Peace Came to Earth

For most people, peace is a common pursuit. We need a quiet place to rest, especially during this restless time. Year after year, with each Advent season, we wonder if this year will bring a peace that endures. Unfortunately, we often grow impatient as we seek peace. Despite knowing the promises of God, when we try to find peace on our own terms, defining it in our own ways, we could go on and on without ever finding it.



December - 2023

To illustrate both our pursuit of peace and God's plan for us, our Advent series uses a five-point star for each sermon and children's message. The star reminds us of the Christmas star of Matthew 2 that guided the Wise Men to find Jesus. Every point represents a path of peace we might choose, never to be fulfilled. But as we seek peace in these many ways, God intersects us with a peace that both passes our human understanding and yet meets our needs. That peace comes always through the birth of Jesus, the Word become flesh, who steps into the world and fulfills our desire for peace.

The sermons, dates, and times for our sermon series are as follows:

Midweek of Advent 1, December 6, 6:30 p.m.: Look Up! The Star of Peace Draws Near

Midweek of Advent II, December 13, 6:30 p.m.: Peace to All, Near and Far

Midweek of Advent III, December 20, 6:30 p.m.: Our Peace Rests on Him Alone

Christmas Eve, December 24, 5:00 p.m.: The Diamond Found in the Manger

Christmas Day, December 25, 10:30 a.m.: Let's Celebrate: Jesus Christ Is the Way!



By God's grace, we find our lasting peace and treasure. God's peace is a treasure laid in the straw of the manger. God's peace is the priceless Son of God, born in the stable and laid in plain view for us all. As the Prince of Peace, He is the peace that we seek and that we receive by grace. See you in church! **Your co-worker in Christ,**

Pastor Lofgren

Look Up! The Star of Peace Draws Near

The season of Advent is filled with the relentless seeking of things. Shopping is in full swing, and we hear the promise again and again: If we have all the right stuff, buy all the perfect gifts, attend all the posh parties, and decorate with all the trendy



decorations, then we will feel complete and at peace. Counter this line of thinking with what God's Word teaches us about contentment. The apostle Paul writes, "Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content" (1 Timothy 6:6–8). As we pause during this first week of Advent and pray for the Lord to stir up our hearts for the arrival of His Son, we remember the story of the ancient Magi, who followed the star and found contentment in the King who had been born to save them. Jesus now invites us also to follow Him and receive from Him that same peace, that "godliness with contentment," which the Magi also received.

Such a Time as This

As we await God's placement of "the Pastor He wants" to guide and lead us, let's not forget why we are here at *Such a Time as This.* It is easy to get distracted by all that is going on in the world around us, and in our own church world.

We need to recognize that God told us this would be the pattern of the world as time winds down until His second coming. Set Backs should not deter us from our purpose at *such a time as this*. God has placed us here at this time, like Esther (4:14), "... and who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Do you feel unworthy, incapable, untrained, unable to be used by God at this time? Recall God had plans for others who did not feel ready to lead and accomplish His purpose at their time in history and faced setbacks:

Abraham was Old Daniel got thrown to the Lions Jonah ran away from God Sarah was impatient

Elijah was depressed Peter had a temper Noah got drunk Mose could not speak well

David had an affair and was a murderer

God uses setbacks to accomplish His purposes. Our purpose, our calling, at such a time as this, is still to make disciples. It is a matter of urgency for those that don't know Christ and His saving Grace. Heaven and Hell are in the balance for their eternity. We are called to be "salt and light" for them.

Mat 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

As His church we can not abandon our purpose even in times like this. As a "church" if we are not working to make disciples, we are only an "organization." Christ spoke to the church at Sardis about being alive or losing what He has given:

Rev 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Our recent Time, Talent, Treasure and Testimony Inventory request resulted in only 20 family forms being turned in. I pray that our church does not become only a "self-serving organization" and that we continue to reach out during *such a time as this* with our Time, Talents, Treasures and Testimonies as a church to accomplish our purpose to make disciples in His name.

