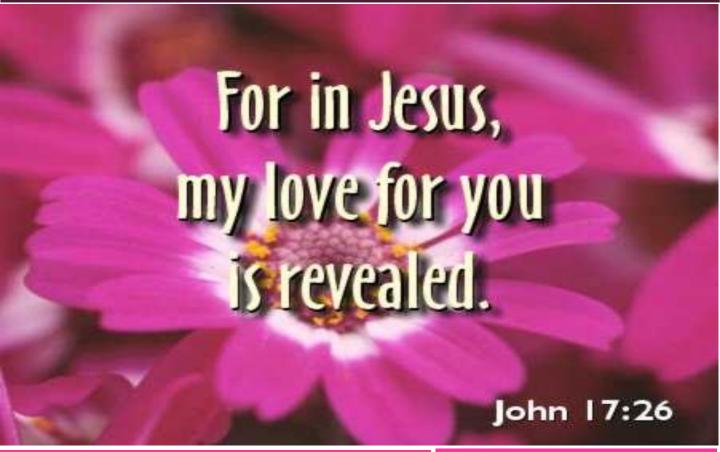


# MESSIAH MESSENGER

February 2021

Volume 42 Issue 2



## **SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

Following the recommendation from Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, all worship services at Messiah Lutheran Church remain closed to in-person attendance.

We will be broadcasting live on YouTube search for MessiahCamrose or find a link on our website messiahcamrose.ca.

We will also continue to broadcast live on EastLink TV channels 10, 310 and 610 at 10:30 am Sunday morning and also rebroadcast on Wednesday at 5:30 pm.

Please call if you have any questions or concerns 780 672 3444 or email office@messiahcamrose.ca.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Monday to Friday 8:00 am - Noon 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm (closed Noon to 1:00 pm for lunch)

# CHURCH FOYER WILL BE OPEN

Monday to Friday
8:00 am to 4:00 pm
(offerings can be placed
through the mail slot on the
inside office door
during the lunch hour)

## Minister's Message

# GOD'S WELCOME FOR ALL



As we have opened this year, which is a really different kind of opening, I have been made keenly aware of God's incredible welcome in this world. This pandemic has really hurled us into a

different way of seeing our lives and of being people together in this world. At first, we hardly knew how to be and now we are slowly finding our way aren't we? But it's still really hard.

We have always talked about swinging wide our church doors... and now as many churches are not meeting, they are swinging the other way, forcing us to go out into the world and be God's welcome in ways we perhaps have not even thought of before.

We have been invited to be God's love in the world in creative ways and perhaps listen to the Spirit around how to celebrate one another, how to acknowledge one another in new and different ways.

We have become more keenly aware of those who have been lonely in our world for a really long time. We have become more aware of those who suffer with hunger and worry around job security. Many who have had no worry around money have found themselves jobless and struggling to make ends meet. We have not been able to be with our loved ones as they die and are ill and now we find ourselves not even with our church families. This pandemic, although so devastating is reminding us to SEE one another in completely different ways and I think in some ways SEE one another for the first time.

In all of this.. we are reminded that God's welcome is for all. I believe that perhaps this is being driven home in ways we have not even thought of before. For the first time in years we are united in a struggle and in a cause to care for our neighbor and to work as one to keep one another safe. We are reminded that love has to take many different and new forms.

Today as I write this I wanted to talk a bit about this welcome that we are learning to have for one another which begins with the welcome our Lord has for and for all people.

Our church has a mission statement. "Sharing Jesus Christ with All People." What does this mean in our moments these days?

Our Lord showed us in his time on this earth that he welcomed all people. We find him connecting with everyone... with the poor especially, with the sick and yes... even with those with dangerous diseases like leprosy. He connected with and was welcoming to those who were considered unworthy in the eyes of the land and the church. He loved the rule keepers and all others alike.

There was no one when Jesus was on this earth who he did not open to spending time with and caring about.

In Matthew 25 and 36 we hear these words around what Jesus said about how God sees our welcome of him through the people we welcome. This passage was written telling the people of God's heart for people which would become clear on the last day.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

And when asked where they did this for the Lord while on earth... the reply was this in verse 40.

