



Messiah Courier

August 2026

**I have a friend,
Willa, who is great
at hospitality.**

She has a gift for both joy and efficiency. Her planning always leaves room for the joy of receiving her guests. The menu, table setting, and cooking are completed with loving care for those who have been invited. I've been a guest of Willa's many, many times and have felt the joy of her welcome. . . even when I've spent time in the kitchen helping with the preparations!

The recent Council retreat mentioned the following characteristics of hoped-for committees: playful, fun, joyful. We described committees as opportunities for relationships, transformation and renewal. I've been on church committees, and most often they default to planning and efficiency. Both are essential, yet as followers of Jesus' Way we are called to be people of hope and joy. There is a dilemma with efficiency ~ plans can become rigid, as if there is one "right way" to get things done. The other effect is newcomers are anxious about doing something wrong. Willa and I cook differently and we set the table differently but I've never felt my way is wrong. Instead, there is laughter, affection, and, wonder of wonder ~ joy! That's one of the things Council discussed for Messiah's committees ~ expressions of hospitality that are open to all comers.

Be my guest,
Pastor Susan



A few days ago I didn't feel well so I just stayed close to home. Watching daytime TV gets boring so I looked for a movie and found one where I had read the book. What a disappointment as just enough changes were made to the story line so it really wasn't like the book. I was thinking about so many movies made about Bible stories and again things were added or just left out making you wonder why. The Bible stories do not need changes or add ons as they have stood the test of time and are believable as is.

I always have books so I spent the rest of those sick days enjoying a good story. Also spent some time reading some Bible reference material I had so daily devotions are really enjoyable even if you are doing them by yourself. I have read many books more than once and it seems I find something new each time I read. I also love history books and even a novel based on real history facts holds my interest. I also like to hold the book, turning the pages to find new adventures.

At present when doing devotions I have been using two different Bibles. When I really want to add a little difference to the study I look up passages in the King James Bible I have which was a Christmas present when I was ten. The Living Bible I have was a gift from the oldest sister Ida. She said in order to get her husband to join in daily devotions and Bible study he liked the fact the Living Bible reads like a novel and he can understand better. For you the question "Living Bible" uses modern language but does not change the passages.

If you have not tried the Church Library give it a try. You will find many very good historical novels as well as other books written by Bible scholars.

PS: I feel better,

Love and prayers,
Judy Ruud

Messiah Lutheran Church ~ ELCA

410 H Street NE Auburn, WA 98002 (253) 833-5280



MEET THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN AT MESSIAH FOR 74 YEARS

Forrest Arden Wohlhueter

- Born in a city named after his great grandfather
- 24 vacations to Hawaii
- Hammered every nail as he built his family's home in Auburn
- Pool Champion

Being Part of Messiah

"When we moved to Auburn, there was a German Lutheran church or Messiah, the Swedish choice. We joined Messiah because I had been raised Norwegian Lutheran. We stayed because we enjoy the people. Church friends are like family."

Forrest joined Messiah in the fall of 1952, in the days of the little white church. It was often standing room only. He was appointed to the Building Committee to secure funding for our new building on H Street. Another important role he had was establishing the scholarship fund for high school seniors. In 74 years at Messiah, he has seen a lot of changes; one of the biggest is having female pastors.

A Brief Portrait of Life & Love

Forrest was born in South Dakota, moved to Anacortes WA as a child, earned a football scholarship to PLU, married his high school sweetheart and love of his life, raised 3 sons (David, James, and Paul who passed away from cancer in 2022). He spent a rewarding 32 years as a PE teacher, coach, and counselor in the Auburn School District. His wife, Virginia, passed away February 22, 2023. He loves his family which now includes 9 grandchildren and their spouses, and all the great grandkids.

Life Now

He spends his time hanging out with his best friend, enjoying the activities at Merrill Gardens, watching sports on TV, and exercising every day. The exercise classes offered at Merrill Gardens are 'too easy' so he works out on his own. He feels blessed by his good fortune in life.