To God be the Glory. David Wendeborn Discipleship team.

"The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us"

Isaiah 33:22

Update from the Call Committee

As was reported at the most recent voter's meeting, the District furnished Messiah with the names of twelve possible candidates for a call. The Call Committee broke into three groups and each group reviewed the information provided on four of the pastors. The committee then met to share their opinions of each of the pastors they reviewed. Based on each group's recommendation, six of the twelve pastors were selected to be reviewed by the entire Call Committee. We then met again and of the six, four were selected to see if they would be open to talking to Messiah about a possible call. Pastor Barz, who is assisting us at this point, made the contact and all four agreed to a Zoom meeting to discuss a possible call. Three of the meetings were completed on

Monday and Wednesday of this week with the fourth occurring on Thursday (the day articles are due for the Friday newsletter). Once all four conversations have been held, the Call Committee will determine how it wishes to proceed. The committee may want to hold a second conversation with one or two of the top picks, or perhaps, one candidate may stand out above the rest and the committee may elect to bring that name before the congregation for a vote on proceeding with a call. Only the Lord knows. I will keep you apprised as the process continues to move forward. Please continue to keep the call process and all involved in your prayers.

Your brother in Christ, Mike Lang

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Elders Report

If you were at the voter's meeting on Nov. 29th, you heard that there was no candidate for Head Elder for the coming two-year period. If you were not at that meeting, you have now heard it as well. A canvas of the existing Elders did not produce a candidate, and the nominating committee could not find a candidate either. I think that many in the congregation perceive the role of Elder has become more physical than spiritual. Due to being thirteen months in the FLC, which required setting up and taking down of the gym every Sunday (and every Wednesday during Advent and Lent), I can certainly understand that feeling. Now that we have returned to the Sanctuary, however, setting up chairs and the alter area are no longer an issue. Regardless, the duties the Elders perform in conjunction with Sunday services still preclude some members from volunteering to be an Elder.

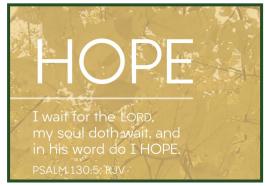
The Board of Elders discussed this at their last meeting and with Pastor Lofgren's concurrence, we have asked the ushers to handle the duties required for our church services. Ushers will prepare the sanctuary for the service which includes the simple duties of turning on the lights, lighting the eternal flame, placing the readings on the lectern, and uncovering the piano. On communion Sundays the ushers will prepare the communion elements and place them on the altar. The fourth usher will assist the pastor in the distribution of the elements. This will entail a slight change to our current communion process. Instead of two separate tables at the altar, which are each greeted by the pastor and then dismissed by the Elder, there will be one table, filled from each side of the church as we currently do, but all twenty (or so) communicants will be greeted as one table by the pastor. The pastor will distribute the host and the usher will distribute the wine, same as now, but when all have communed, the pastor will then dismiss the entire table and then the communicants will leave the table to return to their side of the sanctuary as normal. The process would then be repeated until all had communed.

By delegating church service duties to the ushers, the Elders would be less burdened with physical duties and could direct more energy to the spiritual needs of the congregation which can be accomplished by phone, computer, or direct contact. It is the hope of the existing Board of Elders that if these changes are implemented, there may be more members willing to volunteer to fill the role of Elder. Perhaps, someone will even volunteer to take on the role of the next Head Elder.

The elders are also proposing to eliminate the collection during the church service, which would be one less duty for the ushers to perform. The number of members addressing their financial support of the church electronically continues to increase. Many of the remaining members that still bring their offering to church use a check, and most write one check a month. The other three Sundays of the month they are putting nothing in the plate. The elders would like to go to a Tithing Box, which is being utilized by many churches today. Members that bring their offerings to the church, simply drop them into the Tithing Box, which will be located in the narthex and the treasurer collects them after each service. This idea has been floated before, but there were some who felt that by not passing the offering plates, the church would miss out on 'loose offerings,' cash given by some members, but mostly by visitors. Our bulletin states, "our offering is an opportunity for our members to practice faithful stewardship." Visitors should not feel obligated to give.

The new communion process will begin on the 3rd Sunday of December, the 17th and the collection process will change once the Tithing Box arrives at the church. We can see how these changes work for 90 days or so and if the congregation is not in favor, the old processes can certainly be reinstated.

Mike Lang, Head Elder



From the Board of Directors

CONGREGATIONAL TOWN HALL. We received three presentations at the congregational town hall on November 5:

Anthony Sansone presented information on our year-to-date financial position and the 2024 budget.

YTD Financials: Revenue is \$53,500 below budget, driven primarily by a shortfall in offerings received. This shortfall is offset by expenses coming in \$54,673 better than budget.

2024 Budget: The 2024 proposed budget of \$703,048 is a decrease of \$14,644 from the 2023 budget. Primary driver is a 3.6% decrease in planned offerings received. Budgeted expenses decreased by \$14,644, driven by increases in comp & benefits (COLA increase), insurance, and utilities. That increase was offset by decreases in mortgage payments and capital expenditures. This presentation was informational only. There will be a vote to approve the budget at the Congregational Meeting on November 12. If you have any questions or would like more details about the budget, reach out to Anthony Sansone before the meeting.

Mike Gissi provided an update on open lay leadership positions.

After remaining vacant all last year, the Adult Education committee has leadership! Mike Gissi will chair this committee, assisted by Dennis Parker and David Wendeborn. We thank these men for stepping up! The positions of **Head Elder**, **Youth Development**, and **Discipleship** all remain without willing volunteers. These positions are vital to the continued spiritual health of our congregation. Please pray about your ability to volunteer to help in one of these areas.

Joe Sorenson provided an update from the Call Committee.

The committee has received a list of candidates and is working on a list of topics to include in our discussions with candidates we interview. We are asking the congregation for input on any topics they'd like covered in the discussions. There is a suggestion box in the narthex. Please put any suggested discussion topics in the box by Nov. 19th.

CONGREGATION VOTES TO APPROVE 2024 BUDGET.

Anthony Sansone, board treasurer, presented the 2024 proposed budget at a congregational town hall on November 7, giving members the opportunity to ask questions about our financial picture. A subsequent voters' meeting was held on November 19, and the budget was approved. The 2024 budget of \$703,048 is almost \$15,000 less than the 2023 budget, driven primarily by a decrease in planned offerings received. This decrease is partially offset by an increase in contributions from the preschool. If you were unable to attend either of these meetings, you can get a copy of the 2024 budget from Anthony Sansone.

Committee Update: The committee is going through the list of names; we hope to be able to extend a call within a month or two.

Lay Board Positions: Mike Gissi, Sue Parker, and Larry Rottman served as the nominating committee.

Slate of candidates:

Fellowship: Gracie Funk and Pam Fields

Congregational Care: Marilyn Mazurek and Kathy Rottman

Missions: Kathy Giardinelli and Mark Giardinelli

Property Care: Paul Duennenberg

Discipleship: *Dennis Parker* Adult Education: *Mike Gissi*

Head elder position and Youth Development positions remain unfilled.

Motion moved and seconded to accept the slate of nominees as presented. Motion carried on a voice vote.



Adult Education

Happy Advent season Messiah! Christians around the world are observing the liturgical season of Advent which marks the beginning of the church year. It traditionally starts on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day (November 30th), December 3rd this year, and continues for four Sundays, through December 24th this year, until Christmas. The liturgical paraments and vestments will change to violet or blue to recognize Advent as a time of preparation and repentance as well as a symbol of the royalty of the coming King.

From the Latin word for "coming", Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Christ both in the past in His incarnation as the baby Jesus, <u>but also</u> in the future with His promised second coming as Christ Triumphant. Furthermore, Advent is a time to focus on His present coming to us in the Word and Sacraments. In addition to regular Sunday Worship, we will gather midweek on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM on December 6th, 13th, and 20th for special Advent worship. Thanks in advance to Pastor Lofgren, Maurine, Bob Shoaf and the many volunteers including our elders for their hard work for these opportunities to worship and learn.

Messiah welcomes our new Lay Minister of Adult Education and Small Groups, Mike Gissi! We also thank

all of you who participated in our various opportunities last year including Pastor's Bible class each Sunday at 9:15 AM, the Ladies Friday morning small group, and the Adult classes on Sunday afternoons.

For the coming year **Pastor's class** will continue with a verse-by-verse study of the **Book of John** and then the **Book of Romans**. The Friday Morning Ladies are set to begin a new study about **John Ortberg's book**, "If You Want to Walk

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch... And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness"

Jeremiah 23:5-6

on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat" led by Kathlin Jauregui beginning in January. Let Mike know your other interests and let him know if you are willing to host a small group in your home.

Let us meditate on two Proverbs:

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7
- Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.
 Proverbs 9:9

Dennis Parker drparker46@gmail.com

"If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat"

by author John Ortberg - Six weeks video study from January 19th thru February 23rd - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

"Deep within you lies the same faith and longing that sent Peter walking across the wind-swept Sea of Galilee toward Jesus. In what ways is the Lord telling you, as he did Peter, "Come"?

The choice is yours to know him as only a water-walker can, aligning yourself with God's purpose for your life. There's just one requirement: If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat." In this Christianity Today Award-winning study, by bestselling author John Ortberg you will learn to:

Recognize God's presence

Discern between faith and foolishness

Not only expect problems, but field them when they come

Reorient your thoughts about failure and see it as an opportunity to grow

Wait on the Lord

And, ultimately, connect more deeply with God

Marilyn Mazurek will be ordering books @ \$15.00 each. Please give her your money and she'll take care of it.





MESSIAH'S KIDS PRESCHOOL



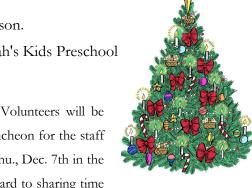
Messiah's Kids Preschool is busy preparing for the arrival of Jesus. The Christmas Trees are assembled, the Nativity Scenes are displayed and glitter is everywhere. The kids are busy preparing for their holiday performances.

Just a reminder, Messiah's Kids will be on holiday December 14th thru January 4th. We look forward to welcoming our friends back on January 7th.

May each of you enjoy all of the blessed wonder of this holiday season.

Healthy Blessings, Our teachers & Gina Huskey Director - Messiah's Kids Preschool







The Friends Of Our Preschool Volunteers will be hosting a Christmas Blessings Luncheon for the staff of Messiah's Kids Preschool on Thu., Dec. 7th in the Family Life Center. We look forward to sharing time with Preschool Director, Gina Huskey, and her dedicated staff! It is always a blessing and a joy!







Peace to All, Near and Far

As we pause to contemplate His Word during this second week of Advent, Jesus comes to us where we are and says, "My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). This peace does not come through our attempts to remove ourselves from reality or rearrange the broken pieces of our past. No, it is only by the grace of God that we now receive His peace, His forgiveness, and His restoration through faith in His promises. Gathering us from far and near, no matter who we are or where we have been, our Advent King gives us His peace by means of His death and resurrection. When we

trust in Him, we will not simply feel better with a short-term stillness; we will stand fully forgiven by Jesus and at permanent peace with our God.

