

# Messiah

Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Answering God's call to love

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## Messiah ENewsletter for December 24, 2025

On the web... go to [messiahlutheranmqt.org](http://messiahlutheranmqt.org) for more information about our congregation and “like” us on Facebook to receive updates and information there.

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*Messiah Lutheran Church seeks to be a welcoming community for all people. This includes people of every race, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnic background, economic grouping, religious affiliation, and political persuasion.*

*We do this simply because God created all people in God's own image and Christ Jesus came so all people might have abundant and eternal life.*

*We may not always be as welcoming as we should be, but this is our intention—all are welcome!*

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### Brookridge Worship Today!

Please join us for worship at Brookridge Heights today (December 24) at 1:30 pm. All are welcome!

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## **Worship Schedule Change for December 27/28**

There will be only one service on the weekend of December 27<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup> - the 8:30 service. No 5:00 pm or 10:30 am service that weekend.

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## **Upcoming Events – December/January**

|        |                                                                                |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dec 24 | Christmas Eve – Church Office Closes at 12:30 pm                               |
| Dec 24 | Brookridge Worship at 1:30 pm                                                  |
| Dec 24 | Christmas Eve Worship Services at 4:00 pm, 7:30 pm, and 10:00 pm               |
| Dec 25 | Christmas Day – Church Office Closed                                           |
| Dec 27 | NO Saturday Worship                                                            |
| Dec 28 | <b>Worship at 8:30 am only</b> ; NO 10:30 am worship service; NO Sunday School |
| Dec 29 | 11-Step Centering Prayer at 5:30 pm                                            |
| Dec 30 | Centering Prayer at 11:00 am                                                   |
| Dec 31 | New Year's Eve – Church Office Closes at 12:30 pm                              |
| Jan 4  | NO Sunday School                                                               |
| Jan 5  | 11-Step Centering Prayer at 5:30 pm                                            |
| Jan 6  | Centering Prayer at 11:00 am                                                   |

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## **Northern Great Lakes Synod Christmas Service on TV6 and Fox**

The Northern Great Lakes Synod Christmas service will air on TV6 and Fox at the following times:

December 24th - 4:00 pm on TV6                      6:00 pm on Fox

December 25th - 6:00 & 9:00 am on TV6   5:30 pm on Fox

The service will also be available through January on TV6 Plus. Pastor Andrew and Dave Blomquist will participate in the service.

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## **Sunday School**

A reminder that there will be no Sunday School on the 28th of December & the 4th of January. Sunday School resumes on the 11th of January. Parents look for a letter with the winter/spring schedule.

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## **Bell Choir**

Thank you for all the great comments about the bell choir this month. We appreciate your compliments.

Several people have wondered how to become members and we would welcome more ringers. Can we use you - yes. We have bells for 4 octaves but usually only have people to use 3 octaves. There are bigger brass bells that have seen very little use. There is also a bell tree that someone can ring with mallets. Though it helps, you do not need to know how to read music because your part can be marked.

January 5th or 12th is an excellent time to join as we are beginning to learn music for lent & Easter. Rehearsals are from 5:45 to 6:45 pm on Mondays. Please come and see if this choir is a good fit for you.

- - - Judy Quirk, *Bell Choir Director*

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## **Giving Tuesday Updates**

Messiah has once again shown our extreme generosity and taking the message of the Gospel seriously this year. On December 2 – our 7th Giving Tuesday event, 58 took time to people took the time to come in person and 24 others called or mailed donations. We are now at \$29,150 and some funds are still coming in! This is a record!

Here are some statistics as of December 10. The final totals will be available in the annual report.

1. First Giving Tuesday Event – 2017. We raised \$27,057.37, with \$10,000 coming from a Thrivent Grant.
2. Since that time, we have AVERAGED \$34,600 per year in funds distributed.
3. We have taken an AVERAGE of 350 interview appointments per year since 2017, including interviews being taken over the phone during COVID.
4. This year – 2025 we have had 387 interview appointments and distributed \$54,543.22 – with 20 more days in the year left!

