last Supper" 6pm	19 Property Maintenance 9am Good Friday Worship with Choir 7pm	20
21 Resurrection Sunday Worship 10am AA 4pm, 6pm	22 Warm Up Portage Lakes 10am	23 Bible Study 10am Children of Alcoholics 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm	24	25 Steps Beyond 6pm Venturing Crew 7pm	26	27 Campus Cleanup 9am-noon
28 Worship 10am Youthers 11am-2pm AA 4pm, 6pm	29 Warm Up Portage Lakes 10am	30 Bible Study 10am Children of Alcoholics 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm				