



# MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*We seek to answer God's call to love*

Senior Pastor: Andrew Plocher  
Associate Pastor: Molly Eversoll

Parish Administrator: Jennifer Dodge  
Administrative Assistant: Inga Banitt

*But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into the one who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. – Ephesians 4:15-16*

September 9, 2020

Dear Messiah Family and Friends,

God's grace be with you during these interesting, challenging and grace-filled days! As summer gives way to autumn, I am writing to share a preview of how our fall worship and programming are unfolding so that you will know how to stay connected to Messiah Lutheran Church. In this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, your pastors and church leaders continue to seek creative ways to be the church together even while we are apart.

The Council's Taskforce continues to track guidance from medical experts, state and local government officials, and to monitor the rate of viral activity in our area and its associated risks when people gather in groups. In partnership with our Church Council, they are guiding us as we move through the Phased Return to In-Person Gatherings plan that was established in June. We currently remain in Phase 2 of that plan.

We would like nothing more than for there to be a definitive end or "until" date for our suspension of in-person worship, but while our impatience with pandemic implications grows, the realities behind our current situation remain unchanged. COVID-19 is as present today as it was when we closed the campus back in March; the virus remains as virulent now as it was then; and we have no idea when that might change.

Therefore, until the viral activity of COVID-19 decreases considerably and can be better managed medically, here are the highlights of plans for the upcoming programmatic season.

- **Our weekly Bible study conversations are now available as a podcast!** The 'Queen City Preacher Podcast' is available through Spotify, Apple podcasts, and most places you might listen to a podcast (and you can find it on our website and Facebook, too). We've started with exploring Sunday's scripture, but look forward to adding more conversations as we move forward into this new (to us) technology!
- **Sunday School is going virtual!** Similar to our Vacation Bible School, our fall Sunday School will be online with some PDF activities and coloring sheets for use at home. The theme is The Beatitudes and your pastors, Sunday school teachers, and other volunteers are producing video lessons each week.
- **Holden Evening Prayer is back!** Holden worship will be held the second Wednesday of September, October, and November at 6:30pm. It will be streamed over Facebook, Vimeo, and YouTube, as well as broadcast on Sunny 101.9FM.



- **Worship in the Park (on a Wednesday)!** On Wednesday September 23rd, at 6:00pm, we'll have worship at the Presque Isle bandshell. The band will be with us, along with the Queen City dancers. We'll distribute Bibles to 3-year-olds, 3rd graders, and 6th graders, and share in communion together. Bring your lawn chairs, wear your masks, and practice physical distancing. We look forward to seeing you there!
- **Adult Forums Coming Soon!** We'll be offering learning opportunities via Zoom with special guests and educators on topics such as immigration, the indigenous community in the UP, and more! We look forward to sharing the details once they're confirmed.
- **The book studies are back!** In October we'll resume our conversation about Debby Irving's "Waking Up White." Then in November we'll discuss "I'm Proud of You: My Friendship with Fred Rogers" by Tim Madigan (available in the church office for \$15).

Our Sunday morning worship will continue online and over the radio. It is broadcast at 101.9FM on Sunday at 8:45am and is also streamed on our Facebook page, Vimeo page, and YouTube Channel. As you may have already noticed, we're slowly increasing worship leadership participation and our musical offerings in worship. For a full list of worship this fall, please check out the card enclosed with this letter. I encourage you to put it on your fridge or in another spot where you can regularly see it. We look forward to seeing you online and outdoors (Sept. 23rd)!

In our commitment to improve our access to our worship, as well as the quality of the broadcast and streaming, we are in the midst of a project installing a permanent streaming system. We look forward to better sound quality, the use of three cameras, and integrated software as we look toward the return to in-person worship and the use of our projection monitors. We've also hired a professional technician to assist us with these worship broadcasts and are excited to have Dan Zini joining our church staff. If you are able to make an additional gift toward this important project, please send a check to the church with 'streaming project' in the memo line. We are incredibly grateful for your generous support during these challenging times. Thank you!

Speaking of your support, we invite you to partner with us by your continued involvement in our ministry and mission, and by keeping our church family, community and world in prayer. In the midst of this pandemic, your generosity has allowed us to maintain, and even increase, our support of local and world mission, as well as continue and expand our ministry. Your support has helped us stay on a firm footing in these turbulent times. We are so grateful for your continued generous financial and prayerful support of the church which has enabled us to meet these challenging days as a creative, vibrant and vital congregation upholding one another and engaging in service.

As we continue to be a church deployed, living out the gospel of love and justice in our families, in our work and in the world, we trust that God is leading us into new life. Know that our church staff is here to support you, to pray with you and to listen. Every week we hold you all in prayer. If you are in need of pastoral assistance, please know that one pastor is always "on call" every day and night of the week (just call the church office voicemail to find who is on-call and what their number is). If you would like to speak with a pastor or anyone on our staff, please don't hesitate to contact us. We miss you and would love to hear from you.

Grace and Peace,



Pr. Andrew Plocher



Pr. Molly Eversoll