

Messiah Staff Directory

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Dick Ellis

Associate Pastor

Carrie Binnie

Associate Pastor –Young Adults

Carol Erickson

Director of Children's Ministry

Theresa Hunter

Director of Youth Ministry

Kathy LeLoup

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Marilyn Blackney

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Joy Ann Harmon

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Communications Coordinator

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Clarence Jansson

Building and Security

Jesse Casady

Custodian

Series Looks at Building Christ-Centered Relationships

Step through the threshold of Messiah Church and the evidence is overwhelming: there is definitely some construction going on around here. The south wall of the Sanctuary is down and workers are busy finishing the task that was begun months ago to enlarge and renovate the church's worship space and some adjacent areas. Completion of the building project is expected in early July.

Physical space, however, is not the only area where construction is happening at Messiah. A six-week sermon series, *Life Under Construction*, is focusing on the importance of building and maintaining Christ-centered relationships.

"In times of adversity and stress," says Pastor Steve Richards, "we often lean on our relationships for support—and either we find that support is there to lean on or often, to our surprise, we find a significant relationship is not what we thought it was. This is an important time for the church to be a source of encouragement.

"Many in our culture no longer see the value of marriage. This series is an opportunity for us to proclaim the important role of marriage and how a marriage grows deeper and stronger when Christ is at the center."

The initial inspiration for the series, according to Pastor Steve, was the movie *Fireproof*. The movie tells the story of a firefighter, Captain Caleb Holt, who is able to rescue strangers from burning buildings, but seems powerless to save his own failing

marriage until he accepts a challenge from his father. The challenge is to make a 40-day commitment to reading and responding to a day-at-a-time guide provided in a book called *The Love Dare. Fireproof* was produced by a local church as its ministry and witness to the power of Christ to change lives.

The *Life Under Construction* series will use movie clips to build on themes that are based upon scripture and real-life situations. A few of the themes will be adapted from a sermon series offered several years ago about love, sex and marriage; others will be drawn from an online survey currently being conducted of the Messiah congregation.

"In this series, we will hear *not* the results of what a nationwide survey is saying or a best-selling book is telling us about relationships," comments Pastor Steve. "We will hear what the people of Messiah Church are saying about their relationships—their joys, strengths and needs."

Materials and small group opportunities are available for those wishing to explore the sermon themes further. The *Grow • Pray • Study* inserts in the Sunday bulletins will provide scriptural insight into relationships with specific recommendations for persons who are currently in relationships. A *Love Dare* journal also will be available for couples who will make a 40-day commitment to strengthening their relationship. The sermon series and support materials will supply tools that can help even those who are not married in their family and friend relationships.

For more information on how you can get connected with a small group that is exploring themes from the *Fireproof* movie and the *Life Under Construction* sermon series, see page 2.



Got an upcoming event or news?

Email story ideas to chazzard@messiahchurch.org or put them in the office mailbox of Carol Hazzard by May 13.

Ministry In Action: Mentors Provide Tools for Christ-Centered Marriages

Editor's Note: By giving of their time, talents and offerings, members of Messiah United Methodist Church (UMC) support several ministries that serve individuals at home in Minnesota, in our nation and in our world. At Messiah, the Marriage Mentor ministry serves to help couples preparing for marriage begin their lives together with the support of a Christian community. Darcy and Scott W. are among those who serve as Marriage Mentors. They reflect on their experience of entering this ministry and the ways in which they believe it is helping to build healthy, Christ-centered relationships.

When we first got a letter from Pastor Dick asking us to be Marriage Mentors, we looked at each other and wondered out loud if he had lost his mind. Didn't he know that we had both been divorced and only had been re-married for a few years? We gave him a call to try and clear things up, intending to graciously decline, but, after a very short conversation, we were fully committed to being Marriage Mentors! Pastor Dick explained to us that we had been specifically chosen because of our unique experiences, not in spite of them. The goal of the Marriage Mentor Ministry was to assemble a team of couples that weren't all alike because the church knew that each couple asking to be married had their own unique story also.



Scott and Darcy W. serve in the Marriage Mentor Ministry at Messiah.

We have worked with multiple couples and none of them have been alike: We've mentored couples who were in their early 20s and couples that were in their 50s and 60s. We've mentored couples who were marrying for the first time, and others who had been married before.

There have been couples with children, couples living together and couples with no idea of what they were getting into. A few of the couples had never been to our church, but wanted to be married in a church and others had been baptized and confirmed at Messiah.

With all of our couples, we made it our goal to give them the tools to build a successful married life—one that includes Christ—no matter what their circumstances. We also wanted these couple to understand that we

weren't judging them or testing them to see if they should get married; we just wanted to support them and pray for them.