Messiah's Annual Adult Christmas Party

Saturday, December 9th from 5:00 to 8:00 pm

Messiah's Narthex Area

Tickets are \$10.00 each

On sale – Sunday, Dec. 3rd Before and After Worship Service **Musician – Bob Shoaf** background music from 5:00 to 7:00 pm followed by Christmas Carol Sing A Long from 7:00 to 8:00 pm

Menu – Heavy Hors d'oeuvres, Coffee, Tea and Water and Desserts

Bring Your Own Beverage – will have Margarita Machine

Entertainment - Music, Door Prizes, Fellowship & Fun



"Special Thing" – Contest for the Men of Messiah

A prize will be awarded to the Man with the "Most Festive Christmas Socks"



"The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Isaiah 7:14







"You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

Our Peace Rests on Him Alone

During one of the busiest and most stressful times of the year, we pause this third week of Advent and consider the source of real and abiding peace. This harmony with both God and others comes to us neither through our exertions of control nor through our best-laid plans, but through the reign of our Mighty God come near to us in Jesus, His one and only Son. The fulfillment of our everlasting Father's perfectly executed plan to save the world is revealed to us in the straw of the Bethlehem manger and then, some thirty-three years later, in the wood and nails of Calvary's cross. Amid the



disorder of our chaotic lives, our Prince of Peace gives us what the world can never give. Let us center our hearts and minds on our Wonderful Counselor, who freely gives His everything so that our peace may rest on Him alone.

From Lindy Eschenko - you are invite . . .

Dec. 2nd - Messiah's Adult Game Day at 2:00 pm at the home of Hal & Lindy Eschenko!

If you've ever been to Hal and Lindy's home, you know she goes all out for the holidays! She is extending an invitation to her home for Game Day Saturday! If you want to bring your drinks BYOB and any snacks, etc. that you would like to share that would be awesome! Please let Lindy know that you are coming!



Dec. 7th – **Ladies Day Out Lunch** at 11:00 am gift exchange and lunch at Albe Vita, an Italian food restaurant next to HEB in Leon Springs!! Previously was Scuzzi's!!! Gift exchange is always optional \$10.00 -

Ladies of Messiah - please know that you are invited to join Lindy for the Ladies Day Out Luncheon! All you need to do is let Lindy know that you are coming!











Multigenerational Christmas Card and Cookie Decorating Event



We will once again be making Christmas cards for our shut-ins and friends of Messiah on December 17th following church. We will also have an opportunity to decorate some cookies for our own consumption and join in a lunch of chili and pigs in a blanket. Please sign up for this event by December 12th if you plan to attend.

Thank you to Carol Mycock for getting Thrivent funds to put this on with no cost to Messiah.

Sign up sheet is in the narthex or text Kathy Giardinelli at 210-334-8820.





"Shout for joy, you
heavens; rejoice, you
earth; burst into song,
you mountains!
For the Lord comforts
his people and will have
compassion
on his afflicted ones."
Isaiah 49:13



From Mark Giardinelli





Dear Messiah Family, Thank you all for packing shoeboxes. The goal for the church and preschool combined was 250 and *we packed 254 shoeboxes*, which will go to 254 children.

I have decided at the last minute instead of going to Charlotte, North Carolina to process shoeboxes, I will be going to the Dallas Fort Worth Processing Center

instead. I apologize for the last minute decision, but I will be in the Processing Center where our boxes went. I will update you in the next newsletter on how it goes.

On January 29 at 6:00 pm, we are starting our Salt and Light Movie Nights. Originally, it was only for those with special needs but I decided to open it to anyone 22+ years of age. You are welcome to come and show Christ's love to these often forgotten adults through fellowshipping with them and watching a movie. We will be having popcorn and drinks. We are looking for someone to do the AV and to help with the popcorn and drinks. If you're interested, please let me know. The first movie we'll be showing is "To the Ends of the Earth."

I hope to see you there.

In Christ, Mark Giardinelli

Calling All Volunteers!



This is one organization we can get behind here at Messiah Lutheran Church. Are you looking for a way to help others this holiday season? David Wendeborn is passionate about it if you have any questions. It would be fun to go together as a group. Instead of just saying it, let's do it. All it takes is one person to say, "Let's Go!" That's the advantage of a small church.

Calling all volunteers! We need 100 teams for the Christmas delivery event, this is an incredible event dedicated to making a difference in a child's life.