"Truly I say to you, and you did to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

As we are called to be God's immense welcome to all people... we are required to not leave a single person out of that welcome. God welcomes you and me so fully. We need to welcome others with that same welcome.

There is a poem credited to Lois Blanchard Eades that I would like to share with you today.

## IF JESUS CAME TO YOUR HOUSE.

If Jesus came to your house To spend some time with you, If He came unexpected, I wonder what you'd do.



Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room
To such an honored guest
And all the food you'd give to Him Would be the very best.

And you would keep assuring Him You're glad to have Him there— That serving Him in your home Is joy beyond compare.

But when you saw Him coming, Would you meet Him at the door With arms outstretched in welcome To your heavenly visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes Before you let Him in Or hide some magazines And put the Bibles where they'd been?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out? Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?

And I wonder—if the Savior spent a day or two with you, Would you go right on doing, the things you always do?

Would you go right on saying, the things you always say? Or would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you go? Or would you maybe change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your closest friends? Or would you hope they stay away, until His visit ends?

Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on? Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know, the things that you would do, If Jesus came in person, to spend some time with you.

By Lois Blanchard Eades

As we consider God's welcome for you and for me, a welcome of open arms and complete forgiveness and of adoption as God' child, let us be that kind of welcome to all in this world.

In these days of pandemic... we cannot welcome people into our churches or homes in the same way right now... but we can welcome people in so many other ways.

Let us find creative ways to open our hearts and our doors.

And let us look for those to welcome and to share of God's love that perhaps we might shy away from or even perhaps cross the street when we see them coming.

Let us welcome everyone with open arms for as we do, we welcome our Lord.

Blessings on you this day and as you find your way in this very different world.

Blessings to you as you look for ways to be God's welcome in this world.

Remember you too are loved also and welcomed by your Lord.

I welcome you also if you want to talk or pray together or just connect in this difficult time to call our office or give me call.

In the love and welcome of our God,

Pastor Bev

(780-678-7830)

## Bishop's Message For Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders



Dear Beloved of God —
The Gospel according to Mark does not begin with angels, a prophetic dream, or a miraculous birth. Instead, the gospel writer hurls us, ready or not, into a lonely and barren wilderness — a desert — where

everything either bites or burns or stings.

As Jesus emerges from the baptismal water, the heavens are ripped open, the Spirit descends like a dove and the voice of God proclaims, "You are my Son, the Beloved, in you I am well pleased." And immediately, Jesus was driven out – hurled out – into the desert to be tormented by wild beasts and tempted by evil. (Mark 1:1-12)

It's not exactly what you would expect, is it? God was pleased, even well pleased with him. And yet, he was hurled from affirmation and love into a desert-like wilderness of sand and heat and wild beasts and temptation.

Experts say deserts are formed under unique climactic conditions. Maps show that they cover about 25% of the earth's surface. Globes indicate that they are found only between specific latitudes. That is what the experts say. But we know the truth about the wilderness, don't we? The truth is that sometimes – no matter where we live or how far we travel – the wilderness is all we can see. Despite weather reports or average rainfall charts, we find ourselves in the wilderness: blinded, sunburned, dying of thirst.

This desert can feel so familiar that we name every shriveled plant, every venomous snake, every blistering ray, every irritating grain of sand. Sometimes, the wilderness feels a lot like home, a lot like now, and what we've experienced this past year.

The single mom, stretched so thin that she almost disappears, knows the desert of exhaustion and guilt. The rejected child, watching silently outside the playground, knows the desert called loneliness. The ill, newly aware of test results and consultations, know the desert of fear and uncertainty. The grieving, now alone, know the desert of unwanted solitude. Parishioners, reeling from scandal, know the desert of a trust betrayed.

The truth is, deserts are not found only in Africa, or in Nevada, or in the Sinai Peninsula. Some of the harshest wildernesses are not marked on any map. They lie just around the corner, or in your living room, in the very heart of your life.

