



Messiah Courier

October 2026

Surplus

I read an article in *The Christian Century* recently that left me embarrassed. It was about stuff the author had. Right away I related ~ I'm not a hoarder but I do have a lot of stuff. The author went on to say that Scripture has a lot to say about stuff and surplus; that surplus is a sin when others do not have enough. Ugh. Too many don't have enough.

When I retired in 2019, Bill and I had moved to Auburn to a home 1/2 the size of our home in Lynnwood. We did an amazing job of down-sizing. Thinking I was done with parish ministry, I brought loads of my clothes aka my "professional wardrobe" to a woman's shelter. It was liberating! I even threw away 35 years of sermons!

18 months later I started serving at Messiah **and** began to accumulate more stuff aka a "professional wardrobe" and I started to save sermon notes this past year. Lord have mercy. Surplus is addictive. Because of the article in *The Christian Century*, I've been downsizing again and I've been asking myself what it would take to **stop surplus-ing!**

Folks have been asking what my plans are for retirement. I want to take Spanish classes, bake a little, enjoy my family and likely care for my 2 year old grandson two days a week. And, clearly I need to confess, repent and amend my surplus ways. Liberating.

Enough is enough,

Pastor Susan



Several years ago my Bible study group had a theme that really made us think.

**"We are here not to be served
but to serve."**

1 Peter 4:10 talks about each of us having special abilities - be sure to use them to help each other. Mark 10:45 reads, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve." Our first homework was to decide if we were a Martha or a Mary. Most of us decided we were more Martha as our talents were cooking, baking and crafters.

Messiah has a rich heritage of using their skills/ talents as cooks, bakers and crafters. Years of having holiday bazaars, pie sales, summer breakfasts, garage sales, quilting, community dinner and even more events. These events made money and the money was used to provide material for Sunday School, VBS, helping others and more. Is this not working to share the teachings of our Lord?

These next Sundays as we visit the many displays of how we can serve, remember you are blessed with talent/special abilities. Let us all find a way to serve and know the many blessings we receive when we do.

Love and prayers,

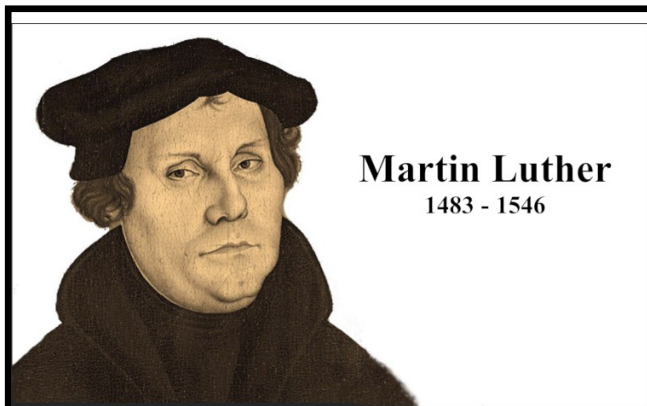
Judy Ruud

Messiah Lutheran Church ~ ELCA
410 H Street NE Auburn, WA 98002 (253) 833-5280



Council Meeting ~ September 17, 2026

- August finance report: Income \$51,110 with expenses of \$50,513 for a net of \$497. YTD net is \$10,445
- Motion to accept procedure for MLC laity to serve communion to home-bound or in event of pastoral unavailability. Pastor Susan to train laity for commissioning in the ministry
- Council discussed priorities for job description for role of Senior Pastor. Council agreed job description will be fluid due to changes in other staff positions.
- A sub-committee to work with Pr Bridget to identify staffing ideas/needs and subsequent job descriptions before 2027 Annual Meeting. Pr Susan and Lynne Inman will retire as of June 2027
- Agenda for September 20 congregational meeting to vote to extend the Call of Senior Pastor to Pr Bridget Misare
- Church credit card use limited to budget line items
- Council members indicated their choices to serve as liaisons of MLC committees. Pr Bridget to meet with committees once a year. Council liaisons to meet with committees twice a year.
- Solar Panel project proceeding on budget. Waiting on permitting
- As part of last Fall's stewardship program, folks who had not been in worship for over a year and had not given a financial gift of record in that time frame received a letter from MLC asking about their intention to remain members. This year the people who did not respond or indicated they no longer wished to be members will be dropped from the membership roll. This process is proscribed by the ELCA Constitution, as well as MLC's constitution.
- Pr Bridget and Pr Susan will teach Faith in Action this Fall
- Next meeting Thursday, October 15 at 6:30 pm



Martin Luther
1483 - 1546

1st Tuesday
October 6 ~ 11:30-1:20
Lunch, conversation
& a Rick Steves' video

Luther
and the Reformation

MLC hosts the community meal on the fourth Sunday of every month. And, grocery costs continue to rise ~ you've no doubt seen that! It would help if MLC folks could provide 1lb of hamburger or chicken to offset the expense. Let Sheilia McLaughlin know if you are able to assist in that way. Her number is 253.886.0925 or call the church office at 253.833.5280. And, thank you!



Gospel Lessons for October 2026

Sunday, October 4
4th Sunday of Stewardship

Luke 2:25-38

My eyes have seen your salvation.

Sunday, October 11

Pentecost 20

Matthew 22:1-14

The wedding hall was filled with guests.

Sunday, October 18

Pentecost 21

Matthew 22:15-22

They asked Jesus, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

Sunday, October 25

Faith in Action Sunday ~ Reformation

John 8:31-36

The truth will make you free.

**Every word of God proves true;
God is a shield to those who take refuge in God.
Proverbs 30:5**



Reminder

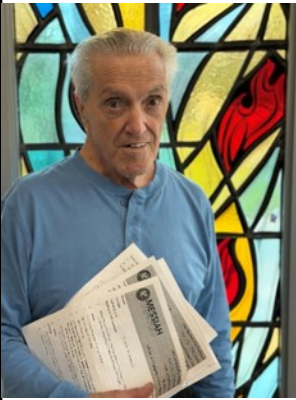
Messiah’s office is open 9-2 Tuesday thru Thursday.
In case of emergency, PLEASE reach out to your
pastors on the cell phone numbers listed below!!

Additionally, please provide the following contact numbers to family:

Pastor Bridget cell: 253-256-5492 Pastor Susan cell: 425-223-6034

Blaine: Faith, Astronauts, Camels, Kings, and 45 Years at the Sanctuary Door

By Amanda Flanery & Dielda Kuhlmann



If you attend Sunday services at Messiah, you've likely been greeted at the sanctuary doors by usher **Blaine Benjamin**. Blaine has been part of Messiah since 1980 and has ushered here for 45 years, but his path to our church family began in the small town of Dunkirk NY.

Born in 1943, an only child raised by a Navy father & a stubborn Italian mother, Blaine jokes that he inherited her stubborn streak — and maybe that's why he became the 1st student ever kicked out of the high school on the 1st day during 1st period. *"Fastest suspension in school history,"* he says proudly. *"But I still graduated!"*

His childhood was rough around the edges, but God was never far. His mother was raised in a Catholic charity home run by nuns, and her belief in God was felt by Blaine. At age six, stuck on a rooftop he'd climbed with friends, he prayed for help: *"God, get me down and I'll love you forever, read the Bible every day, go to church every day."* He laughs now, *"I remember every promise. And I've broken every one of them."* Yet that moment of faith has stayed with him.

Blaine served 24½ years in the Navy & Navy Reserve, losing friends in Vietnam and carrying the weight of those memories. He ran the radio shack on his ship, and when they left Vietnam and were nearing Hawaii, the alert bells sounded: the Apollo spacecraft was off course, veering toward their location. Blaine talked directly to the Apollo commander as the capsule hurtled toward Earth. *"Not relaxing,"* he says. *"I thought I was done with life-and-death events."*

After the military, he graduated from the University of Washington and worked at Boeing for 34 years. He led tooling for the 777, work that took him around the world, including the Persian Gulf. There he floated in the saltwater of Bahrain, befriended a Dubai pilot, met the Emir, and was nearly drafted into a camel race. He says, *"We got orders to leave the next morning. I missed my chance to race a camel."*

He's been a horse jockey, a radio disk jockey (stage name: *Dick West*), and once ate dinner with the King and Queen of Thailand while their son played clarinet for him. *"This little kid from Dunkirk, eating with royalty,"* he says. *"What an amazing honor!"* Blaine is not ready for retirement as he continues to work as a substitute teacher with the Auburn School District.

Family is Blaine's greatest joy now. He had 5 children (son Mark passed away), 5 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. And there was Elaine, his third wife, *"the most compassionate, caring, loving person I've ever met. She is the pillar of my life."* They met via their thin apartment wall, a romance story so sweet that it was published in a Valentine edition of the *Seattle Times*. *"We joined Messiah because her parents were members here. She passed away 15 years ago; I love her to this day."*

At Messiah, Blaine has ushered, served on the Care Team, and volunteered with the food bank back in the beginning when they had only 4 or 5 families as customers. He was also our volunteer office manager for 4 years! *"Through all the turmoil of my youth and the wild adventures of adulthood,"* Blaine says, *"my life turned out pretty darn good. It's a blessing."*

So on a Sunday, when you see Blaine at the door, say hello. Ask him a question. He has a lifetime of stories — and he's happy to share them.