

**THE MESSIAH HERALD**



**APRIL 2021**

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**3 SOUTH THIRD STREET, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059**

**717-436-6213**

**VICAR – SAMUEL J. LEISTER**

**CHURCH WEBSITE: [mlcmifflintown.org](http://mlcmifflintown.org)**

**OFFICE EMAIL: [mlchurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:mlchurchoffice@gmail.com)**

**TREASURER EMAIL: [mlchurchtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mlchurchtreasurer@gmail.com)**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL – CANCELLED UNTIL SEPTEMBER**

**WORSHIP / COMMUNION – 10:30 AM**

**CHILDREN’S SERMONS OFFERED EVERY 1ST AND 3RD SUNDAYS!**

**FACEBOOK LIVE & AM RADIO 1700 BROADCAST EACH WEEK**

**[USS-ARK NEWSLETTER](#)**

**[THE LUTHERAN MAGAZINE](#)**

# **"Growing God's Love"**

## The Messiah Herald



### MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR

Dear Messiah Family,

May the blessings of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and The Holy Spirit be with you all!

This year we see April coming in the midst of Holy Week. The title of these seven days is not misapplied as this week is the holiest consecutive days of the church year. When we consider the events which we commemorate and their deepest meanings, how can this be anything except Holy Week? At Messiah on Palm Sunday we heard the Gospel of Mark chapter 14 verse 1 through chapter 15 verse 47. Andrea Cameron assisted with the reading of Mark's account of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Please take the time to read these words this week as you prepare for God's ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. If you were not able to be present and would like a palm branch, you may contact Judy at the church office. You may choose to watch and listen anytime on Facebook or YouTube or contact the church office to request a CD.

On Good Friday, April 2 at 7:30pm we will hold a Tenebrae service at Messiah. Tenebrae is the Latin word meaning "darkness." The service leads us through the shadows of Christ's Passion to the darkness of the Crucifixion. If you miss this service Friday, you can join in the experience of the shadows on Facebook and YouTube at a later time.

We will celebrate the Resurrection on Easter Sunday with the service at 10:30. Let us rejoice and be glad as we realize God's Grace through the risen savior, Jesus Christ and the empty tomb!

Through the month of March you were asked to read the four chapters of the Book of Ruth. As you read these verses, what feelings did you sense regarding Ruth and what lessons from this book came to mind? Share your ideas with a friend. In the hoped-for-not-to-distant-future we will share these thoughts and ideas in a Bible study at Messiah.

For the month of April, the Book of the Month will hop to the New Testament and the Book of Philippians. Jonah was about Jonah and Ruth was about Ruth (and others.) About whom is Philippians written and who wrote it? Can you surmise the location of the writing? Verses in chapter 2 were included in the readings on Palm Sunday. What do these verses say about the character of Jesus? If you were teaching a Sunday school class of adults, what would you include in your lessons about Philippians? Now, take some time and "practice" sharing Philippians with others. If you have children in your group, talk with them about Philippians.

Please remember that we broadcast all services on AM1700 for parking lot and local neighbors. Facebook live and YouTube are ways to connect over the internet. We continue to record audio CD's as well. If you or someone you know would like to receive an audio CD, please call the church office. These are ways in which we share our worship services each week. We will continue to offer God's Word via this technology.

Let us continue to serve others in need during these extreme times of grief, sickness, loneliness, and struggles. Remain steadfast in your faith in the Love of Jesus to bring to others consolation, attention, happiness, and the peace that passes worldly understanding. Share the message of hope with others around you. Find ways to carry God's Love to others whom we must for now remain physically at a distance but can and must embrace with our spiritual arms and our souls.

May the Lord be with you all!

*Vicar Samuel Leister*

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING

All Front Line Workers,  
 including medical personnel  
 in all areas  
 Pray for peace among nations and  
 among nationalities of mixed  
 race and color  
 The Family of Dixie Dressler  
 Shirley Aumiller  
 Tyson Aurand  
 Carole Baker  
 Donna Barton  
 Lindsey Barton  
 Donna Bell  
 Julie Berryman and Gary Bechtold  
 Nick Beward  
 Roxanne Boyer  
 Charlotte Burd  
 Andrea Cameron  
 Pam Campbell  
 Dan Carlin  
 Ruth Cisney  
 Cade Clark  
 Curtis Clark  
 Kim Clark  
 Randy Clark  
 Terry Coder  
 Jean Compton  
 Leann Crimmel  
 Will DeLancy  
 Guy Dillman  
 Fred & Dot Dowling  
 Renee Dzikowski  
 Tom Ernest  
 Neil & Pat Fisher  
 Janie Fogleman

