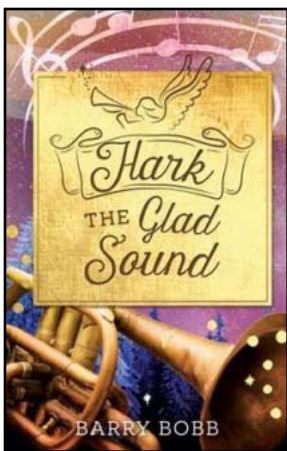


The MESSENGER



The monthly newsletter of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111 804-746-7134

DECEMBER 2015/JANUARY 2016



Advent, a season of preparation

The four week cycle of Advent began on Sunday, November 29, and it is considered the start of the liturgical New Year. We'll be focusing on passages pointing to the promise of Christ's birth and preparing our

hearts to welcome the Christ child once again.

✦ Meditation guides for home use are available for adults/families on our welcome table. The glad sounds of beautiful music heralding the coming of Christ have long been a hallmark of the Advent and Christmas season. In this collection of Advent meditations called Hark the Glad Sounds, expert church musician Dr. Barry Bobb explores the history and meaning behind twelve familiar carols. Verse after verse, let the message of these wondrous melodies of our salvation in Christ put a joyous song in your heart each day of Advent. Youth Advent calendars will also be available.

✦ The ChurchNext online class, Introduction to Advent with Fr. Tim will be offered during Advent. Stay tuned to your email for the link to access the class. Not on our

email list? If you want to be, please contact our office. If you just want the link, please email **Pastor Lou**.

✦ The Light shines in the darkness... Council has decided to revive an old family tradition here at Messiah. Our large evergreen tree (near the preschool playground) will be decorated with lights and lit to honor the birth of Jesus and to help invite neighbors to visit with us during the Advent and Christmas season. Join us on Wednesday, December 2nd at 6:00 pm for a spaghetti dinner and special Christmas entertainment. Immediately following, we'll head outside to officially light the tree, enjoy a bonfire, sip hot cocoa, and sing a carol or two. Please join your family of faith for this special evening together. (This family friendly event will be over before 7:30 pm. Free will donations will be accepted to help defray the cost of the meal and new lights.)

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The Messenger

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<http://www.messiahmech.com>**

**Your 2015 Church Council
And Associate Members**

Kevin Hendrickson.....Council President
Donna ShawVice-President
Laura Harris Secretary

Sally Bennett	Jon Koeppen
Paula Barwick	Dean Gustafson
Steve Gilnett	Gordon Gunn

Council Liaisons

Christian Education**Jon Koeppen**
Evangelism**Dean Gustafson**
Fellowship**Steve Gilnett**
Finance**Paula Barwick**
Property**Kevin Hendrickson**
School Board**Donna Shaw**
Social Ministry**Gordon Gunn**
Stewardship**Laura Harris**
Worship**Sally Bennett**

Johnnie Collie... Treasurer
Bill Weaver... Financial Secretary
Sue Gilnett, RN...Parish Nurse

Trustees: **Leroy Albertson,**
Dick Wright and Pat Hubert.

Advent...

Continued from page 1

† A Christmas Memorial Service (sometimes known as a Blue Christmas Service) will be offered at Holy Comforter Episcopal (4819 Monument Ave, Richmond, VA 23230) on Monday, December 7th at 7:00 pm. This is a special service for those grieving the loss of loved ones during the holidays. A reception follows. Messiah is co-sponsoring this event with other area congregations.

† It's also time to decorate our tree and share memories of the first Christmas. On Sunday, December 13, join us at 9:15 am as we share in a short program, sing carols, and trim our Chrismon tree together. (Chrismons are ornaments depicting traditional symbols for Christ.) Starting at 10:15 am, All Souls Episcopal and Messiah Lutheran youth will help lead us in combined worship service - lessons and carols with a nativity play. Choirs from both congregations have been invited to lead music together that day. An informal fellowship time follows in our church hall. Consider bringing a Christmas treat to share! ▶



Join Messiah on Facebook!

† Last but not least, local German club members invite you to their annual Kaffeeklatsch & German Christmas Service at Messiah on Sunday, December 20th, at 4:00 pm. Come to share in some great food and music, as well as experience the German language in worship. The event is free and open to all.

Pastor's message...

The Christmas rush isn't all bad

"Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright," so the song goes. Unfortunately, our Advent and Christmas can seem anything but calm. As I write this, it is mid-November, and yet, our congregation's planning teams have already been working on our Christmas together for weeks. Christmas music has started to play in stores and in some cases on the radio. One of my neighbors has already set up their Christmas tree even though Advent doesn't begin for almost two weeks!

Our society seems impatient to experience Christmas joy and peace. Perhaps this is because there is too little joy and peace in our world. At this time of year, it gets busier at our congregation and busier in our homes. Light dims and darkness grows. Unexpected bills happen. Sickness and death comes. After Paris, Beirut, Kenya, and on and on, terrorism and war frighten us. We hope for an ideal Christmas because our lives in a fallen world are always less than perfect. Too little is calm, and our future may seem dark to us. We often hunger for a reprieve from our pain and busy, unpredictable life.

COME, LORD JESUS, QUICKLY COME.

Jesus came into a time of trouble not so unlike our own. People were lucky to reach their teens. Thirty was considered old. Israel was an occupied country with isolated rebels and thieves (especially in Judea) seeking to defeat the Roman Empire and perhaps get a little economic advantage and power for themselves at the same time. For their part, the Romans wished to assert their power at all costs. Their vassal king, Herod the Great, was known to be tyrannical if not a bit mentally unstable. It would be he who ordered all babies and

toddlers in Bethlehem murdered over fear that the recently born Jesus would usurp his throne. Life was hard and often unfair. Despite these threats, Jesus came as a most vulnerable babe. He was a child of scandal, for his neighbors had heard of Mary's pregnancy prior to her marriage with Joseph. Many in that day were poor like Jesus' own family, and they often lived and died by the discretion and generosity of others with higher stature. Jesus didn't come into the world to avoid our pain. Instead, he embraced and crushed it forever. As one liturgical communion prayer reminds us, "Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory."

Most certainly, we can be encouraged that Jesus shared in our weakness and sorrows in order to share with us his victory over sin, suffering, death and the Devil. Against all odds, peace forcefully broke into our world to live among us and die among us through Jesus. For a moment, all was calm and all was bright because God was finally with us in the flesh. It was time for all creation to pause, worship and give thanks.

A mere 33 years later, all too soon, Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven. We were warned life would not be easy in his absence, but it wouldn't remain hard forever. Similar to our wait for Christmas morning, creation "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God." It might prove a bumpy, fearful ride at times until then, but there can be joy on our journey. For Christmas day has come, and Easter is on its way. And all the while, we're not alone. We are the church together: enlivened by God's Spirit, sharing both our pain and joys with one another; offering pardon to those still in darkness. We are rushing not toward our death but toward a certain future filled with hope.

Continued on page 4

Christmas, the season celebrating Christ's birth

Christmas is a twelve-day liturgical celebration spanning from Christmas Eve, December 24th, through the Feast of the Epiphany (or Little Christmas), January 6th. Christmas commemorates the most momentous event in human history—the entry of God into the world He made, in the form of a baby. Epiphany traditionally marks the arrival of the Magi, or primarily in Eastern Christendom, the baptism of Jesus. The story of Jesus turning water into wine at a family wedding can also be recalled. In each of these early stories, Jesus is shown to have the power of God. Other feast days of the season include St. Stephen's Day, a traditional day to feed and care for the poor (as in the carol, Good King Wenceslas), and the Massacre of the Holy Innocents (recalling Herod the Great's attempt to kill Jesus as an infant and the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Starting this season, the Narrative Lectionary will take us into the third of its four year cycle with a focus on the Gospel of Mark.



On Christmas Eve, we'll have one service at 7:00 pm.

Building off of our Advent meditations, the rich meaning behind the beloved hymn "Silent Night" will be captured throughout this special candlelight service.

On Epiphany, Wednesday, January 6th, at 6:00 pm, help us welcome the arrival of the traditional Three Wise-men. They will bare gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for our newborn king.

You are invited to bring socks, gloves, and winter hats for area people in need. In addition, we'll have our annual bonfire of Christmas greens and fellowship. Members of Friends of L'Arche Central Virginia, a community serving those with intellectual disabilities, will be joining us. We'll have an Epiphany cake and door prizes. Have left over Christmas goodies? Bring them along to share. This short evening event is perfect for children of all ages!

The Christmas rush...

Continued from page 3

With all the saints before us, we can pray with confidence as we face any darkness, "Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come." We don't know the time, but we can trust Christ is already on his way. And when he comes, all will be calm and bright forevermore. For this time, Christ will be here to stay, and despite whatever might go on around us until then, I for one can't wait.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Lou

Worship team, mark your calendars

The next Worship Team meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall on February 7th, right after the service.



@MessiahMech



We pray for each other:

Charlie Absher; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Mary Key; Paul Knab; Pat Motley; Rev. Howard Thime; Janice (Thomas) Wainwright; Debbie & Doug Walker; Dick & Evelyn Wright.

We pray for our extended family:

The Allen Family, family of the Whirleys; **Diane Beverly**, friend of the Florios; **Pam Butler**, friend of Jean Wightman; **Gwenn Clarke**, friend of Judy Schwerdtfeger; **Angela Markovich**, Kristine Florio's mother; **The Rev. Samuel Mozolak**, father of Karen & Michael Morris; **Wolfgang Niklas**, brother of Erna Jung; **Family & Friends of Timothy O'Connell**, friend of the Gustafsons; **Annette Pfohl**, friend of Messiah; **Evelyn Poulsen**, Roger Schroeder's mother; **Ed Promin**, relative of Marilyn Gunn; **Tarasia Remhoff**, friend of the Florios; **Tim Schroeder**, nephew of Roger; **Lorna Snook**, mother-in-law of Jeffrey Weaver (Susen); **Hunter Townsend**, friend of the Whirley's; **The People & Pastor of All Souls, and our shared ministry; All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in Indonesia, Mauritania, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.** And for those serving in the armed forces: **Andrew Addair and LJ Spray.**

To add or remove a name from the prayer list, please call the church office, 746-7134. Unless we hear otherwise, names will be removed quarterly.



December 4 **Karen Nicholson**
10 **Pastor Lou Florio**
10 **Gordon Gunn**
16 **Marilyn Gunn**
16 **Sandy Sauer**
30 **Kyle Schroeder**

January 3 **Paula Barwick**
4 **Karen Umberger**
4 **JoAn Firebaugh**
11 **Erna Jung**
15 **Grayson Starret**
22 **Bill Hatfield**
23 **Brandi Hendrickson**
25 **Ivy Craig**
27 **Kristin Andrist**
31 **Mary Grace Delph**



December 23 **Paul & Victoria Knab**

If you would like **YOUR** birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please send an email to susiew51@comcast.net OR to office@mlcas.org or call **Davina** (746-7134).



Messiah on Pinterest

<http://pinterest.com/messiahmech/boards/>

December 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Calendar of events

- 1 1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
4:00 PM Hanover Habitat Open House*
6:00 PM Relay for Life Mtg.
7:00 PM Worship Watch Mtg. *
- 2 Local Remembrance: Jean Donovan
6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 3 11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 4 Pastor's Day Off
- 6 Commemoration of Nicholas,
Bishop of Myra
9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
11:45 AM Annual Business Meeting &
Elections
1:00 PM Finance Team Mtg.
4:30 PM Fusion Youth Group
- 7 10:30 AM Worship at Hanover
Adult Center
11:40 AM School Chapel
7:00 PM Holiday Memorial Service *
- 8 1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
7:00 PM Women's Bible Study
- 9 6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
6:30 PM Brownie Troop #557 Meeting
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 10 Human Rights Day
Martin Luther Burns the Popes Decree
of Excommunication (1520)
Pastor Off
Virginia Lutheran Items Due
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 11 Pastor's Day Off
- 13 All Souls-Messiah Youth
Christmas Program
Commemoration of Lucy, Martyr
9:15 AM Christmas Fellowship &
Tree Decorating
10:15 AM Worship Service (MLC &
All Souls - Tentative Time
- 14 11:40 AM School Chapel
7:00 PM MCEF Mtg. *
- 15 1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
6:15 PM Council Meeting
- 16 6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 17 11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 18 Pastor's Day Off
- 20 Commemoration of Katharina
von Bora Luther
Manna Sunday
9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
4:00 PM Kaffeeklatsch
4:30 PM Fusion Youth Group
5:00 PM German Church Service
- 21 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
11:40 AM School Chapel
5:00 PM MCEF Pizza Night
- 22 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
First Day of Winter
9:30 AM Richmond Conference of
Pastors (at Messiah)
1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
- 23 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 24 MESSIAH CLOSED
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
7:00 PM Messiah Lutheran's Family
Christmas Eve Service
- 25 MESSIAH CLOSED
Our family of faith at Messiah wishes
you a blessed Christmas!
Pastor's Day Off
- 26 Feast of Stephen, Deacon & Martyr

- 27 Feast of John, Apostle & Evangelist
9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
- 28 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
Feast of the Holy Innocents
- 29 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
- 30 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 31 CHRISTMAS BREAK - No Preschool
(Childcare Available)
Have a safe & happy New Year's Eve!
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *

January 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- 1 Feast of the Name of Jesus
MESSIAH CLOSED
Pastor's Day Off
The members of Messiah Lutheran
wish you a year full of blessings!
- 2 Commemoration of Johann Konrad
Wilhelm Loehle, Renewer of the Church
- 3 9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
- 4 10:30 AM Worship at Hanover
Adult Center
11:40 AM School Chapel
6:00 PM Relay for Life Mtg.
- 5 1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
- 6 6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 7 11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *

- 8 Pastor's Day Off
- 10 Religious Freedom Sunday
Virginia Lutheran Items Due
9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
- 11 11:40 AM School Chapel
- 12 1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
7:00 PM Women's Bible Study
- 13 6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
6:30 PM Brownie Troop #557 Meeting
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 14 Commemoration of Eivind Josef
Berggrav, Bishop
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 15 Commemoration of Martin Luther King,
Jr., Renewer of the Church & Martyr
Pastor's Day Off
Winter Celebration (HS Retreat)
- 16 Religious Freedom Day
Winter Celebration (HS Retreat)
- 17 Commemoration of Antony of Egypt,
Renewer of the Church
Manna Sunday
Winter Celebration (HS Retreat)
9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
5:00 PM Christian Unity Service (Youth
Led) @ Shady Grove UMC
- 18 Feast of the Confession of Peter
Start of the Week of Prayer for
Christian Unity
11:40 AM School Chapel
- 19 Commemoration of Henry, Bishop and
Martyr
1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
6:15 PM Council Meeting
- 20 6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 21 Commemoration of Agnes, Martyr
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 22 Pastor's Day Off

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Calendar

Continued from page 7

- 24 9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)
12:00 PM Annual Meeting & Pot Luck
- 25 Feast of the Conversion of Paul
11:40 AM School Chapel
- 26 Commemoration of Timothy, Titus,
and Silas, Missionaries
9:30 AM Pastor @ Richmond
Conference of Pastors *
1:30 PM Daily Discipleship Bible Study
7:00 PM Women's Bible Study
- 27 Commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas and
Phoebe, Witnesses to the Faith
Intl Holocaust Remembrance Day
6:00 PM Centering Prayer (Atlee House)
6:30 PM Brownie Troop #557 Meeting
7:00 PM Messiah InSync Rehearsal
- 28 Commemoration of Thomas Aquinas,
Teacher
11:00 AM Men's Bible Study *
- 29 Pastor's Day Off
- 31 9:15 AM Guest Congregation Meets
(All Souls Episcopal)
9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages
(Messiah Lutheran)
10:45 AM Worship Service (MLC)

* Off site



Winter Celebration, 1/15-17

Messiah's high school youth are invited to attend this popular youth retreat at Eagle Eyrie (Lynchburg, VA). If you wish to attend, contact our new youth ministry leader, **Glenda Schroeder**, or **Pastor Lou**.

Annual congregational business meeting

Messiah is governed by a constitution and bylaws which designates that the authority for all decisions ultimately rests with the membership of the church. An elected council serves at your discretion to oversee most regular business operations and property decisions. In December, we gather to elect new council members and approve an annual budget. We can't do it without your help – to establish a quorum, share your opinions, and vote. Please join us on Sunday, December 6th at 11:45 am following worship.

If you wish to be nominated for council (a three year term), please contact any member of our current council or **Pastor Lou**. For questions on our finances, you may contact our Finance Team (**Paula Barwick**, Acting Treasurer; **Laura Harris**, Stewardship Liaison to council; and **Bill Weaver**, Financial Secretary).



Annual reporting meeting & Potluck dinner in January

Come learn about the state of our congregation on Sunday, January 24th after the 10:45 am service. It will be a celebration of what God has, is and will do through our faith community to bless us and others.

We will also swear in our new council members and give thanks for those completing their three year or replacement term: **Kevin Hendrickson**, **Donna Shaw**, and **Gordon Gunn**.

MCEF highlights

Thank You to all who donated filled Thanksgiving bags for the pantry. These were given to each family in addition to what they qualified for. Any left over bags will be distributed in December. The shelves empty in less than 2 weeks since the pantry is serving up to 250 families each month. Please continue your donations of nonperishable foods by putting them in the grocery cart in the narthex.

Hanover Senior Rides gave 50 rides in October and is interested in adding more volunteer drivers to provide this service to those who do not have transportation for essential needs such as doctor appointments, banking and grocery shopping.

Mechanicsville Christmas Parade will be December 6, 2015 starting at 2:00. MCEF will have a float which will accept nonperishable food items along the parade route. Walkers needed to accompany the float to collect these items, contact R.B. Lane at (412) 759-7333 to join in this fun event.

No Room at the Inn, December 5 & 6, at our neighboring Church of the Redeemer, will host nativities from all over the world. The display is very worthwhile and a percentage of the proceeds are earmarked for MCEF's Emergency Housing fund.

Special note: The garden from our All Souls Episcopal Church provided 2,700 pounds of food for Mechanicsville residents in need.

Question? Contact **Pat or Gladys Hubert**



Youth Led Christian Unity Service

As Christians commemorate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, our Fusion Youth Group will invite other local youth groups to lead their worship communities in a third annual worship event. Youth will organize and lead the entire service, and you are invited.

This year's service will be hosted at Shady Grove United Methodist Church on Sunday, January 17th at 5:00 pm.

The Week of Prayer runs from the Feast of the Confession of Peter through the Feast of the Conversion of Paul (January 18-25). Bible study guides will be available on our welcome table.



Thank you from Pastor Lou

Dear Messiah family,
Thanks for recognizing me efforts as your pastor during Pastor Appreciation Month. Your gift certificate to the Bavarian Chef was much appreciated. I couldn't think of a nicer gift than to have a special time with Kristine over a wonderful meal. Indeed, it is one of our favorite restaurants.

Vielen Dank! (Many thanks!)
Pastor Lou



"Take the Plunge"

Volunteer Opportunities
from Social Ministry

* **Volunteer-Leader-In-Training – Hanover County Parks and Recreation**

The Leader-in-Training (LIT) program is designed for students who are interested in volunteering their time and energy to share their passion for working with children while gaining valuable experience. LITs assist summer staff with the overall operation of Summer Sneakers and/or Discover Camps (day camps for elementary age children) including program planning, activity leading, serving as a positive role model for children and more. Eligibility: Applicants must be a rising 9th grader (or higher) for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year and be under the age of 18 as of June 20, 2016. A competitive selection process (including application, interview) will be used to fill the limited number of LIT positions. Chosen applicants may be scheduled to volunteer for 1, 2, 3 or more sessions. Due to the high number of applicants and limited openings, not all applicants will be offered positions. Application deadline: April 10, 2016. For more information, call 804-365-4300.

* **Love horses? Volunteer with a local nonprofit horse rescue organization – Virginia Equine Welfare Society located in Ashland, VA**

Horse Care - Hands on horse care, mucking stalls, feeding, grooming, first aid, property maintenance, etc.; Information Booth - Help with educational programs presented by VEWS; Help at information booths by assisting in setting up the booth and speaking to the public about horse neglect/abuse and inform the public about VEWS and our mission. Fundraising - Help organize and work fundraising events like formal fundraising events, information/merchandise booths,

sell raffle or event tickets, concessions, sales and other special events. Transporter - Move horses where needed. Must have own truck and trailer. Miscellaneous - VEWS needs volunteers for many things that come up periodically or are a one-time occurrence. Barn Checks - Follow up on fostered and adopted equines and do facility checks on potential adopters or foster homes. Horse Training - Many horses that come into VEWS will not have received proper training in their former life. It is the intention of VEWS to provide proper ground and under saddle training, where necessary, to ensure the horse has the best chance of being adopted and finding their forever home. Contact Susan White @ 804-402-2490 for more information.

