

A Letter from Pastor Rickards

May 2017

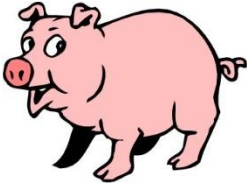
Dear Beloved of God,

As your Vice-Pastor, I work with the leadership of the congregation. Messiah has been blessed with an active and dedicated core of leaders serving tirelessly on the Church Council and the Transition/Vision Team. In this pastoral role, I have served as a contemporary Barnabas, whose biblical name means literally, “son of encouragement.” Recently during worship, you have been hearing Jesus from John’s Gospel speaking about the coming Holy Spirit as “Paraclete,” which means advocate, comforter, and close companion. Like Barnabas, I see myself encouraging, guiding, and strengthening the leaders of Messiah in their efforts to live out God’s will and calling during this time in Messiah’s history. While encouragement is important on an individual level, it is even more so for the congregation as a community. Encouragement allows a congregation to shape its ministry around those present and their strengths rather than around its weaknesses and lamenting those who are no longer involved in the life of the community. During this time of pastoral vacancy, Messiah’s worshipers have been weekly served by a wide variety of experienced pastors who bring additional spiritual and personal gifts to you. Last winter the most successful Jazz and Jambalaya was planned and carried out by many of you. Also, the Transition Team mapped out the many ministries that Messiah and its members conduct and support. The management and reporting of funds has been carefully handled and diligently maintained. During my time with you, I have offered a fall Bible Study and a weekly Lenten gathering to your learning ministries. As we prepare for Pentecost on June 4, remember how a small group of followers were empowered by the Holy Spirit to reach out to others with holy boldness. The tiny early church grew steadily because every individual was involved in and responsible for a ministry. Insight, giving, responsibility, and participation on the part of everyone under the Spirit’s guidance enabled them to carry out their mission faithfully. Encouragement is not cheerleading, nor does it release us from the need to speak truthfully. The ministry of encouragement does not ignore voices of concern and painful realities – they need to be shared and addressed. I encourage each member of Messiah to worship and give regularly, to pray for those who lead and minister, to remember the sick and struggling, and to participate in the learning and service opportunities that are offered. While a congregation becomes vulnerable during a pastoral vacancy, the ministry of encouragement takes seriously the contributions of all believers and seeks to expand the circle beyond the faithful few. Effective ministry in any church requires honesty about our fears, limitations, and struggles as well as optimism for the future God has planned for us. As we continue this journey together, I ask for your continued prayers, encouragement, support, and participation. Remember, we serve a great and gracious God.

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Jeffrey H. Rickards

Pastor Rickards is available for Pastoral care and may be reached by phone 609-927-3082 or
by -e-mail Jeffrick@AOL.Com



Lenten Pigs

Thanks to the Lenten savings of lots of folks at Messiah, we were able to send the ELCA World Hunger program \$480 to buy 16 pigs for needy families. The bacon brigade took home with them a cardboard pig bank and, during Lent, saved up at least \$30 to buy one pig. The generous pig purchasers were Marion Atkinson (Sue Harz's mother), Nancy and Jack Birkmeyer, Wendy DeRose, Grace Felix, Pat Gerew, Sue Harz, Joann and Henry Ireland, Tom Keck Sr., Denise and Harry LaBov, Liz and Tom Deneka, Andrea Linder, Holly and Dan Perlingiero, Nancy Runzer, Becky Sannino, Joanne and Ben Smith, and Jane Vitullo.

Thinks!!

Summer Pastor Schedule

June 4 th	Rev. John Hansen
June 11 th	Rev. Phil Harkey
June 25 th	Rev. Neil Jaggie
July 2 nd	Rev. Gordon Huff
July 9 th	Rev. Gomes Pedro
July 16 th	Rev. Jennifer Sweitzer
July 23 rd	Rev. Andy Gordon
July 30 th	Rev. Jim Jacobs
August 6 th	Rev. Phil Harkey
August 13 th	Rev. Lou Dunkle
August 20 th	Rev. Gordon Huff
August 27 th	Rev. Phil Harkey

MEET PR. JEFF RICKARDS

Pastor Jeff Rickards, Messiah's vice pastor and full time pastor of Grace Lutheran in Somers Point, grew up in Springfield, Del. Co., PA, also the hometown of Paul Larson and Joann Ireland. In fact, Pr. Rickards was confirmed at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Springfield the same year that Pr. Henry Ireland received his first call, as assistant pastor of the very same St. Matthew's. He attended what is now West Chester University, and in 1973 he was graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He was called to serve as assistant pastor of St. Luke's in Cumberland, MD, then to Zion in northeast Baltimore. While at Zion, he received an MS in pastoral counseling from Loyola. After a further year of advanced training, he worked in practice with two physicians in Whiteford, MD. He completed an internship in family therapy at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Center and all of the course work for a doctorate in developmental psychology at the University of Maryland.

In 1986, Pr. Rickards was called to Grace, Somers Point. He has served as cluster counselor and dean and has, for 25 years, been a member of the synod's Candidacy Committee. He and his wife Jan have been married for 44 years and have three adult children and two grandchildren.

New Messiah associate members

Holly and Dan Perlingiero and their children Elena and Gabe are current members at St. Matthew's, Springfield.

Campfires on 4th Fridays of month starting June 23



WHAT DOES IT COST TO FINANCE A CHURCH?

The Parish Paper, a newsletter of ideas and insights for active congregations, reports that the annual average budget for a Protestant church is \$200,000 to \$250,000. Individual contributions make up 80 to 90% of those budgets with the average contribution of each worshipping individual being \$2,500. One third of those individuals give about three fourths of the total of contributions.

Typically, 80% of a church's budget goes for staff and operating expenses. Another 8% typically goes to the church's judicatories to help the denomination carry out tasks that are beyond the scope of the local church. The remainder, 12 to 25%, goes for local ministry and mission work.

About half of U.S. worshipers regularly give 5% of their net income to their church, most often because they are grateful for God's love and goodness. Other influences are their wanting to contribute to God's work, the Bible's teachings on giving, and a sense of gratitude for help they have received from their church. One in four worshipers gives 10% of his/her net income.

At Messiah, our anticipated income for 2017 is about \$78,000. We will be able to have a pastor when we have an annual income of at least \$150,000 to \$160,000. (Pastor Kelly's 'package,' which included salary, housing allowance, health insurance, retirement contributions, car and continuing education allowance, was \$90,000).

HABITAT STUDS AND RE STORE NEWS

Messiah is participating in Habitat Cape May County's 'Blessings' project. We're selling studs which will be used in Habitat's next house which will be built on Reeves Street in Whitesboro. Construction will start early this month. A whole stud sells for \$50. Frequently buyers purchase half a stud and, either way, sign or decorate and sign their studs which are then used to frame the new house.

In August, Habitat will host a 'Find your Stud' party at the house, complete with a chance to meet the homeowners-to-be and buyers from other churches and enjoy light refreshments. About 15 county churches are participating in 'Blessings.'

You may also buy a stud at the **JUNE 10 OPENING OF THE HABITAT CAPE MAY COUNTY RE STORE.**

The store sells high quality donated furniture, appliances, household goods and building materials to fund building more Habitat houses in the county. It's located next to Big Lots in what was Super Fresh in Court House. Please consider donating to the store if you're clearing or cleaning out.

Did you know that Messiah was one of the two churches that started Habitat in Cape May County? The Baptist church in CMCH and Messiah launched the affiliate in 1988. Jim Sorenson was the first president of the Board. Joann Ireland was the first secretary and Joan Sorenson the first treasurer.

Sundae Sunday

Please join us after the service on June 25th for ice cream sundaes.



RETURN OF THE CAMPFIRES

Friday, June 23 at 7:00 PM marks the return of Messiah's campfires and fireside chats. We're planning on having them the fourth Friday of each month at 7 pm for as long as the weather permits. Bring a chair and a stick to roast your marshmallows. Different campfire evenings will have different themes. Do you have some creative ideas for fun nights around the flames? If so, let Bill or Carol Boland know 609-374-1596.

Coming soon, Messiah's newest Telephone tree.

Sixteen of your fellow members have volunteered to be either a Shepherd or Crook (assistant) who will contact each member of the church with any 'breaking' news in the congregation. This way, our non-computer or only once-a-day computer people will be current with what's happening at Messiah. You Shepherd or Crook will be in touch to be sure we have the correct or preferred number for you. Thanks to all of the volunteers!

Dates to Remember

June 23rd	Fire Side Gathering
June 25th	Sundae on Sunday
July 23rd	Picnic
July 28th	Fire Side Gathering
August 20th	Barbeque
August 25th	Fire Side Gathering
September 17th	Taco Day

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The last day of Sunday School for the 2016/2017 season was on May 21.

Some major changes were made this year. The biggest change was that classes were held during the worship service. After the "Time for children" with the presiding pastor the children adjourned to their classes and returned to worship before communion. Although this time change made for less class time, everyone seemed to adapt. We had to give up the whole group opening session as well as some class time. We will need to relook at this time change to determine if it should remain for next year or if it should be changed back to the earlier time of 9:30.

The other change was that we had 3 groups; pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, grades 1 and 2, and grades 3, 4, and 5. This age grouping seemed to work out well. We were blessed to have the following children attend; Khloe Bushong, Ryan and Tre'Mar Davis, Katie Dormanen, John and Kylie McGarr, Lucia and Rocco Palombo, Gabriel and Elena Perlingiero, Marin and Garrett Van Gilder.

A Sunday School program cannot happen without children. But just as important as the children are the teachers. We were blessed to have several people volunteer their time to teach classes. I am so grateful to the following people who heeded the call and volunteered. They are, Bill and Carol Boland, Teal Boyer Davis, Jane Gerula, Sue Harz, Lena Hindle, Bev Larson, Deb O'Hara, Becky Sannino, and Meredith Van Gilder.

I look forward to another exciting Sunday School year beginning September 10. If you would like to learn more about the program and how you can help please talk to me. I will be happy to discuss the curriculum and how you can be a part of it with you.

Pat Gerew

Help Wanted

We are still looking for a few good people to head up this summer's VBS. This will be much similar than previous years: video bible lessons, snacks, and a daily campfire. Music and games will fill in as time goes. Leader will get to pick the date. Please call Bill or Carol Boland 609-374-1596.