Jerald (Jerry) Foltz  
 Bentley Fulkroad  
 Joan Fulkroad  
 E. Michal Gayer  
 Terri Gayer  
 Ken Geedey  
 Edie Kay Gill  
 Paul Goss  
 Beth Harris  
 Amy Hart  
 Harry & Jennifer Heikes  
 Sue Henderson  
 Nox Hepburn  
 Jason Hockenberry & Family  
 Curt & Judy Houtz  
 Dean Hutchinson  
 Matt & Jennifer Hutchinson  
 Brenda Imes  
 Annie Ingle  
 Doc Johnston  
 Guy Kerstetter  
 Denny King  
 Darvin Krause  
 Pam Lawson  
 Linda Leister  
 Michael Lozano  
 Carol Lyter  
 Anthony Martin  
 Zayden Mabey  
 Carlen McClure  
 Alice McClure  
 Charlie, Amanda & Isabel Meinsler  
 Messiah Mutual Ministry  
 Cecilia Miller  
 Elwood Miller

Larry Miller  
 Shirley Miller  
 Jim Minick  
 Claire Mummah  
 Landon Musser  
 Carole Nace  
 Darve Nace  
 Austin Parker  
 Noel Peachey  
 Rick & Audrey Peters  
 Kari Ann (Reagan) Petrine  
 Dave Phelan  
 Butch & Sandy Pines  
 Betty Ranck  
 Keith Ranck  
 Mackenzie Shearer  
 Ronald Shearer  
 Bobby & Eva Sieber  
 Mike Sparks  
 Donald Speece  
 Andy Spigelmyer  
 Bob & Jeanette St. Clair  
 Sieber Stoner  
 Pastor Charlie Stump  
 Alice Swartz  
 Dorothy Towsey  
 Rich Walters  
 Dr. Glen Webb  
 Erma Williamson  
 Jim Woltman  
 Mackenzie Wray  
 George Zimmerman  
 Linda Zimmerman

## UPCOMING SERVANTS

### ALTAR GUILD

March 29 to April 25 ..... Diana Wise & Cynthia Smith  
 April 26 to May 30 .... Tawny Mummah & Tammy Smith

### LECTORS

April 4 ..... Haley Mummah  
 April 11 ..... Ron Yorks  
 April 18 ..... Jean Compton  
 April 25 ..... Linda Bahorik

### FLOWERS

April 4 ..... Vicar Sam and Linda Leister  
 April 11 ..... OPEN  
 April 18 ..... Barb & Don Geedey  
 April 25 ..... OPEN

### ACOLYTES / OFFERING PRESENTERS

April 4 ..... Slone Smith & Zeb Berry  
 April 11 ..... Harrison & Olivia Mummah  
 April 18 ..... Hope & Grace Miller  
 April 25 ..... Thea & Brea Beward



WELCA will begin meeting again on Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in the Youth Area. Everyone is reminded that masks will be mandatory! See you then!

### PRAY FOR OUR SHUT-INS

- BROOKLINE RETIREMENT VILLAGE  
(92 VILLAGE DRIVE, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)  
Jane Marhefka
- BROOKLINE MANOR  
(2 MANOR BLVD., RM. 226, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)  
Gail Henderson
- BERRY'S PERSONAL CARE CENTER  
(3 ALEX CIRCLE, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059)  
Carol Simonton

HONNEMAN HOUSE  
(58 HONNEMAN HOUSE DR., APT. 108, THOMPSONTOWN, PA 17094)  
Ruth Cisney                      Ray Bramm

- AT HOME
- Max Ernest                      Margaret Guss  
1099 William Penn Hwy.    20 South Third Street  
Mifflintown, PA 17059      Mifflintown, PA 17059
- Mona Lawson                    Minnie Minick  
2792 William Penn Hwy.    187 JAM House Road  
Mifflintown, PA 17059      Mifflin, PA 17058
- Edith Nipple                      Sieber & Ona Stoner  
1482 William Penn Hwy.    23591 Route 35 North  
Mifflintown, PA 17059      Mifflintown, PA 17059
- Ken Stuck                         Kitty Walters  
66 Eighth Street              P.O. Box 61  
Mifflintown, PA 17059      Port Royal, PA 17082

### PRAYERS & CONCERNS

If you wish to be included on the email recipient list for the Messiah Prayer Chain, please send an email to Vicar Leister at [sleister@gmail.com](mailto:sleister@gmail.com). Also, if anyone has any needs or concerns, please contact Vicar Sam Leister. If you or someone you know is ill or hospitalized, please let Vicar Leister know as well. He can be reached at 717-436-8589 (home), or 717-348-1020 (cell), or email at [sleister@gmail.com](mailto:sleister@gmail.com).

### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**Tuesday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Thursday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Friday – 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

### “MISSION OF THE MONTH”

April’s “Mission of the Month” at Messiah will be for our campers at Mount Camp Luther this summer. The monies will be sent from Messiah directly to CML. In addition to your generosity, the PPC allocated funds to match congregational donations up to \$1,000.00. This is just one way in which we can continue to extend our mission in Christ’s love beyond the walls of our church building.

If you want to add your name to the birthday/anniversary list, or know someone you would like to acknowledge, please let the church office know at [mlchurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:mlchurchoffice@gmail.com).



## JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY APRIL UPDATE

In February 2021, the Food Pantry served 185 families – 437 of your neighbors! A big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers.

Join our family! We are always looking for a few more good volunteers!  
If you could help by donating the items below, we would be very grateful.

### FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR APRIL:

ALL NON-PERISHABLE FOODS; SHAMPOO, DEODORANT;  
CLEANING SUPPLIES: LAUNDRY DETERGENT, DISH SOAP, ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS  
*Donations of cash/checks are also APPRECIATED!*

PO Box 44, 114 N. Main St, Mifflintown, PA 17059  
Phone: 717-436-9718      Hours: Tue 9-12 and 1-5, and Sat 9-12



\*PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY.  
(CONTACT PERSON: GLENDA FULTZ).      Email: [jcfoodpantry@embarqmail.com](mailto:jcfoodpantry@embarqmail.com)

**Our vestibule is open 24 hours a day to receive donations. Cash, checks, or gift cards may be deposited in the vestibule's mail slot. \*Non-perishable foods and non-food items may be dropped off at any time in our vestibule. Please deliver perishable foods only when someone is here to receive them. Thank you!**

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

APRIL 1 – Zeb Berry  
APRIL 3 – Shirley Covert  
APRIL 5 – Jan Smith  
APRIL 11 – Anne B. McNaight  
APRIL 15 – Steve Bahorik

APRIL 20 – Slone Smith  
APRIL 24 – Hunter Berry  
APRIL 26 – Steve Berry

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

APRIL 10 – Dave and Jan Smith  
APRIL 20 – Gene and Lois Crissman

## 2021 CAMP MOUNT LUTHER UPDATE

Kate Swales is serving as our congregation's camp person with Camp Mount Luther again this year. She has information on programs for the summer. If you have additional questions, you can contact her or the camp office at 570-922-1587 or [cml@campmountluther.org](mailto:cml@campmountluther.org). Since our congregation has a camp person, each camper from our church will receive Camel Bucks from Kate for use at the camp store this summer! Campers who attended camp at Mount Luther in the past should have already received the camp brochures in the mail.

For more information on Camp Mount Luther or to print the camp registration form, visit [www.campmountluther.org](http://www.campmountluther.org). Submit your camp registration form to Kate along with a \$50 payment payable to Messiah Lutheran Church which will go toward the non-refundable deposit. The remaining portion of the cost of camp will be covered by various fundraising events, donations, etc. Kate will submit the registration forms to Mount Luther. We ask that you submit your registration form and payment to Kate prior to April 15th so that we receive the early registration discount.

Because Camp Mount Luther is accepting a lower number of campers this summer, Chad Hershberger recommends that families register their campers as soon as possible. Registration will not be accepted within the two weeks prior to each camp week.

[2021 Camp Mount Luther Temple Talk Video](#)

# DAILY BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYER FOCUS

APRIL 1 ----- JOHN 13:1-17, 31B-35  
*NURSES*

APRIL 2 ----- JOHN 18:1 – 19:42  
*FARMERS, GARDENERS, AND LANDSCAPERS*

APRIL 3 ----- ROMANS 6:3-11  
*STORYTELLERS*

APRIL 4 ----- MARK 16:1-8  
*THOSE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES*

APRIL 5 ----- MATTHEW 28:9-15A  
*CONFIRMATION TEACHERS, MENTORS, AND STUDENTS*

APRIL 6 ----- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-49  
*FLORISTS*