But there is something more about the wilderness – something more that Mark wants us to hear: Jesus has been there first. Here is the Good News of Mark's opening scenes. No wilderness is so remote, barren, inhospitable, or filled with danger that Jesus has not walked there first. And Jesus' presence here reminds us something else: despite all appearances to the contrary, the wilderness is filled with life. A handful soil swirling in the hot wind can be filled with hundreds of seeds, waiting for a chance to bloom. That withered plant still has living roots deep underground. That landscape, empty in the harsh light of day, comes to life in the moonlight with reptiles and insects.

Even at its most desolate, the wilderness is ready to bloom at the first sign of life-giving water. Maybe that is why the scriptures speak of the wilderness as a place for discovery and transformation.

And there is more: the angels waited on him. Jesus is not alone. He is cared for in the wilderness, receiving sustenance and nourishment.

And this is our experience too – for in the wilderness of our 40-day Lenten journey, and over this past year – we have also been given sustenance: the Word, the Eucharist, community, family, opportunities for service and action.

This Lent finds many of us traveling through the wilderness, wrestling with demons and tempted by evil. We may feel like we have been thrown out into the wilderness. Some people might look upon this journey and despair.

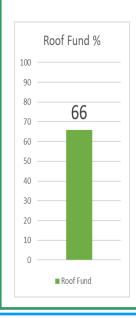
But we know the truth about the wilderness, don't we? In Christ Jesus –

Shalom,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

## **ROOF FUND UPDATE:**



The revised goal is \$92,341 Received as of January 24: \$61,330 (66% of our goal) 2021 Offering Envelopes are available for pick up at the church office.

# **Eternity for Today**

Prayer booklets are now available for pickup from the church office.

# Treasurer's Report

## **December 31 Financial Notes (8 Months)**

Offerings and other receipts \$272,569

Budgeted \$280,667

Expenses 270,224

Budgeted \$281,522

Net Income 2,345

Designated offerings 44,360

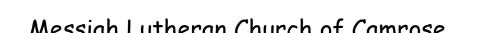
Other financial notes:

Roof repair funds needed \$31,138



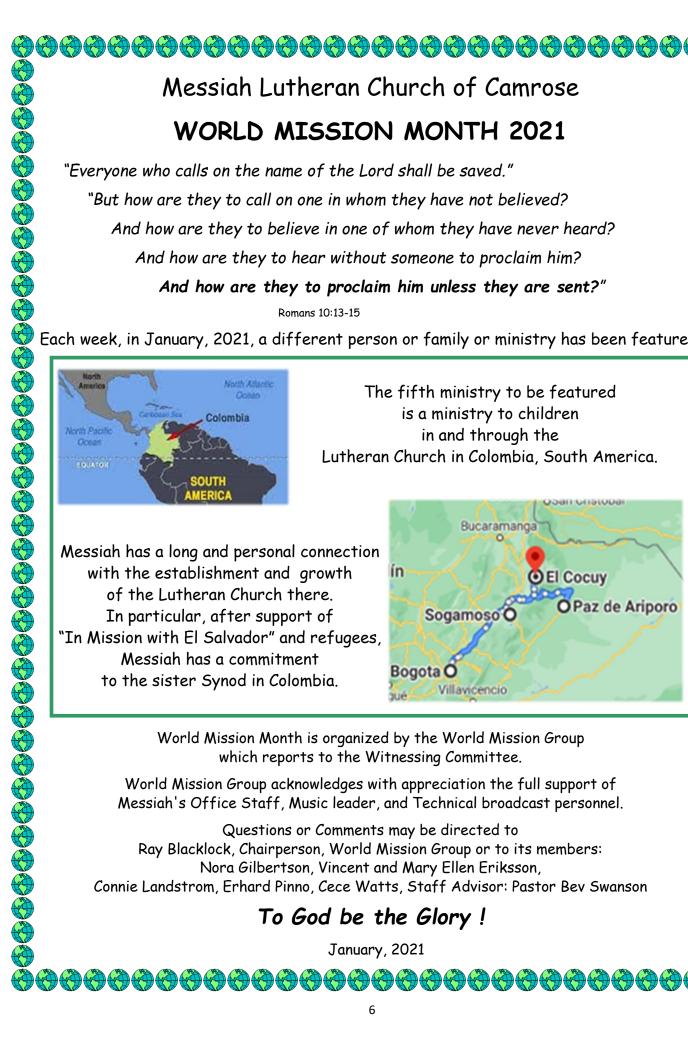
Christmas donations were \$2,500 lower than budget, however, this was more than offset by larger than usual general donations. As a result, we are showing a slightly favourable income for the year to date. This is WONDERFUL news! Thank you to everyone for your generous support of the work being done by Messiah Lutheran Church!