Forrest's Words to the Congregation

"I think I've been a member here longer than anyone else. Sunday is church time. It is automatic for me and is an important part of my life."

By Amanda Flanery & Dielda Kuhlmann

Two opportunities for F E L L O W S H I P !

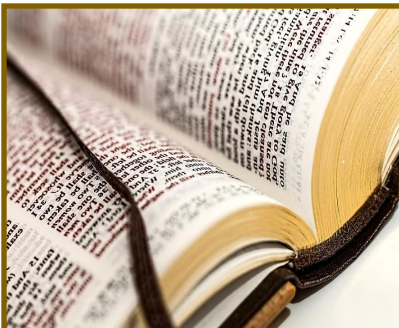


First Tuesday on August 4 11:30-1pm Taco Bar!



All-Congregational Picnic
Sunday, August 9 4-6:30pm
Grilling hot dogs & burgers
Potluck of sides and desserts
Games & Music!





Gospel Lessons for August 2026

Sunday, August 2 ~ 10th Sunday of Pentecost

Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus said to the disciples,
“You give them something to eat.”

Sunday, August 9 ~ 11th Sunday Pentecost

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus said to the disciples,
“Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Sunday, August 16 ~ 12th Sunday Pentecost

Matthew 15:10-28

Peter said to Jesus, “Explain this parable to us.”

Sunday, August 23 ~ 13th Sunday Pentecost

Matthew 16: 13-20

“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Sunday, August 30 ~ 14th Sunday Pentecost

Matthew 16:21-28

Jesus said, “If any want to become my followers,
let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.”

**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

July is usually when Church Council takes a month off to have a break when things at Messiah are a bit slower. But this year we did something different – we held a Council retreat! As part of our strategic plan, we’ve been focusing on rebuilding our financial stability while also remembering and recommitting to our mission priorities. Last year we focused on Embrace and how we might expand our welcome. This past winter the Council decided to focus on Enhance for the 2026-2027 program year.

After beginning with dinner and a devotion and some brief business, our first activity was to define what Enhance meant for us. The mission priority is **Enhance** our understanding and practice of a life called by God. But as we discern together and raise up leaders what markers would we use to determine our way forward? We brainstormed words like: Spirit-driven, enthusiasm!, transformation and renewal, community, improving, prayer, refuge, playful, refining, relationships, joyful, building up, attraction, prayer, making Church more than Sunday, fun, clarifying, bringing things to light, making things better, and lifting up.

It was an incredible conversation about what engaging at Messiah could look like. I know many of you have experienced some of this through your work for this congregation. There are plenty of tireless volunteers who are already improving and building up. At the same time, committees and volunteers of all organizations can get caught up in the functional part of their task. As we finished brainstorming it became clear that we want to reclaim the joy and relationship and Holy Spirit parts of building up the Body of Christ as we work together to do the work of the church.

We next broke into small groups to begin thinking more concretely about the fall and our goals. One group worked on stewardship for 2026. This year it will begin in September and our theme is “I Will Serve!” We will still be collecting intents for the 2027 budget, and we will also invite the congregation to investigate how else they might give their time and talent to Messiah through a Leadership Fair after worship each Sunday.

One small group worked on committee infrastructure. An issue they talked about was how we can better prepare leaders of taskforces and committees. Ensuring that they have budget information, door key codes, conflict management training, and list of what their group is responsible for can help with leader longevity and with leadership transition. As a Council we want leaders throughout the congregation to feel supported and encouraged and will work throughout this semester to improve on that.

Our final group worked small groups this fall. I know for me personally, it is difficult to get to know someone by just chatting on a Sunday morning. Small groups allow for deeper relationships and more connections. These four- to six-week groups would be a great entry point for people looking to be more involved without committing to a group forever.

I am grateful for the leadership of our Council, and I am so excited to see what this fall will look like! I hope you will join us for the multiple ways that we Engage here at Messiah.

Peace, Pr. Bridget