

Our Church

Messiah Lutheran Church is 52 years old and has been served by four pastors, 3 of which still currently serve its members. We have a Mother's Day Out that serves about 100 children, a Pre-K –6th grade school with about 130 students. We are located in the northwest area of OKC with worship attendance of around 410 at three Sunday services.

Our Plan

As a pilot congregation in *Fan into Flame*, we were asked to complete our appeal before the late May 2007. I approached our Stewardship Chair about the possibility and then we discussed it with our Stewardship Board and came up with a plan of action. We set a goal of at least 10% of our annual budget, rounded up to \$80,000.



Each of our families was invited to attend an *Ablaze!* Mission Festival. Also, each congregation from our Circuit was invited to send their pastor and some members to see how we handled the appeal. We had about 110 members attend and 20-25 from the Circuit and from Synod. This Mission Festival consisted of dinner and presentations by Synod 1st Vice President Bill Diekelman, Oklahoma District President Paul Hartman, and me. Synod 1st Vice President Bill Diekelman shared the national and international aspects of *Ablaze!* and *Fan into Flame*. District President Paul Hartman shared how *Fan into Flame* would impact the Oklahoma District. I finished with a presentation on new mission initiatives we planned to do through the new *Fan into Flame* money Messiah would receive back.

Our Results

My wife and I made a lead commitment of \$5,000 over 5 years and I shared our gift with the congregation to help encourage them. I never will ask the members to do something that I will not do or take the lead in doing, following the model of King David when they were gathering resources for building the temple. We made a list of 16 potential early donors, and our Stewardship Board approached this group to be “seed money” donors. From this initial contact list we had gifts totally \$30,000 before the night of our *Ablaze!* Mission Festival.

By the end of our first week running the appeal, which included the *Ablaze!* Mission Festival and dinner along with holding a Commitment Sunday on May 27, our pledges stood at \$92,000 on our \$80,000 goal!

We mailed out a follow-up request with the results to date to any family we had yet to hear from so we could give them an opportunity to make a pledge. This mailing included a pledge card and a self addressed stamped envelope back to the church to encourage responses.

Totals to Date

- Goal- \$80,000
- Raised to date- \$112,390, (140% of goal)
- # of families making pledges to date - 42
- Average Gift- \$2,676
- Projected Amount to be received back to Messiah for new outreach projects- \$14,800

Our Outreach Efforts

Ideas for using our local outreach money include establishing a congregational partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries to develop a comprehensive two-year outreach plan. This outreach plan will include hosting an *Equipping to Share* personal outreach workshop, starting an outreach ministry to new residents in our area and hospitality training for our entire church. Also, Messiah Lutheran will help with a new church plant northwest of Oklahoma City.



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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I count it an honor that Messiah was asked to help be a lead church in for *Ablaze!* and *Fan into Flame*. We have been greatly blessed as a congregation and it is a privilege to help trail blaze with this special synod-wide effort to increase our outreach to those who do not yet know Christ as Savior.

Having served the Oklahoma District as Stewardship Chair, I have seen the need that we have a church body- in our District and across Synod- to do a better job of teaching our members about biblical stewardship principles and challenging them to step up and live those principles. This is not just to pay the bills at church or “giving to the need” but is a vital part of the discipleship health for everyone, or “the need to give.” I like to tell people that the most freeing thing they will ever know is the Gospel truth of forgiveness and grace given in Christ and right behind it is to truly understand what the Bible teaches us about money and stuff. I encourage each church to help their people learn to let go and let God be in control and really learn the joy of giving, for we are indeed- IN HIS GRIP!

Participation in *Fan into Flame* was a nice dovetail to our 50 Days *Ablaze!* 7 Week Preaching/Worship Themes that we used during the Easter season. This way we were not just talking about raising our mission awareness and involvement, but we were able to put words and actions together for the benefit of the Kingdom!

Thank you for your ongoing personal support for *Fan into Flame*. Together we can accomplish marvelous things for the sake of Christ and His Church.

Your Brother in Christ,

Rev. Mark R. Muenchow
Senior Pastor

Dr. Shelbie Simmons
Music Director

Teresa Laudermilk
Church Administrator

Mary Caldwell
Executive Assistant

Chris Anderson
School Administrator

Rachel Widmer
School Secretary

Donna Sudol
5th – 6th Grade Teacher

Sharla Lindley
3rd & 4th Grade Teacher

Kathy Cade
2nd Grade Teacher

Rebekah Stoll
1st Grade Teacher

Angela Sitz
Kindergarten Teacher

Robyn Menge
Early Childhood Director

Shannon Lynch
Pre-K Teacher

Jennifer Renfro
Preschool Teacher