Chris Hohm, Treasurer



Each week, in January, 2021, a different person or family or ministry has been featured.





\$



What does "CELCO" stand for?

Colegio Evangelico Luterano de Colombia

or

Lutheran Schools in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, South America

CELCO schools are private schools and require students to pay tuition. Public schools are paid for by the government. In the November *Messenger*, an article by Bishop Larry described the quality of these schools. Here is an extract from the November Messenger to remind us of why students go to these Lutheran schools:

"The students told us that they not only believed that they were receiving the best education possible which prepared them for post-secondary education, but that they also were receiving a well-rounded education where they learned values of love, respect, integrity, and character. They underscored the value of a Christian education where grace and faith were demonstrated."

There are 4 CELCO schools in Colombia, but here are details concerning one more of these schools with the name CELCO El Cocuy which Bishop Larry and the Alberta Synod members visited:

El Cocuy is situated in the Andes in northern Colombia, close to Venezuela. This school started in 1940 for the same reasons as the other missionary schools, in order to give protestant children a safe space to learn. The school had to close in 1949 due to the La Violencia but in 1955, when the situation improved, Elizabeth Heerde and Valborg Torkelson went to work in El Cocuy and a large house was bought that would serve as parsonage, chapel and school. In 1956 the community was organized as Iglesia El Salvador with missionary Harold Olson as pastor and director of the school until Pastor Gerhard Ostrem returned in 1957 from furlough. In 1957-58 Pastor Gerhard mentored evangelist Oliverio Moro. When Oliverio was ordained, he became pastor of the church and director of the school. Since then the Moro family has continued to be involved in the school and now, Oliverio Moro Navante, nephew of the original Pastor Oliverio, is the director.

Today there are 200 students in Collegio CELCO El Cocuy. With its motto "EDUCATE FOR LIFE" it has been and continues to be an oasis of peace in all kinds of situations, especially during critical times of violence. CELCO El Cocuy is known for its Christian formative education which generates and promotes life.



\$

In support of children struggling to meet the fees at these schools donations are encouraged from Messiah members. Cheques may be made out to Messiah Lutheran Church with "Lutheran Schools in Colombia" shown on the detail line.

Colombia article submitted by Erhard Pinno on behalf of the World Mission Group.

## **Connecting in the Word**

Check out our brief recorded inspirational messages twice a week. One with Pastor Bev and then with Andy the puppet for a message for the kids! Go to messiahcamrose.ca to find the link called Connecting in the Word

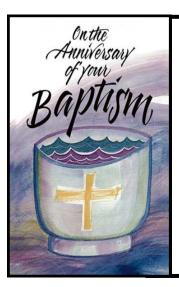
Join us in this time of making safe connection with one another around God's word. We welcome your responses.



