"THE WITNESS" NEWSLETTER

of

MESSIAH (FISHERVILLE) & ST. PETER (FETTERHOFF'S)
(ELCA) LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF HALIFAX, PA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

Rev. Nancy Brody, Pastor
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Dear Church Family and Friends,

Do you ever feel like the universe keeps trying to get your attention/is speaking to you? Everywhere you turn, the same message keeps coming across louder and clearer saying the same thing, over and over. The message I've been hearing lately is: "Give up control." (Sigh.)

It's true. In numerous circumstances, others might describe me as *hypervigilant*. My senses are engaged/on high alert; I observe things keenly, prepare for action and anticipate giving direction (if others do not). Being hypervigilant is one way to manage uncertainty and anxiety caused by a threat: the potential of harm.

Ever been told, "You worry too much," or that you "focus on the negative?" While I don't consider myself a worrier or negative thinker, I sometimes do focus on worst case scenarios and try to avoid or prepare for them. In *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young (a daily devotional Greta gave to me last Xmas) the author writes as though Jesus is speaking aloud thoughts backed by scripture spoken to the reader personally.

Here are several examples: "I never meant for you to be self-sufficient. I carefully crafted your longings and feelings of incompleteness to point you to Me. Come to me in all your neediness, with defenses down…"

Excerpts from the next day, "Your desire to live a risk-free life is a form of unbelief. Your longing to live close to Me is at odds with your attempts to minimize risk. Let me lead you step by step. If your primary focus is on Me, you can walk along perilous paths without being afraid."

And the next: "Make me the focal point of your search for security. In your private thoughts, you are still trying to order your world so that it is predictable and feels safe. Not only is this impossible, but it is counter- productive to spiritual growth."

Most remarkably, the fourth day read, "I work on your behalf. Bring me all your concerns as a way of collaborating with Me. I have deigned to co-create with you. Do not try to hurry this process. If you want to work with Me, you have to accept My time frame." [1]

That very same day, I pulled a random card from a pack of meditation prompts which read, "As the

[1] Sarah Young, *Jesus Calling, with Scripture References: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*, Jesus Calling® Ser (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2004), 359–62.

laws of nature reign over all living things, we should realize that our lives, too, have a natural pattern. If you are having difficulty getting the desired results out of a particular situation, it may be that you are trying to force the issue. Have the courage to let go and trust in your life's natural flow, for what is rightly yours will come to you, nothing happens before its designated time." [2] (Sigh.)

What (or who) do you try to control for fear of the unknown? What unforeseen or worst outcome do you hope to stave off by being ever vigilant? Scripture is full of wisdom concerning where to place our energy and direct our focus.

By walking life's journey together and sharing testimony about where each of us has experienced God's abiding presence, we may all come to know with surety that good outcomes don't depend on us. Neither success nor failure (our own or someone else's) is solely our doing. We are not responsible for orchestrating time, the cause, control or cure of a dilemma. Leave those to God.

T. S. Eliot said, "For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." In other words, the outcome is not ours to determine. So, I ask, "How can I/we allow/trust/and respect God enough to follow His design for every play? How can I/we allow/trust/and respect God enough to coach every player, to lead the team to victory according to His timeless perspective on life?"

Life does seem an odd game, of sorts, but in every circumstance, it proves to be worthwhile, valuable, meaningful, and with purpose. Please share what you have discovered about life and God with someone else so that all of our journeys will be enriched. Then we'll become faith-full and enlightened, experience more gratitude and joy as each of us struggles less with trying to control how the whole thing turns out.

Your Loving Pastor,
Pastor Nancy Brody

LET US PRAY

We Mourn for the Family and Friends of:
Alia Mendez, Virginia Steinhauer, Charles Aleksy, Cassandra Miller, Bob (Bobby) Long, Tricia Rebuck, Kamphet Sayawong (nephew of Vilay and Tom Kahler.) Tom Rode, Brett Kiser, (Amy Decker's spouse, Sue's son in law) Shirley Jury, Christopher Zserai

We are Grateful to Those Serving in Our Military.