We strongly believe that this is an important ministry at Messiah with great rewards for both the engaged couples and the mentor couples. It's one more way that we can "fill lives with the power of God's love through a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Small Groups Provide Opportunity to Explore Themes from 'Fireproof'

April 26 was movie day at Messiah as members of the congregation were invited to attend one of two showings of the movie, **Fireproof**. The movie, which helped to inspire the current sermon series, **Life Under Construction**, also is the source of a variety of materials intended to help couples explore their marriages and learn how to put Christ at the center of their lives.

Messiah is making these and other resources available to persons wishing to pursue the themes of the sermon series and movie. Beginning May 6, the Sunday Evening Small Group Experience for Men and Women will follow a study guide offered by the creators of the

movie. Contact Diane B. through the church office for more information about this group that meets from 7-9 p.m. on Sunday evenings.



Other small group and independent studies of themes in the movie are being coordinated by Larry W. If you would like to get connected with a study group or purchase a copy of a **Love Dare** journal so that you can take the 40-

day commitment challenge taken by the main character in the movie, Captain Caleb Holt, contact Larry through the church office.

Living Into the Easter Message

By Pastor Carrie Binnie

John 11:1-44; *The Raising of Lazarus*

Rob Bell, the primary preaching pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan, is the author of the must-read, *Velvet Elvis*. Bell and Mars Hill are reaching thousands of people each week with their authentic and contagious approach to ministry and spiritual growth. The church's mission statement asserts, "We have the opportunity to make a difference. That's why we leverage both our resources and our selves in pursuit of tangible results."

It is clear to someone not connected to the congregation that Mars Hill is a church of action. They are a people who have declared their need for God *now*, the God who teaches us how to live *now*. And they exhibit a faith that's about *today*; a faith that helps a person understand the world that we live in *today*.

The Johannine¹ account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead reminds us that that in addition to the hope of a bodily resurrection given to us by Jesus Christ, each of us has the gift of new life *now*. In Christ, we have the opportunity to fuse faith, resurrection hope and salvation with life *now*. Bell articulates this further in his recent interview with *The Christian Century*, saying, "For me, everything begins with the divine in the daily. ... If I lose the sense of wonder about today and

this afternoon and this evening, then there's no point in spouting off" about how to change or fix things. "For me, that's what it's all about."

As we continue to live into the Easter message, I leave you with a blessing that Bell offers in one of his NOOMA² videos:

May you trust Jesus, when he says that death has been taken care of, and that you can live forever with God, that you're never, ever, ever going to stop living. May you believe that death has been taken care of, and you can be a partner with God in redeeming and restoring this fallen, broken, hurting world. That you can literally be a partner with God in making this the kind of place that God originally intended it to be. May you be the kind of person who, when you live this way, the very trees of Paradise are being planted.



Blessings,
Pastor Carrie

¹From the Gospel of John

²As www.nooma.com explains, NOOMA videos are "a series of short films that explore our world through the teachings of Jesus."

Worship Service Times: 8:30 and 9:45 a.m., Traditional; 11 a.m., Contemporary

Worship Messages for May

Continuing the Series: Life Under Construction

May 3: 2. Fireproof your Life
May 10: 3. Love for a Lifetime
May 17: 4. Breaking Free
May 24: 5. Forgiveness
May 31: 6. A Better Way

About the Sermon Series—Inspired in part by the movie, *Fireproof*, Sunday sermon messages will give us ways to improve our relationships based on scripture and reflected in real-life situations.

Worship Services will take place in Heritage Hall while the construction is being completed on the Sanctuary.

Adult Christian Education

Sunday

9:45-11 a.m. Discovery Class—**Speaking of Faith**. Led by Wayne P.

Tuesday

9:25-11:15 a.m. **Discerning the Voice of God**, by Priscilla Shirer. Led by Diane B. Meets offsite.
1-2:30 p.m. **Gospel of John**. Led by Leland E.
7-9 p.m. **Disciple Bible Study**. Led by Pastor Steve Richards (763-473-6968).

Wednesday

9:30-5:45 p.m. **Gospel of Matthew**. Led by Larry W.
6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday Night Women's Group—**God's Answers to Life's Difficult Questions** by Rick Warren. Led by Diane B.
6:30-8 p.m. **Gospel of Matthew**. Led by Peter S. and Terry S.

For more information about Adult Christian Education Classes, contact Larry W. through the church office.



Messiah's Small Group Ministry

Many small group opportunities exist for members of Messiah. Watch Sunday bulletins or contact Diane B. through the church office for more information.