We are able to accept E-transfers set up from your online banking at the following email address:

offering@messiahcamrose.ca (deposits directly)





We recognize the monthly Baptismal Anniversaries of the children in the *Splash* program:

Liam Hatch - Feb 3 Malia McNary - Feb 4 Jack Etty - Feb 9 Erin Bilyk - Feb 25

Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

## **FOOD BANK DONATIONS**

Food bank donations are still needed and can be placed in the cart at the back of the sanctuary or dropped off at the Neighbor Aid Food Bank located at 4524 54 Street -Mon to Fri from 9 am to Noon and Tues, Wed, Thurs 1 - 4 pm. Monetary donations

are also greatly appreciated and can be made at atbcares.com by entering CAMROSE NÉIGHBOR AID **CENTER INC.** 

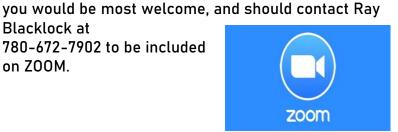
> in the Find A Cause search area. FOOD BANK SUNDAY February 14

Bible Study & Fellowship Opportunity For Men of All Ages. A study of the lessons for the next day's worship service takes place each Saturday morning at 9:00 am. All Men are Welcome for Study, Fellowship, and Encouragement in the Faith.

Men's Bible Study has resumed using the ZOOM program. If you would be new to this group,



Blacklock at 780-672-7902 to be included on ZOOM.



# Council Highlights for January 2021

Happy New Year everyone. There is hope on the horizon as vaccines arrive, the sun shines longer each day, and we all continue to reach out to connect and care for one another during this time of isolation. In her devotion opening last week's Council meeting, our President shared a passage from Hebrews 10:15-25 reminding us of the assurance we have from God and the need to "stir up one another to love and good works."

Pastor Bev underlined how happy she is to see the many ways people are using the internet and phone to stay in touch and to grow through the studies in Mark, Philippians, ALPHA, and virtual coffees. These initiatives have also drawn people who are not members of Messiah and may not live in Camrose. This is and continues to be a learning and creative experience.

A new ALPHA session begins Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 6:30. See the link on our website messiahcamrose.ca to register.

It was agreed that Messiah would not re-open for in-person worship yet, but that we would be alert to changing conditions and regulations.

Thank you everyone for your financial support. See our Treasurer's note elsewhere in this Messenger.

Vice-President, David Dahle, is assembling a Nominating Committee. Don't wait to be approached. If you would like to be on a Committee or Council, let David know. We are in this together.

Committees are reminded to submit their budget requests along with a brief rationale to the President by March 1.

The 2020-2021 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 6, 2021.

# Bulletin Board Displays always brighten up our church! Preach the Word 2 Theority 613 Thank you, Signe Harder!

# **Donations of Used Stamps**

Thanks to Cathie Bartlett who has kindly forwarded our used stamps to 2 organizations for use in their fundraising efforts. A large number went to the Leprosy Mission.

Cathie has since found a way to forward used stamps to the Canadian Bible Society. This donation will



help the CBS to provide the **Key to Freedom Bible** for prison ministries across Canada.

So we encourage you to keep saving your used stamps and bring them to the church office and Cathie will forward them.

She recently received a letter from the Canadian Bible Society and here are quotes from that letter:

"I cannot imagine this ministry being as relevant to the lives of the inmates we meet without the Key to

Freedom Bibles. We have seen more men saved in jail in the last two years than any other time, and CBS has played an important role in that!" (Bill, a Prison Chaplain.)

"Thank you again, to all involved for taking the time to collect and send used stamps, to us.

May God bless you, for your efforts!!" (Bessie Govostis, Receptionist and Administrative Assistant,

Human Resources, Canadian Bible Society)

# A *Grief Group* will be starting in February and will be led by Pastor Bev Swanson and Diaconal Minister MaryAnn Pastuck.

If you are interested, please call or email the office to register at 780-672-3444. Please indicate whether you could participate by Zoom during the day or would

prefer in the evening. Pastor Bev is also available to speak to individually if you do not feel comfortable with a group setting.





## **NEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING – PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

A new vocational training program is in place to help more women get specialized jobs in the Palestinian Territories. With funding from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, **CLWR**, in partnership with Lutheran World Federation, has begun a \$10 million program to improve education, training and employment in non-traditional fields for Palestinian women.

The new program, called **GRIT** (Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training) will give women better access to programs suited to their specific needs.

**GRIT** will open new doors for these women providing greater economic freedom and confidence within their families and communities.









# "ALPHA" is coming to a Computer near You!

But first, **what** is "ALPHA"?