2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS
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Messiah Council Officers
President: Kyle Jury
Vice President: Austin Kieffer
Secretary: David Wright
Treasurer: Lisa Kaufman
Other Members
Jennie Farner
Madison Crum-Burger
Dawn Pellman

St. Peter Council Officers
President: Ray Rummel
Vice President: Audrey Rummel
Secretary: Rhonda Hentz
Treasurer: Nicole Miller
Other Members
Linda Lucas
Sallianne Bechtel
Lori Ritter

Please pray for council members, other lay leaders, Pastor, and each other as we continue to minister under our shared call: God's mission to bring abundant life to the entire world through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

[2] Mike George, *Relax: 50 Meditations* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2000), fig. The Seasons.

CURRENT SEASON(S) of the CHURCH YEAR and WHAT THEY MEAN

The season of **Epiphany** is celebrated on January 6th, the day God revealed the Christ child to the nations via a special star, the same one which led three Wise Men to Jesus. The color of altar paraments (cloth hangings of various seasonal liturgical colors used to adorn the altar and pulpit or lectern) for the day is white. During the time after Epiphany, we hear stories about Jesus' baptism and early ministry. The color for these Sundays is sometimes white, sometimes green. On the last Sunday we celebrate the Transfiguration, when Jesus shines brightly on the mountaintop, God's glory is seen, and the witness of Moses and Elijah confirms the mystery of faith. The color for this day is also white.

Lent, from the Anglo-Saxon word "spring" is a season when we turn toward God and think about how our lives need to change. This is also a time to remember our baptism, and how that gift gives us a new start every day. The color for Lent is purple, symbolizing repentance. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days (not including Sundays) and ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, the Easter Vigil. The period of time is symbolic of Christ's 40 days in the wilderness.

Descriptions of church seasons and liturgical terms have been paraphrased from publications by Augsburg Press, including The Lutheran Student Handbook and Lutheran Handbook II.

UPCOMING SCRIPTURE

1/05 – 2nd Sunday of Christmas
1st Reading – Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalmody – Psalm 147:12-20
2nd Reading – Ephesians 1:3-14
Gospel – John 1:[1-9] 10-18

1/12 – Baptism of Our Lord
1st Reading – Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalmody – Psalm 29
2nd Reading – Acts 8:14-17
Gospel – Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

1/19 – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
1st Reading – Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalmody – Psalm 36:5-10
2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Gospel – John 2:1-11

1/26 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
1st Reading – Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalmody – Psalm 19
2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Gospel – Luke 4:14-21

2/02 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany
1st Reading – Malachi 3:1-4
Psalmody – Psalm 84
2nd Reading – Hebrews 2:14-18
Gospel – Luke 2:22-40

2/09 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany
1st Reading – Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]
Psalmody – Psalm 138
2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Gospel – Luke 5:1-11

2/23– 7th Sunday after Epiphany
1st Reading– Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalmody–Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
2nd Reading– 1 Corinthians15:35-38, 42-50
Gospel– Luke 6:27-38

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THE SEVEN FAITH PRACTICES

PRAY. . .Prayer. . .Pray Frequently Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1Thessalonians 5:16-18).

STUDY. . .Christian Education. . Study Scripture Diligently. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).

WORSHIP. . . Worship Regularly I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be

glad. O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt his name together (Ps. 34:1-3).

INVITE. . .Evangelism. . .Invite Others Often But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15).

ENCOURAGE...
children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18).

SERVE. . .Social and Justice Ministry. . .Serve for the Sake of Others for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

GIVE. . .Stewardship. Give Freely and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Luke 6:38). www.elca.org/eteam/2001CEProgramPlanner.

THANK YOU ONE & ALL!

Messiah's Ways and Means Committee would like to thank Brad Crum and the Joyful Ringers Handbell Choir for donating their time and talents for the Holiday concert held at the Halifax Ambulance Building on November 24th. This event was enjoyed by more than 75 attendees and $1,126.00 was raised to continue the ministry of the church.