Honduras Mission Recap

Join us for a program by Pastor Alden K., Messiah's representative on the Honduran UMC mission team on Sunday, May 17, Lakeside Room at 9:45 and 11 a.m. There will be photos and two brief videos of the Bible School and church construction; also a time for discussion and questions.

Vacation Bible Campers to Learn Big Lessons from God's Smallest Creatures

God's smallest creatures will be teaching children BIG lessons when Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) begins on June 15. The theme for the 2009 camp is Bible Bug Safari. Throughout the week, campers will discover what they can learn about God's world from the likes of praying mantises, butterflies, ants, bees and lightening bugs.

While many churches offer a Bible school experience in the summer, Messiah's programs are unique because they are not pre-packaged, purchased curriculums; they are developed in-house by the director of children's ministry and a team of creative, dedicated volunteers. The Bible Bug Safari theme generated all kinds of fun ideas for activities during the week-long camp.

A glance at the daily lesson plans reveals that, indeed, these tiny bugs do set some very big examples of how we can grow closer to God:

Day 1—Praying Mantis—If we want to get to know God, we have to talk with Him

Day 2—Butterfly—Through Jesus, God can transform your life

Day 3—Ants—We must work together

Day 4—Bee—Be who God has created you to BEEE

Day 5—Lightning Bug—Let your light shine!

"Most churches use the same couple of curriculums. We like to develop our own curriculum because we want to present an experience that is available only at Messiah," explains Carol Erickson, Director of Children's Ministry. "That way, a child could go to a standard vacation Bible school and still come to Messiah because ours will be different, new and fun!"

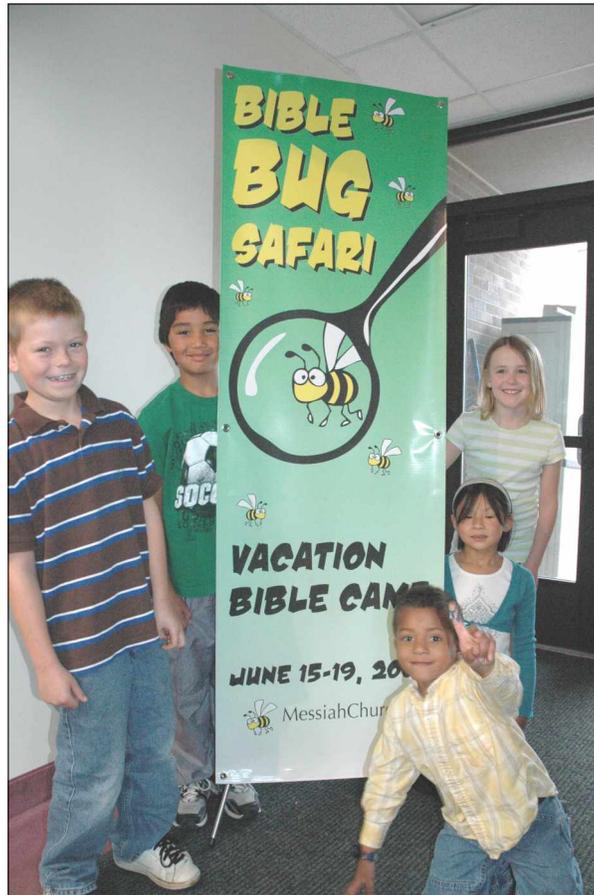
"The bug theme is ideal for summer and kids," comments Amy R., who is one of the VBC leaders. "With all of the greatly interesting, tiny creatures, there are so many possibilities for children (and adults) to explore. The whole VBC team has been great with ideas and inspiration. I hope that we can create a really memorable experience for all of our campers

that takes them through the summer and brings them back to Messiah."

Amy and her husband, Jan, are using their talents and making it their gift to develop some marketing tools for Bible Bug Safari. "To get the word out about VBC this year," Amy says, "we have a few items coming—look for a bug and sun towel-

ette for Memorial Day and, for spring colds, we have some special pocket-pack tissues with our VBC information. We're using banners and car magnets, as well as printed periodicals and online calendars. The best resources we have are the kids inviting their friends and our congregation extending the invitation to neighbors and friends."

Vacation Bible Camp is a fruitful outreach program for Messiah. According to Carol, in past years, approximately half of the kids participating are from outside Messiah. This year, the church plans to invite children through Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners (IOCP) and the CONECT (Community Organizations Networking Compassionately Together) program. Many children attend because they have been invited by Messiah kids.



Help Messiah's kids spread the word—VBC is coming June 15-19!