This ministry has become an important part of the safety net in our area. A huge THANK YOU to all who contributed, donated prizes, volunteered and prayed for this effort. --- *Mary Lou Blomquist*

*Winners of Drawings: Quilt – Louise Anderson; Basket/trivets – Kathy Strazzinski; Wooden bowl/platter – Marina Shinkarenko; French roast coffee beans – Inga Banitt; Messiah sweatshirts – Tom Froiland, Amy Froiland, and Ernie Johnson. Congratulations to all of you! And many thanks for your donation to our community assistance fund that helps folks throughout the year! A special thanks to all of you who helped make Giving Tuesday at Messiah a success. In addition to all of those who made a financial contribution, there were many people who donated their time yesterday to help with providing food, rearranging furniture, greeting guests, processing credit cards, providing the prizes for the drawings and paying attention to the details.*

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## **OWLs Outing – January 14**

The OWLs (Older, wiser Lutherans) are going to the Marquette Regional History Center on Wednesday, January 14 at 1:00 pm. Join us no matter what your age. Bring a friend if you'd like. Mad About Maps is the current special exhibit and features U.P. maps. The cost is \$8 per person if you are not a member of the Center. Please sign up outside the church office so we have an idea of how many will be attending. Questions? Ask Betsy or the church office folks.

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## **Give a Gift That Makes a Difference**

Tired of wracking your brain to think of a gift for the person who doesn't need anything? Check out the table near the office, pick up a *Good Gifts* catalog and honor someone with a gift in their name. You can make a lasting difference in the life of someone who really does need something - and model Christian charity for your children and grandchildren.

NEW this year! - you can help fund the Community Assistance Fund and honor someone at the same time. Look for the letters and the red & green envelopes on the table.

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## **Last Day for 2025 Financial Giving**

The last day for any financial giving to Messiah for 2025 will be Wednesday, December 31 by noon. Thank you!

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## **Endowment Committee News**

The document governing the Robert Malette Mission Endowment Fund has been reviewed and approved by the church council. This document is available on Messiah's website. In anticipation that the congregation will adopt this revised document, applications for grant funding are also available online and at the church office.

The deadline for submission is extended for this first round to grants to February 15, 2026. If you have questions about the fund or the application, talk to a committee member (Judy Quirk, Ann Johnson, Maddie Dykema, Gail Edgar, Grant Soltwisch) or a pastor.

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## **Bowls for a Cause**

Turned Wooden Bowls are available for a donation to the community assistance fund. They are located next to the homemade jams in the narthex. All bowls are homemade and are finished with a food safe finish. If you have questions about the bowls, they can be directed to Paul Carstens at [pcarsten@alumni.nmu.edu](mailto:pcarsten@alumni.nmu.edu).

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## Senior Men's Ministry

Messiah's Senior Men's Bible Study will resume on **Friday, January 9th at 9:00 am** in room #202.

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## Knotty Knitters

The Knotty Knitters will continue to meet at Messiah on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month. The knitters typically meet in Magnuson Hall but occasionally meet in the atrium. They do join one another for lunch at Vangos prior to coming to Messiah. Please contact Shelly Johnson for more information.

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## Wanted - Nursery Staff

Messiah is in need of another staff person or two for our nursery. This is a paid position. Any person interested needs to be 18 years of age or older. Please inquire in the office if this is something you might be interested in. Thank you!

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## A Daily Guide for December 2025

### December 1 – Begin in Hope

Light a candle and say aloud: *"Even now, I believe light is coming."*

Write one hope you carry into this month. Post it where you'll see it daily.

### December 2 – Make Space

Declutter a drawer, shelf, or calendar slot. Let go of what's no longer needed.

Pray: *"Make room in me for peace, joy, and presence."*

### December 3 – Fear Isn't the End

Write down one fear that's been speaking loudly.

Now, below it, write what hope says back.

### December 4 – Reach Out

Text or call someone who feels far away. Let them know you're thinking of them.

### December 5 – Find the Warmth

Wrap yourself in a blanket. Sip something hot.

Name three things that make you feel safe and held.

### December 6 – Light in the Window

Place a candle or light in your window tonight. Let it be a sign—for your neighbors, for yourself—that love is near.