* **Camp Volunteer – Comfort Zone Camp**

Comfort Zone Camp provides grieving children with a voice, a place, and a community in which to heal, grow and lead more fulfilling lives. We are always in need of big buddy mentors, photographers, nurses, and mental health professionals to help us execute our camp weekends. For individuals aged 15-18, volunteers attend camp as Junior Counselors. Junior Counselors support Campers and Big Buddies throughout the program weekend, engaging in all camp activities and lending their energy and unique perspective to these events. Volunteers aged 18+ are needed to support children as Big Buddies. These mentors participate in all aspects of camp, standing by their camper's side throughout the fun games and activities, as well as four facilitated group processing sessions where kids can listen, share, and gain coping skills for living with loss. Volunteers are also needed to support camp behind the scenes working with staff to prepare activities such as registration, arts and crafts, bonfire, memorial service, and balloon release. Come be a part of the Comfort Zone magic! For more information call (866) 488-5679, 7201 Glen Forest Drive, Richmond, VA 23226

Narrative Lectionary – Gospel of Mark

The Narrative lectionary is an alternative four-year cycle of readings. On the Sundays from September through May each year, the texts follow the sweep of the biblical story from Creation through the early Christian church. The texts show the breadth and variety of voices within Scripture. They invite people to hear the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and the prophets, Jesus, and Paul. Listening to the many different voices within Scripture enriches preaching and the life of faith. In December, we enter the Gospel of Mark, the shortest and thought to be the earliest gospel. As you listen, be prepared to encounter sparse history with no account of Christ's early years and some of his most popular teachings. The writing style is relatively unrefined and fast paced. Jesus' humanity and deeds are lifted up more than his words or identity as the Son of God. Jesus' time in Galilee seems to be of special interest along with the many failures of his followers to understand and believe in Jesus. The text ends abruptly at the empty tomb. "So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8). Will the hearer stand on their belief or not?



Hanover Habitat Open House

You are invited to celebrate Habitat's 25 years of service to Hanover County residents and welcome their new local director. Join Habitat staff and friends for their open house on December 1st, 4:00 – 7:00 pm, at 9161 Atlee Road.



- The Home Depot playground project has been postponed again due to circumstances at Home Depot.
- Enrollment at MLS continues to grow.
- One November service project includes a food drive benefiting MCEF.
- Our other project is filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. After shoeboxes are packed, sent off with prayer, and prepared for overseas shipment, they travel by plane, boat, and truck to countries where local churches receive them with joy. Every gift-filled shoebox provides these churches with an opportunity for evangelism and discipleship in places they otherwise might never be received. As a result, the Gospel is transforming children, families, and entire communities. National Collection Week is November 16-23.
- Our students are hosting Pilgrims and Pastries with Parents on Nov. 20. They will be cooking and preparing the food and enjoying a social time with our school family.
- Our MLS Christmas Program will be held on Thursday, 12/17 at 6:30. All are welcome.
- Check out our school Facebook page at Messiah Lutheran School to see what the kids are doing throughout the month.
- With the holidays approaching, our preschool will follow the Hanover County School schedule; however we will have all-day daycare available. Please call the office if you might benefit from this service.
- Pack the Pantry is continuing. Please see the narthex table for a list of items if you'd like to contribute non-perishable items for school use.
- We are continuing to do tours and accept enrollments. If you have any friends or family looking for childcare please send them our way.

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
8154 Atlee Rd
Mechanicsville VA 23111



December 2015/January 2016

Messenger

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The DEADLINE for the
February, 2016
edition of *The Messenger* is
Sunday, January 17th

Please call me with your
written submission, place your written
submission in the "Newsletter" mail slot
OR email susiew51@comcast.net

On Sunday, January 10th, churches
across the United States will commemo-
rate the anniversary of the passage of the
Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom on
January 16, 1786 This document became
the foundation for our constitutional pro-
tections.



Our thoughts and prayers go out to all
victims of terrorism and violence through-
out the world.