Sign up- https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040F4BAEA828A6FE3-44372192-christmasbclid=IwAR356NRBVuoD2F9jt7soTCNNqDRsRxp75e6qlMrBHj7TnW4Ub6yoc4z7D0 0#/

In thy LIGHT shall we see light. PSALM 36:9, KJV

Laura Saunders

The Gospel according to Luke

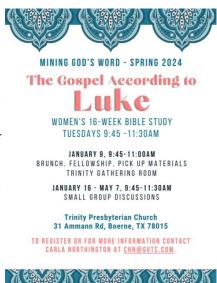
I have attended this Bible study for 18 years and have personally found it very informative and rewarding. I have learned so much about the Bible that I didn't know before.

The upcoming study that begins in **January** is a 16 week in-depth study on the Gospel of Luke

Please contact **Sue Theis** if you are interested in receiving more information or you can contact the coordinator, Carla Northington directly. Her information is on the flyer.

Sue Theis (830) 431-0733





Join us at the Theater

There is a group of Messiah members who attend the plays at the Boerne Community Theater. We usually go on Sunday afternoons. The theater has opened their 2024 memberships drive so if you would like to join this group, this is the time.

The membership consists of 6 play productions plus 2 additional ones we can attend performed by the Teen Troupe at an additional cost. Usually we have lunch together and head to the theater when the doors open at 2:00 p.m.

I take a tally and decide the most "popular" date to go, make the reservations, and let everyone know so they can mark their calendars.

Please contact Sue Theis for more information if you are interested in having more information or want to join us.

Sue Theis (830) 431-0733





Messiah needs Ushers

We need YOU!

Messiah is looking for more ushers and ladies are welcome to usher too!

Please let Marilyn Mazurek know if you'd like to usher next year, training will be provided.

Marilynptx50@gmail.com or text 210 380-1906

God's gift to the world For I delivered to you as
of first importance what
I also received: that
Christ died for our
sins in accordance with
the Scriptures





SACRED MUSIC FOR THE ADVENT SEASON...

"Savior of the Nations, Come," "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry,"

"Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending," "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding," "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

You can listen to sacred music for the Advent season 24/7 at lutheran public radio.org, TuneIn, Amazon Echo, Google Home, Apple HomePod and the Lutheran Public Radio mobile app. http://issuesetc.org/support/



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Dec 4th - Ed Mycock Dec 6th - Peggy Hedrick Dec 12 - Linda Dicke Dec 12 - Sarah Barry Dec 13 - Brad Sanders Dec 13 - Larry Risley Dec 19 - Brooke Turner Dec 19 - John Soper Dec 19 - Chris Eckhart Dec 21 - Jim Behrens Dec 24 - Kim Maloy Dec 26 - Mike Stender Dec 27 - Jochen Brosien Dec 27 - Suzy Soper Dec 28 - Carol Mycock

November 2023 Contributions			
General Fund	\$45,920.91	Building Fund	\$15,008.61
Renovation Fund	\$55,150.00	Family Life Center	\$5,812.50

December Altar Flowers



Dec. 3rd - Steve & Janet Haberoth – in thanksgiving of God's Blessings Dec. 10th – Bill & Linda Dicke – honoring Linda's Birthday

Dec. 10th – Kathleen Blakely – in memory of mom Polly Mohnke on her100th Birthday (Dec. 9th)

Dec. 17th – Dennis & Sue Parker – in memory of Doug's Birthday

Dec. 24th – Kim & Maurine Maloy – in memory of those who have gone before us

Dec. 24th – Terry Chhabra – in loving memory of her parents Randall & Carlotta Burns,

Amanda Addington's Grandparents, Gus & Luke's Great Grandparents

Dec. 31st – Bill & Sharon Loren - in thanksgiving for another year of God's blessings.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



9401 DIETZ ELKHORN BOERNE, TEXAS 78015

PHONE: 830-755-4300 FAX: 830-981-8035 WWW.MESSIAHBOERNE.ORG







The Staff of Messiah Lutheran Church wish you all a Blessed Christmas!