### **December 7 – Pray While You Walk**

Take a short walk, even in the cold. Let each step be a prayer: “God, walk with me. Walk with us.”

### **December 8 – Feed Another**

Make a meal or snack for someone else. Drop it off, invite them in, or pack a lunch for someone who needs it.

### **December 9 – Choose Beauty**

Do one thing that makes your space or day more beautiful—light a candle, hang a string of lights, or display something meaningful.

### **December 10 – Remember the Lonely**

Write a card or letter to someone who might feel alone this season. Mail it today.

### **December 11 – Mid-Advent Check-In**

What has surprised you this month? What still feels tender?

Give thanks for both.

### **December 12 – Practice Hope**

Hope is a practice, not a feeling. Do something today that leans toward healing or change—even if you don’t feel ready.

### **December 13 – Give a Gift, Just Because**

Wrap something simple and leave it for someone—homemade bread, an ornament, a poem, a pack of cocoa.

### **December 14 – Pray for the Children**

Lift up children in your life and community. Pray: “*God of gentleness, protect their joy and grow their dreams.*”

### **December 15 – Take One Brave Step**

Do one small thing today that scares you a little but leads toward life: a hard conversation, a new habit, or an honest word.

### **December 16 – Let Go of Perfect**

Cross one thing off your to-do list without doing it. Let peace matter more than productivity today.

### **December 17 – Shelter and Solidarity**

Donate a warm item—socks, gloves, coat—or volunteer at a shelter.

Pray for those seeking safety this winter.

### **December 18 – Give Thanks for Ordinary Goodness**

Thank someone who shows up consistently: the custodian, the grocery clerk, the neighbor who always waves.

### **December 19 – Watch for Wonder**

Look for something today that catches you off guard—a child laughing, snow falling, the sky shifting. Wonder is everywhere.

### **December 20 – Be Someone’s Warmth**

Bring warmth to someone else today—through your presence, your words, your help.

Say: *“Even now, love shows up.”*

### **December 21 – Longest Night, Deepest Light**

On the solstice, light a candle in the dark and say:

*“The light is coming. I will not give up hope.”*

### **December 22 – Listen Generously**

Have a conversation today where you mostly just listen. Make space for someone’s story without needing to fix or respond.

### **December 23 – Deliver Joy**

Drop off cookies or treats for someone nearby—a neighbor, teacher, bus driver, or postal worker. Include a simple thank-you note.

### **December 24 – Christmas Eve: Love Breaks In**

Read Luke 2:1–20. Light a candle. Sit in stillness. Say:

*“Even now, Christ is born. Even now, good news lives.”*

### **December 25 – Christmas Day: Joy is Here**

Bundle up and step outside, even for five minutes.

Look around and whisper: “God is with us. Joy to the world.”

### **December 26 – Rest Well**

Give yourself permission to rest today. Breathe deeply. Be gentle with your body. Light a candle and do nothing.

### **December 27 – Remember Who Carried You**

Write down the names of three people or communities that supported you this year. Give thanks—and maybe reach out.

### **December 28 – Pay It Forward**

Buy coffee for a stranger, support a mutual aid fund, or offer a ride. Let your generosity ripple.

### **December 29 – Look Toward the New**

Begin asking: *What do I want to carry into the year ahead?*

Make a list of three values you want to live by in 2026.

### **December 30 – Make a Way**

Read Matthew 2:12 – *“They went home by another way.”*

What new way might God be opening in your life?

### **December 31 – End With Hope**

Light a candle one last time this year. Say:

*“Even now, even still, God is with us. And I will keep hoping.”*

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## **What is Centering Prayer?**

Centering prayer is a form of silent prayer that emphasizes resting in God's presence through silence and a sacred word. It involves finding a quiet space, sitting comfortably, and focusing on a chosen word to help maintain stillness and let go of thoughts. The goal is to cultivate a deeper relationship with God through stillness and receptivity. Several members of Messiah lead groups that practice this form of prayer throughout the week as a piece of their faith life. - *Pr. Molly Hunter*

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## **What I Know & Centering Prayer**

Consciousness can be defined as our ability to know, the experience of knowing. The subject knowing the object. When we look at objects and name them, we think we know them. We think we know this person or that person because we have a name or a memory of them. We think we know all kinds of things because we remember them. Our ability to know is of the conditioned sort—knowing about, rather than knowing directly.