Debbie and Danni S. were invited to VBC at Messiah three years ago and have attended each year since. Last year, their family came to the VBC Sunday celebration and picnic and discovered a new church home.

"The church was so warm and welcoming. We felt so relaxed and comfortable that we kept returning and recently became members," says Carrie S., the girls' mom.

Bible Bug Safari VBC is offered for children in preschool through grade 5, beginning Monday, June 15, through Friday, June 19. Program hours are 9 a.m. to noon. Click [here](#) for a registration form. Camper fees are \$35 per child. Contact Carol Erickson (cerickson@messiahchurch.org or 763-473-6968) for more information or to volunteer your time and talents to make the Bible Bug Safari a wonderful adventure for all campers!



Confirmation Class Completes Preparations at a Spring Retreat

Confirmation Sunday is moving to September 27 this year, making the 2009 class the first to be confirmed in the new Sanctuary. Although their confirmation date is later than in years past, their preparation for confirmation has been the same.

The students spent the school year meeting on Sunday mornings learning more about the Christian

faith and the United Methodist Church. They also worked individually with mentors from the congregation, participated in service projects and attended retreats. The group's final retreat before confirmation was April 18-19. They traveled to a Christian camp in southern Minnesota to spend time together in fellowship, enjoy nature and formulate their faith statements.

May 1

Mystery Night for Graduating Seniors- 6:30-9:30 p.m.

May 3-Senior Recognition Sunday

Nursery care for young children 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m.

Heartland Sunday School

9:45 and 11 a.m. for preschool through grade 5

Youth Bible Studies are recessed until September. Youth worship with their families

May 5

Senior High Breakfast Group

6:30 a.m. at Panera Bread

5th Grade Youth Group 6-7 p.m.

May 6

Messiah Kids' Pioneer Club

6-7:30 p.m.

Minneapolis Urban Immersion Trip

Training 6-7:15 p.m.

Red Lake Reservation Trip Training

7:15-8:30 p.m.

JYF and MYF are recessed until September

May 9

The Mother's Tea 11-1:30 p.m.

May 10-Mother's Day

Nursery care for young children 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m.

Heartland Sunday School

9:45 and 11 a.m. for preschool through grade 5

Youth worship with families

May 12

Senior High Breakfast Group 6:30 a.m. at Panera Bread

5th Grade Youth Group 6-7 p.m.

May 13

Messiah Kids' Pioneer Club 6-7:30 p.m.

May 17

Nursery care for young children 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m.

Heartland Sunday School

9:45 and 11 a.m. for preschool through grade 5. Last day of regular Sunday School. Summer program begins May 24

May 19

Senior High Breakfast Group 6:30 a.m. at Panera Bread-last meeting for school year

5th Grade Youth Group 6-7 p.m.

May 20

Messiahs' Kids Pioneer Club-Award Banquet and Potluck 6-7:30 p.m.

May 24-Memorial weekend

Nursery care for young children 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m.

Summer Sunday School begins 9:45 and 11 a.m. for preschool through grade 5

May 31

Nursery care for young children 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m.

Summer Sunday School

9:45 and 11 a.m. for preschool through grade 5

Messiah Members Help KCC Garage Sale, Sanctuary Building Project

Messiah members answered the call for help on Sunday, April 19, by showing up to assist with the “big move”—emptying two storage pods full of donations for the Kids’ Care Connection (KCC) Garage Sale and filling them again with the contents from the Sanctuary. The transfer of goods needed to be accomplished to set up for the garage sale and to ready the Sanctuary for the final phase of the building project.



The turnout of helpers was impressive, according to Office Manager, Linda Munch: “It would have been fun to yell, ‘Freeze,’ and take a count of all the help, but we have estimated that there must have been 125 persons here. The pod was emptied and re-

filled in about an hour and a half. It was truly amazing!”

While dozens of people were emptying the pods in a cold, April rain, others were working in the Sanctuary to unbolt the pews from the floor and to remove items from the chancel and storage areas. The garage sale items were dispersed according to category to various rooms in the building. The Sanctuary furnishings were organized to be stored in the pods or removed for refurbishment, donation or sale.

The big move was especially helpful for the set-up of the KCC Garage Sale. “Sunday was a Godsend,” said Sue B., who coordinated the sale, “because we were able get things set up much more quickly than in past years. We literally were a whole day ahead leading into the sale,” she said.

The sale, which was held April 22-24, raised \$7,000 for Kids’ Care Connection scholarships.