--- A series of stimulating sessions that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith.

What happens in each session?

--- A lively presentation will be followed by breaking into small groups for talking over what has been presented.

**When** will it be happening?

- --- Each Tuesday, starting on February 9 to April 20<sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 7:45 pm
- --- Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to 2:00 (with a break for lunch)
- --- twelve sessions in all

Where can you find out more about joining in?

--- go to <a href="www.messiahcamrose.ca">www.messiahcamrose.ca</a>, click on "Alpha Online Course", and enter the details to register for the program

OF

--- pick up a brochure from the Messiah Church office and fill out the short form in that brochure and leave it at the Church office.

**How** will it be offered?

--- in the comfort of your own home, using the computer program "ZOOM". Do you need help with ZOOM? Help to use ZOOM is available for each person who registers.



# Wednesday Morning Coffee Fellowship

While we are unable to meet in person we will have a virtual Wednesday Morning Coffee Fellowship through Zoom from 11:00 am - Noon beginning on January 6, 2021. Please email the office at <a href="mailto:office@messiahcamrose.ca">office@messiahcamrose.ca</a> to register to receive the Zoom link.





ASH WEDNESDAY AND
LENTEN MIDWEEK
MEDITATIONS
WILL BE BROADCAST ON
EASTLINK AND YOUTUBE
ON WEDNESDAY'S,
STARTING ON
FEBRUARY 17
AT 5:30 PM

The Camrose Refugee Center received 2 twin beds for a refugee family that may arrive in February. They still need a dresser or chest of drawers.

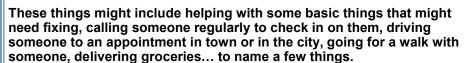
Contact Yvonne Myrehaug at 780-679-3727 to donate.

Thank you to those who have donated.



# Care Group!!

We would like to start up a care group. COVID has created a lot of distancing which creates separation, but the needs of people are still important and perhaps even more intense in this time of isolation. So, if you are able and willing to be a part of a care group we would welcome you to call the church office and put your name on a list for our Care Group or talk with one of our pastors about what you might be willing to do to help.





If you are a person who needs help with some of these things PLEASE GIVE US A CALL.

Give Pastor Bev a call at the office 780 672 3444 if you are interested!!! We would love to have you join our care group.

## PHONE CALLS

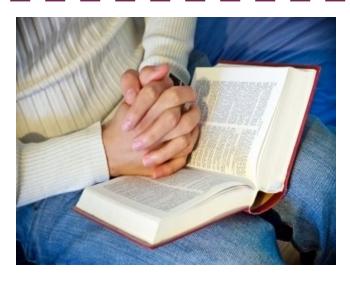


Bernie Williams challenges us to call 2 people every day!

Thank you Bernie.



Lenten Devotional on Prayer
With Pastor Bev
On Zoom
Wednesday Evenings
Starting February 17, 7:00 pm
Email the office at
office@messiahcamrose.ca
to register for the ZOOM link.



# Devotions for MARCH 2021

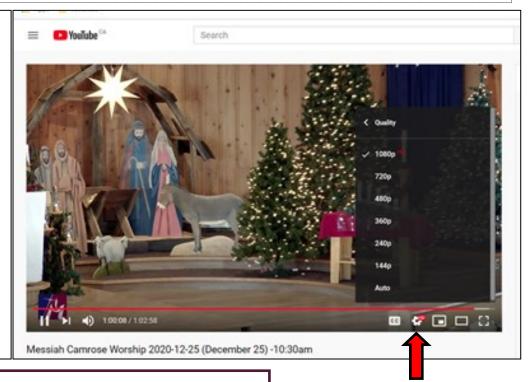


We are assembling a devotional booklet with contributions from members of Messiah. It will contain readings based on the Bible texts from the daily lectionary.

The devotions will be sent out to our members by a weekly email and a hardcopy will be assembled for those who do not receive email.

Thank you to all who are contributing!