Special thanks to everyone who donated food items for the event and volunteers who helped on the day of the concert. The generosity and kindness of Messiah's members and friends is very much appreciated. Thank you for making the concert a success!

THANK YOU FOR GRAVY, CORN AND PEAS

Messiah and St. Peter collected 65 cans of peas and corn plus 65 jars of gravy for the Upper Dauphin Human Services in Lykens for their food bags for the Christmas Express dinner program. Thank you for your support!

MEMBERS OF MESSIAH AND ST. PETER HONORED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

On January 19, 2025 during worship, Bruce Keister of St. Peter, Stephen Blades and David W. Wright of Messiah will be recognized and honored for service to their churches by having their names added to their congregation's Memorial Plaque for Distinguished Service.

We give thanks to God for Bruce, Stephen and David for dedication and outstanding service to the church along with everyone who faithfully gives of their time, talents and/or treasures for support of ministry in God's name.

JANUARY BLUES

After the excitement and bustle of the Christmas season, it is completely natural to feel a little down at this time of the year.
January, the month of cold weather, dark mornings and (possibly) failing in our New Year's resolutions collide to create "January Blues". Typically, January Blues manifests itself as feelings of low mood, sadness, lack of motivation, tiredness and low energy. It is also the peak season for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which can induce serious depressive episodes during the darker months.

Blue Monday, so-called the most depressing day of the year, falls on January 20th this year. It is typically the third Monday of the month and it is supposedly the saddest day of the year, due to a combination of bad weather, long nights and lingering aftermath of the festive period.

The least upbeat day on the calendar has taken on new meaning in 2025, as many of us are experiencing an increased level of stress and uncertainty due to financial difficulties and challenges which we are all having to cope with. Instead of giving into "The January Blues", why not learn how to beat them? Here are our tips for giving yourself the best start to 2025.

Tip one: Understand that this is normal.
There are biological reasons why many people feel low and lack energy during January and there is nothing "wrong" with having these feelings. Many people will be going through the same or similar feelings, but you may not realize it. Understanding that it is a natural response is helpful.

The restrictions we had due to COVID-19 and the impact these had on our connections with other people meant we had to adapt how we interact with each other. But it's really important that since these restrictions have been lifted, that we continue to have face to face social interactions with our friends, family and colleagues so that we feel connected and supported by each other.

Tip two: Get as much daylight as possible.
Lack of daylight is partly why people suffer from "The January Blues". Not getting enough sunlight and Vitamin D, has been shown to decrease our happiness and leaves us feeling down in the dumps. The sunlight can make you feel better and also help to regulate your sleep cycles properly. Exposure to natural light increases the level of serotonin in the brain, which is associated with improved mood.

Tip three: Keep fit and stay active. Regular exercise has been proven to reduce stress, help improve self-esteem levels and relieve depressive tendencies as exercise releases endorphins which gives your body a positive feeling of happiness. The exercise can take any form, even if it is just gentle or moderate activities like jogging, yoga or even a brief lunchtime walk.

Tip four: Avoid unrealistic New Year's resolutions.
One of the reasons why people suffer from the "January Blues" is that they are overly ambitious with their New Year's resolutions and are left feeling unhappy when they can't fulfil them. Making re-solutions to better yourself is a good thing, but make sure they are things you can stick to.

Tip five: Eat properly
It is normal for us to want more fatty and heavy food during the cold months of winter. Apart from being very unhealthy, sugar crashes cause tiredness and make you crave food unnecessarily. You can improve how you feel by eating a good, varied diet with things like oily fish and take extra vitamin D the "sunshine vitamin".

A healthy diet will boost your mood, give you more energy and stop you putting on weight over winter. Balance your craving for carbo-hydrates, such as pasta and potatoes, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Tip six: Sleep well. National Sleep Foundation guidelines advise that healthy adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. Poor sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health and lead you feeling irritable, anxious and worried. Try to reduce screen time in the evenings to let your brain switch off and allow for a good quality of sleep.

Tip seven: Learn a new skill.
Getting creative or learning a new skill is an ideal way to gain a sense of achievement and boost your confidence. There are plenty of hobbies you can take up indoors. Studies show that you reduce your stress levels and experience fewer symptoms of depression.

Tip eight: Get help for financial pressure.
Worrying about money can negatively affect your mental health and the stress of dealing with financial pressures does not just affect your personal life, it can affect your work, family life, health, and relationships.

Tip nine: Use positive affirmations.
Try to start every day with a positive thought, saying, memory, or quote that sets you up for the best possible start. Don't forget to keep reminding yourself of it throughout the day too.

Tip ten: Be grateful for what has happened.
Focus on the positive things taking place all around you "no matter how small". For example, you can be grateful for having a good night's sleep, completing your work on time. Remember to treasure the little wins and celebrate your achievements, this helps to move your focus away from the negatives.
Excerpts from Matthew Gill, Cygnet Health Care.

SOUP and SUCH

Where: Messiah Lutheran Church
3 Church Street, Halifax, 17032

When: First Thursday of Month
February-May 2025

Feb. 6, 2025	**(Orders due by 1/26/25)**
Chicken Noodle Soup	$7.00 /QT.
Crescent Rolls	4 for $1.50
Pumpkin Bar w/Cr. Cheese Icing	$1.50/slice

Mar. 6, 2025	**(Orders due by 2/23/25)**
Chili	$7.00 /QT.
Cornbread Muffins	4 for $1.50
Shoofly Cake	$1.50 /Slice

April 3, 2025	**(Orders due by 3/23/25)**
Ham and Bean Soup	$7.00 /QT.
Mini-Loaf French Bread	1 for $1.50
Pineapple Upside Down Cake	$1.50 /Slice

May 1, 2025	**(Orders due by 4/20/25)**
Beef Vegetable Soup	$7.00/QT
Buttermilk Biscuits	4 for $1.50
Choc. Cake w/PB Icing	$1.50/Slice

Order forms available monthly. Place orders with Dianna Reed (717-692-5317).

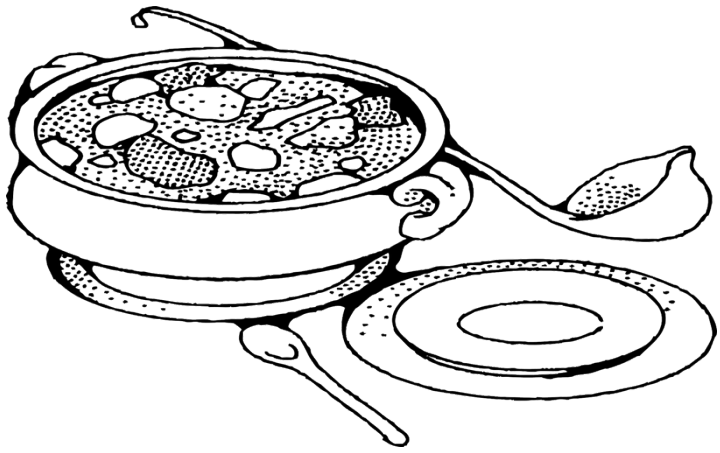
Pickup will be from 4-6 p.m.
in the church basement of Messiah.

JANUARY 2025

FEBRUARY "SOUP AND SUCH"

In February, "Soup and Such" has a menu which includes Chicken Noodle Soup – $7/quart, crescent rolls – 4/$1.50, and pumpkin bars w/cream cheese icing – $1.50/slice. Orders are due by Sunday, January 26 and pick-up is from 4 to 6 P.M. on Thursday, February 6 at Messiah.

For more information, please contact Dianna Reed at 717-692-5317. Order forms and upcoming menus will be available at Messiah in January.



Also: Please be safe while butchering!

FEBRUARY 2025

MARCH 6 - SOUP AND SUCH"

In March, "Soup and Such" has a menu which includes Chili – $7/quart, cornbread muffins – 4/$1.50, and Shoofly Cake – $1.50/slice. Orders are due by Sunday, February 23 and pick-up is from 4 to 6 P.M. on Thursday, March 6 at Messiah. For more information, please contact Dianna Reed at 717-692-5317.

COMBINED WORSHIP/JOINT SERVICES in 2025

Please check back for exact dates. But REMEMBER: every fifth Sunday, the Annual Picnic, day of each congregation's yearly meeting, the Christmas Bell Concert followed by Brunch/ Party will all be held jointly and alternate

locations between St. Peter and Messiah.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

5 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Worship including Holy Communion
- 830AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10AM Worship @Messiah

9
- 1 PM St Peter Council Meeting
- 6:30 PM Messiah Council Meeting

12 Baptism of Our Lord
- 830AM Worship at St. Peter
- Sallianne Bechtel and Lori Ritter inducted as new Council members
- 10 AM Worship at Messiah w/Baptism
- Dawn Pellman inducted as new council member
- 11:15 AM Joint Council @ Messiah

January 13-17 (Mon-Fri) Pastor Brody @ULS Philadelphia for second week of Continuing Ed/Small and Mighty Church

15
- 630PM Ladies Aid meeting @ Messiah

19 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
- 830AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10AM Worship @Messiah

20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 7 PM Dart Ball-BYE

26 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
- 8:30 AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10 AM Worship @Messiah
- DEADLINE FOR FEB SOUP & SUCH

27
- 7 PM Dart Ball @ Messiah

28
- 7 PM UD Conference Meeting by Zoom

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

2 4th Sunday after Epiphany
(And Scout Sunday)
Worship including Holy Communion
- 830AM Worship @St. Peter*
- 10AM Worship @Messiah*

*Scouts will participate and be recognized during both church services!

3
- 7PM Dart Ball @ Messiah

6
- 4-6PM Pick Up Soup and Such @ Messiah

9 5th Sunday after Epiphany
- 830 AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10 AM Worship @Messiah

10
- 7PM Dart Ball @ Valleys ECC

13
- Messiah Preschool Resumes to celebrate St. Valentine's Day

16 6th Sunday after Epiphany
- 830AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10AM Worship @Messiah
- DEADLINE FOR MARCH/APRIL NEWSLETTER

17
- 7PM Dart Ball @ Messiah

19
- 6:30pm Ladies Aid meeting @ Messiah

23 7th Sunday after Epiphany
- 830AM Worship @St. Peter
- 10AM Worship @Messiah
- DEADLINE MAR SOUP & SUCH

24
- 7PM Dart Ball-BYE

MAY 2025

FISHERVILLE DAY – 2025

Fisherville Day will be held May 10, 2025. Lots of fun activities and events are being planned for this special community day. The Fisherville Volunteer Fire Company will also hold a craft fair as part of

the day. If you would like to be part of the planning committee, please contact Dianna Reed at 717-692-5317. Your help is much appreciated!

CHURCH WEBSITE

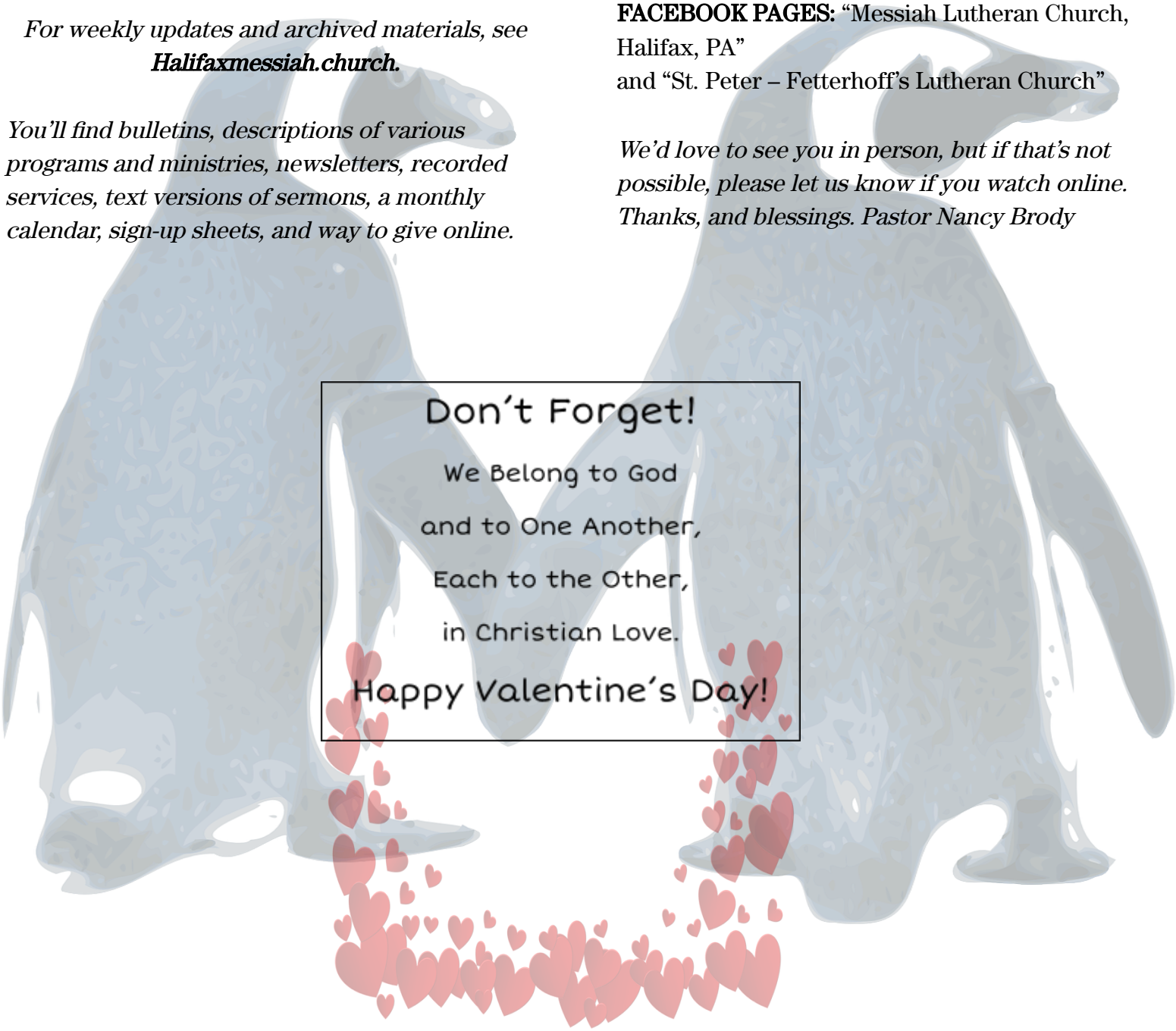
For weekly updates and archived materials, see ***Halifaxmessiah.church.***

You'll find bulletins, descriptions of various programs and ministries, newsletters, recorded services, text versions of sermons, a monthly calendar, sign-up sheets, and way to give online.

Our 10am (and joint church services) are available every week as a livestreamed event via Facebook and available later in the day on **YOU TUBE:** Halifax Messiah

FACEBOOK PAGES: "Messiah Lutheran Church, Halifax, PA"
and "St. Peter – Fetterhoff's Lutheran Church"

We'd love to see you in person, but if that's not possible, please let us know if you watch online. Thanks, and blessings. Pastor Nancy Brody



Messiah & St. Peter Lutheran Churches
3 Church Street
Halifax, PA 17032