APRIL 7 ----- PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24  
*CAREGIVERS AND THOSE THEY SERVE*

APRIL 8 ----- ACTS 2:42-47  
*NEW BELIEVERS*

APRIL 9 ----- ACTS 4:23-31  
*SPEECH THERAPISTS*

APRIL 10 ----- PSALM 133  
*FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS AND THOSE WHOM THEY SERVE*

APRIL 11 ----- JOHN 20:19-31  
*THOSE STRUGGLING WITH FEAR AND ANXIETY*

APRIL 12 ----- 1 JOHN 2:3-11  
*MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND  
ESSENTIAL WORKERS*

APRIL 13 ----- PSALM 135  
*CAMP COUNSELORS*

APRIL 14 ----- ISAIAH 26:1-15  
*PEOPLE WORKING OR PLAYING IN WATER TODAY*

APRIL 15 ----- PSALM 4  
*THOSE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT*

APRIL 16 ----- 1 JOHN 2:26-28  
*PEOPLE WITHOUT A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE*

APRIL 17 ----- LUKE 22:24-30  
*ELCA GLOBAL MISSION ACCOMPANIMENT WORK*

APRIL 18 ----- LUKE 24:36B-48  
*ALL WHO ARE DISBELIEVING AND WONDERING*

APRIL 19 ----- 1 JOHN 3:10-16  
*TRAUMA VICTIMS WHO ENDEAVOR TO FORGIVE*

APRIL 20 ----- 2 JOHN 1-6  
*LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF'S PARTNERSHIPS*

APRIL 21 ----- MARK 16:9-18  
*PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHEARD OR DISBELIEVED*

APRIL 22 ----- PSALM 23  
*DIALOGUE GROUPS SEEKING UNDERSTANDING*

APRIL 23 ----- ACTS 4:1-4  
*ELCA E-ADVOCACY*

APRIL 24 ----- MARK 6:30-34  
*CRISIS HOTLINE CALLERS AND RESPONDERS*

APRIL 25 ----- JOHN 10:11-18  
*ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH INITIATIVES*

APRIL 26 ----- MARK 1:1-15  
*PEOPLE WHO SERVE WITHOUT RECOGNITION*

APRIL 27 ----- REVELATION 7:13-17  
*LUTHERAN SERVICES IN AMERICA*

APRIL 28 ----- MICAH 7:8-20  
*COURTS THAT BALANCE JUSTICE WITH CLEMENCY*

APRIL 29 ----- ACTS 8:1B-8  
*HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS*

APRIL 30 ----- ACTS 8:9-25  
*CHURCH MUSICIANS SHARING THE GOOD NEWS*

## CHRIST IN OUR HOME

A reminder to anyone who would like a daily devotional to jump start their day. There are plenty of devotionals in "Christ in our Home," which can be picked up in the church office or in the Adult Sunday School Room and are FREE!

## STORE GIFT CARDS

Weis and Giant gift cards are available to purchase from the Disciples Class. This is a very important outreach ministry that helps neighbors in need in our own community. We thank each and every one for continued support of this very worthwhile project.

## MESSIAH ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS – MARCH 2021

DATE	ATTENDANCE	TOTAL OFFERING	GENERAL FUND OFFERING	OTHER FUNDS OFFERING
March 3	21	\$190.00	\$90.00	LUTHERAN DISASTER -- \$100.00
March 7	44	\$4,144.00	\$3,142.00	BENEVOLENCE -- \$35.00 BUILDING FUND -- \$640.00 WORLD HUNGER-- \$100.00 FLOWERS -- \$27.00 MEMORIAL FUND -- \$200.00
March 10	14	\$105.00	\$105.00	
March 14	42	\$2,503.00	\$2,047.00	BENEVOLENCE -- \$20.00 FLOWERS -- \$36.00 SUMMER CAMP -- \$400.00
March 17	14	\$339.00	\$300.00	BENEVOLENCE -- \$15.00 FLOWERS -- \$9.00 BUILDING FUND -- \$15.00
March 21	43	\$2,964.00	\$2,537.00	BENEVOLENCE -- \$35.00 BUILDING FUND -- \$115.00 FLOWERS -- \$77.00 WORLD HUNGER -- \$50.00 TEXAS DISASTER -- \$150.00
March 24	20	\$105.00	\$105.00	
March 28	47	\$3,427.00	\$3,051.00	BENEVOLENCE -- \$120.00 BUILDING FUND -- \$120.00 FLOWERS -- \$36.00 TEXAS DISASTER -- \$100.00

## APRIL 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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- THURSDAY, APRIL 1:** -7:00 PM – MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
- FRIDAY, APRIL 2:** -7:00 PM – GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE
- SUNDAY, APRIL 4:** **RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD / EASTER DAY**  
-10:30 AM – WORSHIP & COMMUNION
- MONDAY, APRIL 5:** -7:00 PM -- AA IN YOUTH AREA
- THURSDAY, APRIL 8:** -7:00 PM -- W.E.L.C.A. MEETING IN YOUTH AREA
- SUNDAY, APRIL 11:** -10:30 AM -- WORSHIP & COMMUNION
- MONDAY, APRIL 12:** -7:00 PM -- AA IN YOUTH AREA
- SUNDAY, APRIL 18:** -10:30 AM -- WORSHIP & COMMUNION
- MONDAY, APRIL 19:** -7:00 PM -- AA IN YOUTH AREA
- FRIDAY, APRIL 23:** **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
- SUNDAY, APRIL 25:** -10:30 AM -- WORSHIP & COMMUNION
- MONDAY, APRIL 26:** -7:00 PM -- AA IN YOUTH AREA



United Way of PA is conducting a survey to find out the impact that COVID-19 has had on PA communities a year after the shutdown. The survey is available in English and Spanish and will take about 10 minutes. This survey asks about childcare, food insecurity, housing, healthcare, and employment status. If you could please take the survey as well as share it with your friends, family, co-workers and the groups that you belong to, it would be greatly appreciated. We did this survey 6 months into the pandemic but unfortunately, did not have a very a good response from Mifflin and Juniata counties. By having a larger representation of the two counties taking the survey will give us a better understanding of the impact this pandemic has had on our communities.

Here are the links to the survey:

English: <http://bit.ly/UWPsurvey>

Spanish: <http://bit.ly/UWPencuesta>



## HOLY WEEK

### BEGAN WITH PALM SUNDAY

On Palm Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, our chancel was decorated with palms as we observed Palm Sunday. We also relived the events of Holy Week that culminates with Christ's crucifixion. Therefore, our altar vases held not only palms but also 5 red flowers reminding us of the five wounds of Christ (the nails in his hands and feet and the spear in his side) as he hung on the cross.

### AND CULMINATES WITH

### GOOD FRIDAY

This year's Good Friday Tenebrae Service will be held at Messiah on Friday, April 2, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. "Tenebrae" is the Latin word for "shadows." The Tenebrae service commemorates the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. The gradual extinguishing of the light symbolizes the fading loyalty of the disciples and friends of Jesus, and the gathering darkness of the Crucifixion. (As with our Sunday services, masks and social distancing will be required).





## FROZEN IN TEXAS

By [Michael Rinehart](#) March 18, 2021

*If one member suffers, all suffer together with it (1 Corinthians 12:26).*

The pandemic would have been enough. The police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and too many others would have been plenty. Then last summer brought two hurricanes, including Laura, which destroyed the sanctuary of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lake Charles, La. The fall teemed with political tension surrounding the presidential election.

We yearned for a new year.

It arrived Feb. 13 in the form of a winter storm. With bitter cold. With devastation. Pipes froze and burst, flooding buildings. An insurance adjuster told me there have been more claims in Houston for this storm than for [Hurricane Harvey](#). Who would have believed an ice storm and freezing temperatures would cost more lives and damage than a hurricane?

The storm was forecast a week or so in advance, but we weren't prepared for the power outages caused by ice storms and 10-degree temperatures—something not seen since 1989.

This was the “perfect storm” in some ways: The human need was already great, with unemployment so high during the pandemic. Climate change has led to weather extremes the likes of which old-timers tell me they have never seen. Food insecurity was critical even before the storm. A federal judge has ruled that a statewide moratorium on evictions is unconstitutional.

Like Aaron holding up the arms of Moses, individuals and other local congregations have

scrambled to keep Santiago Apóstol/St. James funded.

The death toll is still being tabulated and, of course, debated, although it's in the dozens at least.

Amid all this, the church has stepped up. Santiago Apóstol/St. James Lutheran, a small congregation on the north side of Houston, was fielding dozens of requests a day for assistance with food, rent and utilities prior to the storm. Now the number is higher than ever.

Santiago Apóstol/St. James is no stranger to serving its neighbors. With community wellness events, immigration forums, citizenship classes, food distributions and more, members have been serving the neighborhood in critical ways. The need, however, has exploded with the pandemic and the storm.

Thanks to gifts from the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Disaster Fund and grants from the [ELCA COVID Response Fund](#), Santiago Apóstol/St. James has been able to help many. Like Aaron holding up the arms of Moses, individuals and other local congregations have scrambled to keep Santiago Apóstol/St. James funded. We are church together.

Santiago Apóstol/St. James has sustained damage from burst pipes. Every time members think they have the pipes fixed, another gives out—and finding a plumber in Houston is a huge problem now. Thankfully, one of the members of a citizenship class being sponsored at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Houston is a plumber and has been helping out. What goes around comes around!

### RECONSTRUCTING

I was amazed when Kinsmen Lutheran Church in Houston, despite extensive damage to its two-story family life center, hosted a community-wide food distribution in partnership with the Houston Food Bank. Members were mucking, gutting and repairing burst pipes in the building, and yet, ministry to a hurting community continued. The food distribution program served 1,700 people. Beth Warpmaeker and Mark England, pastors of Kinsmen, have committed to continuing the

distribution twice a month for the foreseeable future as food insecurity, fueled by the pandemic and now the winter storm, rises. They also hold free community meals every Wednesday; these usually feed around 130 people, although as many as 200 have attended.

Kinsmen has managed to launch a Latinx ministry in the middle of the pandemic. Though hampered by physical distancing and online worship, the ministry has taken off and continues to grow under the leadership of Pastor Gabriel Marcaño.

When water started pouring through the ceiling into the sanctuary of Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz in Houston, the congregation turned off the water. Members found and repaired the leaky pipe, but the damage had been done. Then they found another leak. When I arrived on Sunday morning that week, there was water in the sanctuary. A third leak. Again they turned off the water.

Principe de Paz and its pastor, Adriana Johnson-Rivas, have had a hard year. As the pandemic has disproportionately affected the Latinx community, they have mourned five COVID-related deaths in the parish. Many in the community and the congregation have lost work and experienced food insecurity. Johnson-Rivas also weathered a personal tragedy: her sister died as she was being taken to the hospital. (Her illness was not COVID-related, but overcrowding at the hospital had forced her discharge days earlier.) Despite all this, Principe de Paz serves as a community of spiritual healing and hope.

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod now has 10 congregations with major flooding. Humanitarian needs and congregational needs go hand in hand. Congregations with an outward focus become beacons of hope in their communities. Ministry continues even as congregations face the realities of reconstructing.

Pastors of Kinsmen have committed to continuing the distribution program twice a month for the foreseeable future as food insecurity rises.

On Feb. 15, Pete Lopez—pastor of St. John Lutheran in Angleton and St. Peter Lutheran in

Bay City—and his wife, Elida, faced a power outage and sought refuge from the cold at House of Prayer Lutheran in Clear Lake City, where Elida works. After warming up and recharging their devices, they returned home, only to find a burst pipe. Furniture was drenched, ceiling tiles had fallen down and floor tiles were coming up.

The house, which had witnessed family meals, movie nights, tears and laughter, was now a mess. Pete and Elida scrambled for a place to stay, landing at the parsonage at St. Peter, then rooming with friends and finally lodging at a hotel.

The Lopezes had the resources to find shelter and repair their home. Many in the area covered by the synod do not; they continue to live in uncertainty with destroyed homes and prohibitive deductibles. People grow desperate.

The Lopezes' story continues: when they arrived at St. John, they found even more water there. Nine copper pipes had burst, showering different areas of the church.

So much destruction from an unexpected storm.

As empty as the Lopezes feel about losing their home, they and the members of St. John have found their cup overflowing because members of the ELCA, both near and far, have offered help and loving words of comfort.

## TO HELP

The ELCA Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod is engaging in an emergency appeal with a goal of raising \$100,000. Gifts to this [Emergency Winter Freeze Appeal](#) are repairing lives, homes and houses of worship right now. (The North/West Lower Michigan Synod will donate \$5,000 after 400 donors have made gifts of any size.)

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response's (LDR) ["U.S. Severe Storms"](#) designation will be used in full to assist those affected by storms in Texas. LDR is communicating with and stands ready to support the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, the Southwestern Texas Synod, the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod and Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response.

# *In Home Services Of Central PA*



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at any other agency as I do at *In Home Services of Central PA.*” (Team Member Testimonial)

**Kenton Stuck, NHA - Founder & CEO**  
**717.363.4913 • [www.inhomeservicesofcentralpa.com](http://www.inhomeservicesofcentralpa.com)**