For those of you who use YouTube to view the services please make sure you are viewing in HD (High Definition) for optimal picture quality. Click on the 'gear' shaped icon in the tool bar at the bottom of the YouTube screen as indicated in the screen shot by an arrow and choose 'Quality' and then '1080p60 HD'.





If you know someone who does not have access to Eastlink TV or the internet, but they have a DVD player, please contact the office at 780-672-3444 and we can make arrangements to deliver a DVD of any of the services to them!





## Messiah Church Council

Charlene Brown, President David Dahle, Vice-President Gail Stolee, Secretary Chris Hohm, Treasurer

Members at Large: Liaising With:
Lael Olson Worship Committee
Donny Loewen Learning Committee
Dave Larson Support Committee
Carolyn Andersen Witnessing Committee
Vacant Service Committee

## Messiah Lutheran Church

Sharing Jesus Christ with all People



4810-50 St. Camrose AB T4V 1P5
Phone: 780-672-3444; Fax: 780-672-3716
www.messiahcamrose.ca
office@messiahcamrose.ca

## Pastoral Ministry Team: Bev Swanson

## Calvin Skriver (on leave of absence)

Administrative Assistant: Lori Mokry
Part-Time Administrative Assistant: Shirley McFall
Audio Visual Ministry Coordinator: Lowell Dahlman

Bookkeeper: Sheila Becker Custodians: Carolyn & Lloyd Olson Music Ministry Coordinator: Tova Olson Youth & Confirmation Ministry: Bev Swanson



# **Messiah Messenger**

Published 11 times a year – September to July
Also available online at: <a href="www.messiahcamrose.ca">www.messiahcamrose.ca</a>
To request email delivery or to submit articles by email,
Write to: office@messiahcamrose.ca
Messenger Editor: Dena Grue

Members, staff, committees and groups are encouraged to submit articles so that we are aware of who we are as a congregation, and where we are going in our congregation.

Next Issue: March 2021 Material due: February 16 Delivery date: February 26



Sunday morning in-person worship service has been suspended. We will continue to broadcast on Eastlink channels 10, 310 & 610. Rebroadcast Wednesdays at 5:30 pm.

Our services are LIVE streamed on YouTube. Search for MessiahCamrose. There is also a link for the live stream on our website messiahcamrose.ca.



Previous Sunday's services may also be found on YouTube or on our website at messiahcamrose.ca and under the Worship Service tab you will find "Worship Services Archived."

# February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	2:00 World Mission Group by ZOOM	Philippians 7:00 Bible Study by Zoom	11:00 Coffee Fellowship by ZOOM	11:45 Staff Meeting  OSTEL OF  Mark  7:00 Gospel of Mark Bible Study by ZOOM	5	9:00 Men's Bible Study by ZOOM
7 Epiphany 5  10:30 Worship Service  Spiphany	8 5:00 Service Committee	9 6:30 Alpha by Zoom	9:30 Worship Committee Meeting by ZOOM 11:00 Coffee Fellowship by ZOOM	11 11:45 Staff Meeting 3:30 Learning Committee  GOSTEL OF MARK 7:00 Gospel of Mark Bible Study by ZOOM	12	9:00 Men's Bible Study by ZOOM  BIBLE  Study
10:30 Worship Service Food Bank Sunday	15 Family Day  Office Closed	Messenger Articles Due	17 11:00 Coffee Fellowship by ZOOM  5:30 pm Midweek Meditation 7:00 pm Devotion on Prayer by Zoom	18 11:45 Staff Meeting 5:45 Witnessing Committee  6:45 Confirmation 7:00 Church Council	19	9:00 Men's Bible Study by ZOOM  BIRLE Study
21 Lent 1 10:30 Worship Service	22	6:30 Alpha by Zoom	24 11:00 Coffee Fellowship by ZOOM  5:30 Midweek Meditation for Lent 7:00 pm Devotion on Prayer by Zoom	11:45 Staff Meeting  Confirmation	Messenger Delivery	9:00 Men's Bible Study by ZOOM  BIRLE  Study
28 Lent 2  10:30 Worship Service  2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent						