

*Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His love endures forever.*

Psalm 136:26



The SPIRIT
February 2025

The 5th ELCA Social Statement Educational Forum: **Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in the Lutheran Church**

The fifth installment of our monthly Educational Forums on the ELCA social statements will take place on February 2, 2025, in the sanctuary following worship. This forum, led by Vicar Jackson, will focus on the ELCA's social statement, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*. Published in 1993, this statement guides our engagement with issues concerning racial and ethnic diversity. Last month, we discussed the complex road toward peace on Earth. This month, we will continue to learn about how we should yearn to live and act as Lutherans in a complicated world.

You can find the social statement for Race, Ethnicity, and Culture for free at <https://www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements/race-ethnicity-and-culture>. Copies of this social statement will be available at the education forum. We would love for you to have read the document before the educational forum. However, should time prove limited, you can read a shorter 2-page introduction to the social statement. You can also find this at the link listed above. If you have trouble printing them or finding them online, please contact the church office. Copies will also be available in the church office if you would rather get them that way.

Unfortunately, the new Augsburg Fortress book series "For the Sake of the World" has not yet published a book on this social statement.

Next month's forum will focus on the ELCA's social statement on Economic Life. It will be hosted following worship on March 2nd, 2025, in the sanctuary. You can find resources for this forum at <https://www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements/economic-life>.

We hope to see you there!

Table of Contents

The 5 th ELCA Social Statement Educational Forum:	
Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in the Lutheran Church	Page 1
From the Desk of Pastor Orin Cummings	Page 3
From the Desk of Council President	Page 4
Can we help monitor your blood pressure?	Page 4
Announcements	Page 5
Hello from the Trottier's	Page 5
Messiah Book Club	Page 8
Library News	Page 8
Parish Life	Page 8
Wine, Wit and Wisdom	Page 8
Messiah Lighthouse Child and Family Development Center	Page 9
Letter from the Bishop	Page 9
Congregational Care	Page 10
Crosslines	Page 10
New Article by Vicar Jackson Published in <i>Earth & Altar</i>	Page 10
February Altar Flowers	Page 11
February Scripture Readings	Page 12
Mark Your Calendars	Page 12



Messiah Staff

Rev. Orin Cummings, PhD
Jackson Reynolds, MDiv
Nathan Carlson
Leisa Rushton
Missy Fite
Chris Evans
Marilyn Boston
Karen Bowman
Sheryl Hansen
Drew Bowman
Jessica Phillips

Pastor
Vicar
Business Manager
Office Administrator
Custodian p/t
Custodian p/t
Organist
Contemporary Music Coordinator
Senior Choir Director
Assistant A/V Technician, p/t
Director, Lighthouse

pastor@messiahmo.org
vicar@messiahmo.org
nathan.carlson@messiahmo.org
officemanager@messiahmo.org
janitor@messiahmo.org
custodian@messiahmo.org
marilyn.boston@messiahmo.org
karen.bowman@messiahmo.org
sheryl.hansen@messiahmo.org
drew.bowman@messiahmo.org
jessicaphillips@lighthousefdc.org

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Saints,

Greetings in the name of our crucified, risen, and ascended Lord and coming Savior Jesus Christ!

With the annual meeting behind us, we are off to a good start as we welcome the month of February. And while it is true that we still have ten long months ahead to accomplish goals that will soon be circulated following Council Retreat, we are not naïve about certainty of outcomes.

Time might be fleeting, but God's love for us is enduring. God's love is experienced in time, but it was before time and will continue after time, as we know it. The cross makes absolutely clear the extent to which God goes to show love for us. We are reminded of this, especially in the seasons of Lent and Easter.

During Lent, again we will hear stories about God's love as we explore the theme Unbroken: A Living Faith. I hope you will join us for midweek worship; a time to focus on discipleship as a call to love God and the neighbor.

This is timely since we must be on guard against those who in the name of shaping a different America are merciless to the neighbor. That is not who we are because it does not align with the core values of Christianity. It is important that we treat everyone as a human being whom Christ redeemed through his sacrificial death and resurrection. Therefore, let no one feel like they are worthless, not valued or unworthy of God's love and care. Admittedly, we are living in very challenging times, but nothing compared to the life of people pushed out or exiled from their homeland.

History teaches many lessons, including how past events shape the present world, providing insights into human nature, and allowing us to learn from past mistakes. Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived through very difficult times when trust in government evaporated, and anger rose in its place. Into the vacuum stepped Hitler and the people were thrilled, believing that they deserved to triumph after so many losses. He promised to right the wrongs and revive Germany's economy.

Well, that did not turn out as promised because injustice and atrocities were committed but not condemned and stopped. Out of love for the neighbor, Bonhoeffer confronted this evil at the cost of his own life. He said, "There is not a place to which the Christian can withdraw from the world, whether it be outwardly or in the sphere of the inner life. Any attempt to escape from the world must sooner or later be paid for with a sinful surrender to the world." (Ethics)

In these times, true love will be made known through engagement not merely by human effort but by the Spirit's work in us for the sake of the neighbor. So, our prayer going forward will be: Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

In Christ's service,

Pastor Orin

From the Desk of Council President

Dear Beloved Congregation,

As we round the corner into another year it's a time for reflection about the past but also a time to set goals for the new year. I am feeling very optimistic that 2025 will be a year that we continue the momentum established over the past few years and make Messiah an even more amazing place to call our Home. So much was accomplished last year including renovations to the kitchen and the day care, replacement of some critical HVAC components, acquisition of a new Choir director—the list goes on and on. None of this could have happened without the commitment and contributions of time, treasure and talent from parishioners like you. I am honored that I have been elected to serve as your council president for 2025!

There are so many things to love about Messiah Lutheran Church. Our beautiful church, designed by one of our own parishioners, the inspirational messages of our worship leaders Pastor Orin Cummings and Vicar Jackson, or perhaps our pleasing musical offerings are just a few things that come to mind. It's more than just casual conversations over coffee and donuts after Sunday service it's the way; we all collectively contribute to making Messiah such a great place to call home. The way we support each other by sharing our time and talents at church events or simply showing up and supporting others as we provide service to our community. Getting involved can truly enhance your life as well as those around you!

We begin a new calendar year with some new council members including Jack Dimond, Scot Franson and Myril Stewart. Assuming leadership roles on the council are Scot Franson as vice president and myself as president. We are eager to serve you in the upcoming year and welcome any input from you as we prepare for our upcoming council retreat in February when we meet for goal setting and strategy planning.

During our first meeting of the year, we also had several council members volunteer to be liaisons to the various committees that guide and direct many of the aspects of our experience at Messiah. These committees encompass everything from keeping the building in shape to social activities within our own church home and our outreach into our community. I encourage everyone to participate in a committee where you have interest or feel compelled to help. John 14:26 compels us to listen to the Holy Spirit, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you." I encourage you to be mindful and not distracted or consumed by anxious thoughts so that your heart will be open to hearing the Holy Spirit. If you feel compelled by the Spirit to contribute to the wellbeing of the church but are not sure how to do, so meet with one of our council members, pastor, Vicar or one of our Shepards. Have a conversation about your interests and make 2025 a year of spiritual growth.

Thank you,
Frank Noto

Can We Help You Monitor Your Blood Pressure?

This is just a reminder that members of the Congregational Care Committee would like to help you monitor your blood pressure. Monitoring blood pressure is important because it helps identify and treat high blood pressure early, which can reduce your risk of serious health problems. High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so monitoring is the only way to know if you have it. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and heart failure. Also, if you are on blood pressure medication, monitoring helps you and your doctor know if your treatment is working and monitoring your blood pressure can help you feel more motivated to make healthy lifestyle changes. It's a good thing to do!!

Opportunities to Have Your Blood Pressure Monitored

1st Saturday evening of the month prior to 5:30 worship service

1st Sunday morning of the month following the 9:30 worship service

~You can find us available to you by the mailboxes in the narthex~

Announcements

Feb. 8	Council Retreat
Feb. 9	New Member Session @ 2 p.m.
Feb. 16	Church Council Meeting
Feb. 16	Cantando Children's Choir @ 1 p.m.
Feb. 23	Receive New Members

Hello from the Trottiers

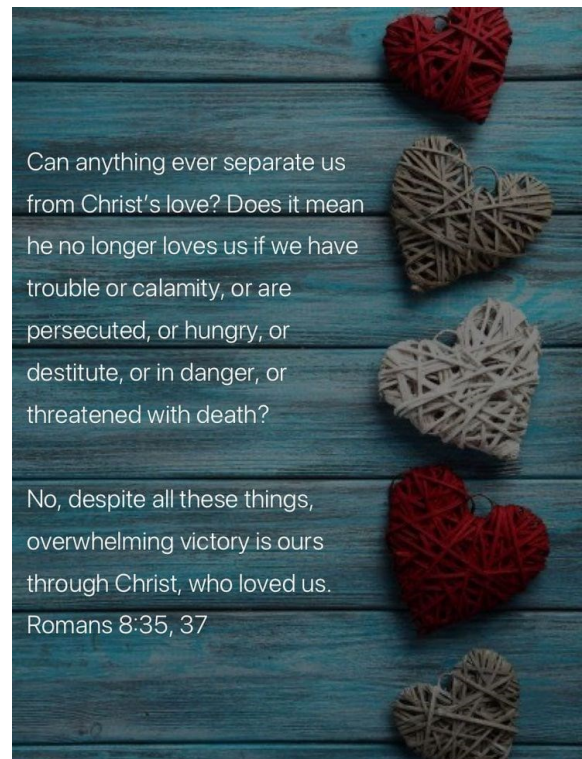
To the people of Messiah,

Hello! I am writing from our new home in Underwood, North Dakota to give you all a bit of an update on Giselle and myself. As most of you probably know, Giselle and I are currently serving as Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) in central North Dakota, each of us serving our own 2-point parish. Giselle serves Augustana Lutheran Church in Underwood and Birka Lutheran Church in rural Washburn ND, and I am serving St. Olaf Lutheran Church in rural Turtle Lake and Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Mercer. These are all very small towns, and it has been interesting to learn about the differences between more urban ministry settings like Messiah and the more rural settings we're at now. In these small towns and rural areas, churches are very important social structures. They serve as one of the primary spaces that people meet, as these areas often lack very many places for public gathering. Relationships are also key in rural ministry, as the churches often function as anchors for the deep and complex relationships between the people in the community. There are many fewer people living in these rural areas, but because of that, the relationships between the people tend to be much deeper, and often go back several generations! And the church is often at the center of these very complex and deep relationships. Stepping into these communities as an outsider is a little intimidating at first, since everyone knows everyone and everyone seems to have such deep ties with each other, but Giselle and I have both experienced a very warm welcome in our communities.

Giselle and I are both doing well and enjoying our experiences here. We are hoping that we will receive our first calls from these congregations and will be

able to stay long-term. So far, they seem to be a good fit for us. My time at Messiah has been an essential resource for me as I begin my ministry here. I am thinking back to experiences had and lessons learned with you all almost daily as I navigate all the complicated issues involved with public ministry. I am also finishing up my final year of seminary, beginning my final semester in February. It has been very difficult to balance being a full-time student and an almost full-time minister. These are both things that require 100% of your focus and attention to do well in, so trying to divide my focus between these two different worlds has been a great challenge. But through prayer, the support of my friends, family, and parishioners, and by the grace of God I have managed pretty well, and had a successful fall semester and a good start to my ministry with St. Olaf and Our Savior's. I have had 3 funerals, but have also had my first baptism and have a couple weddings coming up. I am learning well the countless challenges and joys of ministry, and I still thank God for my time at Messiah, and for all you did to help me prepare for where I am now.

In Christ,
Samuel Trottier.



Messiah Book Club

**Messiah Book Club Monthly in the library at 2:30-4 p.m. Second Thursday of each month
FEBRUARY 2025**

FEBRUARY 2025

The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon published 2023, is based on a true story set in 1789 Maine. The Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice. Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As the local midwife & healer, Martha is good at keeping secrets. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, every murder and debacle that unfolds in the town of Hallowell. In that diary she also documented the details of an alleged rape that occurred four months earlier. Now, one of the men accused of that heinous attack has been found in the ice.



Wine, Wit and Wisdom will meet on Thursday, February 20th, at 5:30 p.m. Watch the Midweek Messenger for location information or call/text Debbie Corlett at 417-848-9426.

Love Is....

February is the month for love, but we should be showing love all year long.

Love is mentioned 310 times in the King James Bible. 801 times in the New Living translation. Depending on the Bible you use the meaning of Love varies.

A couple of verses that stand out to me in the Bible is:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7 "love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We have the eternal Love from our heavenly father and we have love that we show to one another. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. I John 4:16

Parish Life Committee

Our parish life continues to offer a fellowship hour following Sunday morning worship as an opportunity for our congregation to get better acquainted. Please come and join us.

Ash Wednesday is March 5, and our Lenten suppers will begin that night. Supper is served by different groups within the church. The first evening will be hosted by the parish life committee. Supper is served from 5:15 PM to 6:45 PM. Other groups will be responsible for the meal on the following five Wednesdays, with help from the Parish life committee with set up and clean up. This is another wonderful opportunity to commune with your church family. Please come and join us.

Holland School News

Messiah would like to provide a few treats for the teachers at Holland elementary for the twice monthly teacher meetings after school. If you can help, please leave individually wrapped goodies (no homemade items) in the box in the entry or in the office. Any granola bars, small bags of pretzels or chips, or candies, would be appreciated by the teachers. For those who have contributed already, thank you.

1 Corinthians 13 is **describing** love so that you know what it looks like. It is **not** a list of commands.

Love . . .

is patient	doesn't keep a record of wrongs
is kind	does not delight in evil
is not envious	is not easily angered
is not proud	rejoices in the truth
protects	is not dishonoring
trusts	is not self-seeking
hopes	
perseveres	

Messiah Lighthouse Family Night

Just a few fun games and friendly competition for our January family fun night.
January 23, 2025



Who is going to win

Letter from the Bishop

You are the salt of the earth . . .
You are the light of the world . . .
to bring healing, hope, and life to a wounded and broken world.

The flurry of executive orders from President Trump that target undocumented and vulnerable immigrants, denounce the humanity and value of transgendered and non-binary individuals, and cancel programs that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of all persons have brought harm, fear, and division to our country rather than healing, hope, and life. In the face of such actions against our neighbors, how then are we to be the salt and light Jesus declares we are?

Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe of the Episcopal church said in an interview, “ A plea for mercy, a recognition of the stranger in our midst, is core to the faith. It is radical, given the order of the world around us — it is countercultural — but it’s not bound to political ideology.”

We must bind ourselves to the way and teachings of Jesus, boldly proclaiming and living the counter-cultural reality of the beatitudes for:

Blessed are the immigrants, foreigners and strangers in the land, for they will inherit the earth;
Blessed are the transgendered, non-binary for they will be called children of God;
Blessed are the merciful for theirs is the kingdom of God.

I pray that we do not lose our taste and commitment for justice or hide the light of truth under a bushel. I pray we travel the way of Jesus participating in God’s reign of justice and radical love for the world.

Rev. Susan Candea, Bishop
Central States Synod, ELCA

Congregational Care

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

There is a lot of conversation this winter about RSV. In the past RSV has been discussed in regard to how it affected infants and children, but in today's world it is being discussed much more about the risk for older adults who contact the virus.

What is RSV?

RSV is a common respiratory virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. RSV symptoms make it difficult to distinguish it from the common cold or other respiratory viruses like the flu or COVID. RSV spreads in the fall and winter along with other respiratory viruses.

How Does RSV Spread?

RSV can spread when

- A person who has RSV coughs or sneezes near you.
- You get virus droplets from a cough or sneeze in your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- You have direct contact with the virus, like kissing someone with RSV.
- You touch a surface that has the virus on it, like a door-knob, and then touch your face before washing your hands. The virus can survive for many hours on hard surfaces such as tables and crib rails. It typically lives on soft surfaces for shorter periods of time.

Anyone can get RSV, but typically most people get RSV for the first time as an infant or toddler. Nearly all children will get RSV before their second birthday. Repeat infections may occur throughout life. It is dangerous when it reappears in older adults.

How to Prevent Spread?

Everyone can take actions to help reduce the spread of RSV.

- Practice good hygiene by covering your coughs and sneezes, washing or sanitizing your hands often, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- Take steps for cleaner air, such as bringing in fresh outside air, purifying indoor air, or gathering outdoors.
- Stay home and away from others when you are sick.

Who is at Risk?

Infants, some young children, and older adults are at increased risk of severe RSV. People with RSV are usually contagious for 3 to 8 days and may become contagious a day or two before they start showing signs of illness. However, some infants and people with weakened immune systems can continue to spread the virus for 4 weeks or longer, even after they stop showing symptoms. Children are often exposed to and infected with RSV outside the home, such as in school or childcare centers. Then they transmit the virus to the susceptible grandparent. Adults at highest risk for severe RSV disease include: adults ages 75 and older, adults with chronic heart or lung disease, adults with weakened immune systems, and adults living in nursing homes.

What to Know?

- RSV can be dangerous for older adults, especially those who have certain medical conditions, are elderly or frail, or live in a nursing home.
- CDC recommends everyone ages 75 and older get an RSV vaccine.
- CDC recommends adults ages 60-74 who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease get an RSV vaccine.
- If you have already gotten an RSV vaccine, a repeat vaccine is not recommended at this time. Repeat vaccinations may be recommended in the future.

[About RSV | RSV | CDC](#)

Crosslines

We'd love to have new volunteers join us at Crosslines either on a regular basis or as substitutes. We always work the first Thursday of the month. Crosslines is an outreach of the Council of Churches and provides emergency food assistance and connects clients to other community services. January 2 it was just Sandra Carlson, Linda Elliott, Susan Lane, and Sheila Schaefer, along with our co-workers from Grace Methodist, serving 130 families / 258 individuals.

Donations of empty water bottles, handled plastic grocery bags, hygiene items, and canned and boxed food can go in the wagon. Expired food continues to be donated. Please!! Check BB dates. Crosslines doesn't want donations past those dates.

New Article by Vicar Jackson Published in *Earth & Altar*

Vicar Jackson has another article that was recently published in *Earth & Altar*. His article, "Finding Good News in The Promise of Despair," focuses on the book by Andrew Root, *The Promise of Despair: The Way of the Cross as the Way of the Church*. Vicar Jackson writes about how the book has significantly impacted and influenced his life, faith, and theology. He also explores Luther's theology of the cross, which reveals Christ to be with us in all things, including suffering, despair, and death. You can read it online at the link below.

<https://earthandaltarmag.com/posts/finding-good-news-in-the-promise-of-despair>

February Flowers

	1/2	8/9	15/16	22/23
Vase 1	Vic & Peggy Shelton	Pat & Ben Schultz		
Vase 2	Vic & Peggy Shelton			



Flower Vase Costs

Cost per vase is \$20. Please make checks payable to Messiah Lutheran Church, and then in the memo line, write "Altar Flowers" and the date for which you are paying. If you are using an offering envelope, you will find a line for "Altar Flowers" and the amount.



www.messiahmo.org



messiah@messiahmo.org

MessiahMOELCA



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA



925 E. Seminole, Springfield, MO 65807

MessiahMoELCA



417-881-2192

Messiah Lutheran Church
 925 E. Seminole Street
 Springfield, MO 65807

**Return Address Requested*

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Springfield, MO
 Permit 1339



*He restores my soul, He leads me in the paths of
 righteousness, for His name's sake. Psalms 23:3*

February Scripture Readings

Date	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
1/2	Jeremiah 1:4-10	71:1-6	1Corinthians 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30
8/9	Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]	138	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
15/16	Jeremiah 17:5-10	1	1 Corinthians 15:12-20	Luke 15:12-20
22/23	Genesis 45:3-11, 15	37:1-11, 39-40	I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38

Mark Your Calendars

Feb. 8	Council Retreat
Feb. 9	New Member Session at 2 p.m.
Feb. 16	Church Council Meeting
Feb. 16	Cantando Children's Choir Concert @ 1 p.m.
Feb. 23	Receive New Members