Mothers to be Celebrated at Annual Mother’s Tea on Saturday, May 9



Make plans now to attend The Mother’s Tea at Messiah on Saturday, May 9, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Heritage Hall. The annual event will feature tea, a light lunch, decadent sweets, music and a special tribute to mothers!

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for children. Child care is available. Please RSVP to Carol Erickson by May 4 at cerickson@messiahchurch.org or 763-473-6968.

The Children’s String Quartet, directed by Danell D., will be present musical selections for guests at The Mother’s Tea. At left, Danell and the children rehearsing for their performance.

Messiah • News Briefs

Family Mission Trip to Jamaica

The second annual family mission trip to Jamaica is scheduled for July 2-11 (dates may vary by a day or so). Individuals and families with children in grade 3 or above are encouraged to join in service to the people of Mandeville, Jamaica. Participants will be presenting Messiah's Vacation Bible Camp program, **Bible Bug Safari**, and painting classrooms. The estimated cost of the trip is \$1500 or less per person. Fundraising opportunities exist to offset the cost.

For more information, contact Carol Erickson at cerickson@messiahchurch.org or 763-473-6968.

Middle and High School Youth Service

Summer service trips are planned for Messiah's middle and high school youth.

Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota is the destination for the high school youth. The students will work on home repairs and help run children's programs on the reservation. Dates for the high school service trip are June 21-26.

Middle school youth will stay close to home and work in a variety of service pro-

grams throughout the metro area through the Minneapolis Urban Immersion program. Dates for the middle school service trip are August 9-12.

Save The Date for Putt & Pray

Attention all golfers. Mark your calendars and save the date. Sunday, July 19, is Messiah's annual Putt & Pray Golf Scramble. Watch for details in Sunday bulletins and online at www.messiahchurch.org.

Silent Auction for Camp Kingswood

Camp Kingswood is hosting its third annual silent auction along with a celebration of 61 years of ministry on May 17 from 4-6 p.m. Come and tour the camp, enjoy refreshments and participate in the auction. Donations of items for bid are appreciated.

Messiah Church has always been a strong supporter of Camp Kingswood. This support has never been more important as the camp and its programs allow kids a chance to experience God's grace in nature. For more information or to ask questions about donations, contact Hal B. or Lee B. through the church office.

FaithWorks—
Saturday, May 9: Camp Kingswood. Helping to build on to the amphitheater, clear trails and do general clean-up. Meet at Messiah at 8:30 a.m., return around 12:30 p.m. Youth and adults welcome.



Mission Focus for May

During May, Messiah will collect art supplies for Kids' Care Connection and tools and cleaning supplies for Camp Kingswood. Among the art supplies needed by KCC are construction paper, glue sticks, pom-poms, drawing paper, pipe cleaners, sand toys, sidewalk chalk, colored pencils, markers and glitter.

Camp Kingswood needs rags, paintbrushes and rollers, paint trays and liners, picks, shovels, pruning sheers and hand saws. Gently-used tools are acceptable.

Teach Summer Sunday School

Summer Sunday School will use a high energy, high fun and low planning curriculum called Kidmo. Adults are needed to help have fun with the kids. Contact Carol Erickson at 763-473-6968 or cerickson@messiahchurch.org.

Sponsor a Camper This Summer

This summer, Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners (IOCP) hopes to once again offer Camp CONECT, a free eight-week afternoon camp experience for 180-200 Wayzata school district youth from hardworking, low-income families. The goal of the camp is to provide a safe environment and fun for the summer. To provide this wonderful summer opportunity costs approximately \$500 per student or nearly \$90,000. Consider making a gift to offset this cost. To donate, contact IOCP at 952-404-9388 or www.iocp.org.

Sanctuary Building Project Moves Toward Completion



A little more than two years since the beginning of the Facilities Stewardship Program, the Sanctuary building project is nearing completion. Work

that began on the outside with the excavation and framing of the addition has now moved inside as the new is joined with the old. To facilitate the work, pews were removed and the oak flooring in the chancel area was taken up with the help of many Messiah volunteers led by Leland E. The flooring was bundled and taken to the Habitat ReStore where it will be sold to generate revenue to fund Habitat for Humanity homes, to provide low cost building materials to the public, to keep usable materials out of the land fill and to increase the breadth of donations Habitat is able to accept.





Annual Egg Hunt Provides An 'Eggs'trordinary Day for Kids at Messiah

Messiah's Annual Easter Egg Hunt was held on Saturday, April 4. While the weather outside still signaled winter, it was spring inside where approximately 85 children hunted for treat-filled plastic eggs. Many new faces

were among the egg hunters. The annual children's event continues to be a popular outreach activity that welcomes kids and their families from beyond the walls at Messiah.