Buddhist practice is to abide in pure mindfulness in which there is what we call insight knowing, or direct knowledge. It is a knowledge that isn't based on perception, an idea, a position, or a doctrine, and this knowledge can only be possible through mindfulness. What we mean by mindfulness is the ability to not attach to any object, either in the material realm or the mental realm. When there is no attachment, the mind is in its pure state of awareness, intelligence, and clarity. That is mindfulness. The mind is pure and receptive, sensitive to the existing conditions. It is no longer a conditioned mind that just reacts to pleasure and pain, praise and blame, happiness and suffering. That which observes and investigates is what we call a reflective mind. The human mind is a reflective mind.

We ask questions: Who am I? Why was I born? What is life all about? What happens when I die? Is there meaning or purpose to life? But because we tend to think that other people know and we don't, we often seek the answers from others, rather than opening the mind and watching through patient alertness for truth to be revealed. Through mindfulness and awareness, revelation is possible. This revelation of truth or ultimate reality, is what the religious experience really amounts to. When we bind ourselves to the divine, and engage our whole being in that bond, we allow this revelation of truth, which we call insight—profound and true insight—into the nature of things. Revelation is ineffable as well. Words are not quite capable of expressing it. That is why revelations can be very different. How they are stated, how they are produced through speech, can be infinitely variable.

So a Buddhist's revelations sound very Buddhist and a Christian's revelations sound very Christian. There's nothing wrong with that. But we need to recognize the limitation of the convention of language. We need to understand that language is not ultimately true or ultimately real; it is the attempt to communicate this ineffable reality to others.



Today we have an opportunity to work toward a common truth among all religions; we can all begin to help each other. It's no longer a time when converting people or trying to compete with each other seems to be of any use or value. Rather than attempt to convert others, religion presents the opportunity to awaken to our true nature, to true freedom to love and compassion. It's a way of living in full sensitivity, with full receptivity, so we can take delight in and open ourselves to the mystery and wonder of the universe for the rest of our lives. - - -

*The Mind and the Way* by Ajahn Sumedho

Centering Prayer is the God-oriented way of meditation/mindfulness. We meet on Tuesdays from 11:00 am-12:00 pm. We meditate for 20 minutes together & then read and share from spiritual literature. Other opportunities to practice meditation together are here at Messiah with Laura Petrie, or online at [www.meditationchapel.org](http://www.meditationchapel.org) via zoom, or with <https://www.minnesotacontemplativeoutreach.org/> via zoom or at Peter White Public Library with MeditateMarquette on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm in the Heritage room.

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### **OWLs (Older, Wiser Lutherans)**

The OWLs meet on Monday morning at 10:00 am at the Dome. Afterwards they go to Provisions for coffee. They walk at different rates and welcome everyone to join them. If you're not interested in walking, join us for coffee. If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Little or the church office.

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### **The New Free Store Donations**

The New Free Store is an inter-faith, non-profit group supporting people who express a need for free clothing, linens, hygiene & cleaning supplies. Anyone in need is welcome. Free things are offered as "in God's economy three is always enough." There is a collection bin in our narthex at Messiah for The New Free Store. They are currently collecting:

\***December** – *Laundry Soap, Dish Soap, Bar Soap*

\***January** – *Dental Floss, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes (adult & child size)*

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### **Devotions Link**

<https://nglsynod.org/prayfaithfully/> is an on-line devotional reading service maintained by the Northern Great Lakes Synod and written by various pastors and laypersons.

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### **Messiah Birthdays**

Dec 24      Lucy Dellangelo, Holly Sundman

|        |                                            |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|
| Dec 25 | Carol Stevens                              |
| Dec 26 | Diane Adams                                |
| Dec 27 | No birthdays                               |
| Dec 28 | Michael Broadway, Larry Pagel              |
| Dec 29 | Abby LaForest, Aliina Maki-Warne, Tim Weir |
| Dec 30 | Carol O'Neill                              |
| Dec 31 | Jerry Cory, Beth Wendricks                 |
| Jan 1  | No birthdays                               |
| Jan 2  | Daphne Evans                               |
| Jan 3  | Laurel Reece                               |
| Jan 4  | No birthdays                               |
| Jan 5  | Pam Forsberg                               |
| Jan 6  | Kathy Godec, Luke Rector                   |

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## **In the Hospital**

Please inform the church office when you are hospitalized. Pr. Andrew Plocher & Pr. Molly Hunter would like to visit you while you are there. If you are unable to notify Messiah, please ask a family member to do so.

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## **Your Prayer Requests at Messiah**

At every Saturday & Sunday worship service, we ask people to fill out a welcome card that is found in the bulletin. The card asks people to put their prayer requests on the back, and these requests are prayed for every Tuesday morning at Messiah's staff meeting. If you wish to have your name or a loved one's name read during worship, please call the office or let the pastors or Jen know. We will need to get permission before we include anyone's name in the worship prayers.

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## **In Our Prayers**

*Please remember the following people in your prayers at this time:* Darlene Martin and family upon the passing of her husband John; Linda Ruohoniemi; Charlie Blake; Rick; Jan Brown; Former and current CDC employees; Sam Elder; Ken and Jan Vickstrom; Doug Morton; Jackie Greising; Art Ortlieb; Christine and Jason; Darlene Dreisbach; Ruth Koehler; Sherrie Wagner; Betsy; Carrie Oslund; John Collins; Myra; Katie; John Kiltinen; Mary Ruman; Jeremy; Sally Olson; Carol Bell; Dorothy; Karen; Rose Collins; Don Hillegas; Grant; Kai Dolan; Samantha; Ted; Bruce Lindberg; Grace Chien; Jamie; Donna; Brian; Ben; Evelyn; Akira

Carlson; Karen Eldevick; Grace; Shannon; Marshall Lovan; Peter; Shawn; Mae Desonia; Lisa Douros; Tina; Wayne Hanmer; Judy Donckers; Sierra; Charlene Avery

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### **Pastor on Call:**

Pastor Andrew is on call December 24 and on vacation December 28-January 9

Pastor Molly is on call December 25-31

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### **Worship Volunteers**

#### **Christmas Eve - Wednesday, December 24 – 4:00 pm in sanctuary**

Ushers: Linda Berry, **one more needed**

Communion Assistants: Laura and Lydia Tripp, Addy Davis

Projection Technician: Kathy Godec

#### **Christmas Eve - Wednesday, December 24 -- 7:30 pm in sanctuary, on 101.9 FM, Vimeo/Facebook**

Ushers: Cathy Seblonka, Brenda Blett

Communion Assistants: Laurel Kniskern, Karen Burkman, Kerry McGinley

Projection Technician: Lesley Williams

#### **Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24 –10:00 pm in sanctuary, on 101.9 FM, Vimeo/Facebook**

Ushers: Linda Berry, Susy Swanson

Communion Assistants: Linda Chapman, Jen Bleckiner, Marina Shinkarenko

#### **Sunday, December 28 –8:30 am in sanctuary, on 101.9 FM, Vimeo/Facebook**

Ushers: Cathy Seblonka, Sten Taube

Greeters: Chris Harkness, Marina Shinkarenko

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### **10:30 am Worship Volunteers**

We need more volunteers for our 10:30 worship service. Specifically, ushers and communion assistants. If you are interested in either of these roles or if you have questions, please visit Jen or Kathy in the office and they will let you know what is involved. Thank you!

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## **Radio Broadcast & Livestream Sponsorship**

We need sponsors for weekly/ongoing radio broadcasts & livestream. If this is something you would like to support, please contact the office & share what you would like written for your sponsorship; it can be in honor or in memory of a loved one.

You can reach us by phone at 225-1119 or email at [office@messiahlutheranmqt.org](mailto:office@messiahlutheranmqt.org). The cost of the Radio Broadcast or Livestream sponsorship is \$110.00 each.

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## **Announcements and Classified Ads**

### **Help Needed**

Louise Anderson needs occasional help with heavy lifting, climbing, and odd jobs; probably not more than ½ hour at a time. She will pay. If you are interested in helping, you can get Louise's contact information from the church office.

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### **Medication Help Available**

If you have questions or concerns regarding your medications, you can contact retired pharmacist, Barb Salmela. Contact the office to get her number. All inquiries are confidential. She can help find discounts for medication, ways to possibly obtain them for free, or suggest less expensive alternatives.

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### **Financial Help for Cancer Patients**

If you or someone you know is going through any financial hardships while going through cancer treatment, please do not hesitate to contact Dave Poirier of Cancer Care of Marquette County (CCMC). 906-362-9226 / [poirph@msn.com](mailto:poirph@msn.com) or Barb Salmela.

There are no income guidelines. Assistance can be for travel expenses, insurance co-pay, medical bills & medications related to cancer care. This organization is all volunteer based. Money to support is from fundraising, grants and donations. This organization is a 501c3 group so donations are tax deductible. But I cannot emphasize enough....to CALL if you need help.

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### **Lake Superior Life Care & Hospice**

[Find Your Balance — and Keep It!](#)

[Informational Presentation: "A Matter of Balance"](#)

Worried about falls or avoiding activities because of balance concerns? A Matter of Balance is

an award-winning program that helps older adults reduce fall risk and stay active through practical strategies and gentle exercises.

Registration is open and required for this program.

Class begins January 8th

Lake Superior Life Care & Hospice, 914 W. Baraga, Marquette

Time: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Who should attend:

- Anyone concerned about falls and are 60+
- Those wanting to improve balance, flexibility, and strength
- Individuals who have fallen or limited activities due to fear of falling

Take control and keep moving safely!

Call Jamie at 906.225.7760 or email at [Outreach@Lakesuperiorhospice.org](mailto:Outreach@Lakesuperiorhospice.org)

Mindful Aging - Aging U.P. Learning Series. Shifting attitudes and perspectives as they relate to getting older. Have you ever walked into a room and forgotten why you are there? You're not alone! Join us for a 4-part Virtual Zoom workshop series that explores the everyday "Senior moments" we all experience. We'll guide you through understanding how our brains work, what sets us up for forgetfulness, and — most importantly — practical strategies to strengthen memory and cognitive connections. Walk away with tips you won't forget and plan to turn those senior moments into senior momentum! Registration is Open but limited.

Date & Time: Wednesdays, January 14th - February 4th, 10:30–11:30 am

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Cost: Free, Open to the community

Note: Participants must have a device with internet connection & an email address to attend

Register now by calling Jamie Barbieri at 906.225.7760 or

[Outreach@LakeSuperiorHospice.org](mailto:Outreach@LakeSuperiorHospice.org).

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## **Do you have an announcement?**

Send announcements & ads to Kathy Godec ([kathy@messiahlutheranmqt.org](mailto:kathy@messiahlutheranmqt.org)). Send concert or performance information, yard sale announcements, party invitations, requests for babysitters, yard maintenance, rooms for rent and items for sale. E-newsletter deadline is 12:00 pm on Tuesdays.

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## **Messiah Contact Information**

Messiah Lutheran Church  
305 W. Magnetic St.

Phone: 906-225-1119  
Fax: 906-225-5025

Marquette, MI 49855

Email: [office@messiahlutheranmqt.org](mailto:office@messiahlutheranmqt.org)

Website: <https://www.messiahlutheranmqt.org/>

### **Pastoral Staff**

Senior Pastor - Andrew Plocher

Associate Pastor - Molly Hunter

### **Office Staff**

Parish Administrator - Jennifer Dodge

Administrative Assistant – Kathy Godec

Parish Accountant - Mike Hill

Financial Secretary – Anne Rydholm

### **Music Staff**

Director of Music – Sara Parks

Bell Choir Director - Judy Quirk

Organist/Pianist - Kathy Strazzinski & Jon Banitt

Pianist – Jacob Schmeltzer