

# Sixth Sunday of **EASTER**

May 17, 2020

**For video viewing of music and service go to:**

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO\\_pAVddaeV1\\_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO_pAVddaeV1_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM)

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray together:

**C: *Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen***

## **\*THE FIRST LESSON**

### **Acts 17:22-31**

<sup>22</sup>Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. <sup>23</sup>For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup>nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup>From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup>so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup>For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' <sup>29</sup>Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup>While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup>because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

## **\*THE SECOND LESSON**

### **1 Peter 3:13-22**

<sup>13</sup>Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup>yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## **\*THE GOSPEL READING**

### **John 14:15-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

## **SERMON: PASTOR RICHARD CARBAUGH**

*There is a difference between being religious and being a follower of Christ. Religious surveys often ask the question: "Do you believe in God?" Usually, a large percentage of people say that they do. But what does that mean, really; and what god? Paul, in his visit to Athens, noticed the many objects of worship*

that represented the many gods of the Greeks. He speaks to the people by saying: "I see how extremely religious you are in every way." Included in these objects of worship was an altar to an unknown god - as if they wanted to make sure they had all the bases covered in case they overlooked some god. Paul picks up on this and uses it as an opportunity to tell them about Jesus. He says that what they worship as unknown, is known, and can be known to them.

A mother of a little boy asked her son, after his first day of school: "Did you learn anything in school today?" "Yes", he said, "I learned to spell cat - it's K-A-T." "But honey", his mother said, "that's not how you spell cat." The little boy was silent for a moment, and then replied: "Well, in that case, I didn't learn anything in school today." What have we learned? What do we know about this God we worship and follow? Many people, it seems, prefer a god that is more unknown - a generic, vague god that is elusive and defies description. Such a god can be made in any image, even in our own image. Such a god makes no demands ON us, and requires no response FROM us. That is the big difference between Christianity and much of what passes for spirituality today. It is the difference between a formless religious sentiment that is pretty much what a person wants it to be, and a life of obedience to something or someone who is outside of us. It is the difference between what we make of our god, and what our God makes of us.

Do we know our God? Are we just a religious people, or are we a follower of Jesus? Our Gospel reading helps us understand what it means to know and to follow Jesus. Jesus says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Those who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and I will love them and reveal - make myself known - to them." In other words, it is in keeping the commandments of Jesus that we come to know and love Jesus. And that commandment, as Jesus tells us in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of John, is: "That you love one another; as I have loved you, you also love one another." There was an old bumper sticker that said: "Honk if you love Jesus". Jesus is telling us that loving Him is going to take a lot more than that.

Marriage, in its best sense, is a sign of this love. When two people come to their wedding day, the question is not so much: "DO you love this person?" It is more: "WILL you love this person?" It is a love that is an act of the will, something we decide to do as opposed to love as a feeling - not that feelings are bad. It's just that feelings can't always be counted on. It's just that you cannot command a feeling. You cannot say to someone: "Be happy!", and think that they can be. So Jesus commands us to love - love one another, love our neighbor - not because we may or may not feel like it, but because that is what people who love Jesus do. I remember a conversation some people were having about stewardship and the reasons they give to the church. Some said they give out of a sense of gratitude for all the blessings God had given them - and that is certainly a good reason. Others said they gave because if they were going to

be a part of something, then they needed to support it - and that is also a good reason. One woman said: "This may sound trite, but I give because I think I am supposed to. If you are going to be a disciple of Christ, then that is what you do. You give." Because we love Christ, then we choose to be a loving people in the world and with one another - or perhaps a better way to say it is that because we love Christ, we don't really have a choice but to love one another. We love, because God first loved us. And I have to say that this love is evident among the people here at Messiah Lutheran. This is indeed a community that has taken Jesus' command to heart and follows Him.

Someone has said that 'a person is what a person does'. Jesus would say that 'a person does what a person is.' All of us know that it is much easier to do things we love doing or that we do out of love. If, for example, we came to worship out of a sense of obligation or duty or fear over what would happen if we didn't come, then worship would feel like a chore or an interruption in our lives; but if we come to worship out of a sense of love, then it becomes a thing of joy to us. Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Why did Jesus say it was easy and light, because for many people people it seemed difficult and hard? It was easy and light because it was something done out of love. Jesus was obedient in love, obedient even to death on the cross. Following Jesus, therefore, is to be obedient to this command to love.

There was a story of a stressed out person who was tailgating someone on a busy road. The light turned yellow as they approached the intersection, and because the person in front didn't push on through, it made this person behind have to stop as well. This resulted in a lot of ranting and raving and horn blowing and hand gestures for the person in front. In the middle of all of this, a policeman tapped on the window, asking the driver to exit the car. The policemen then took that person to the station where he was fingerprinted, photographed and placed in a cell. After a couple of hours, the policeman approached the cell, opened the door and told the man he was free to go. The policeman apologized and said: "I'm sorry for the mistake, but when I pulled up behind your car, and you were blowing your horn and showing your displeasure, I noticed the 'What would Jesus do' bumper sticker, and the 'Follow me to Sunday School' bumper sticker, and the chrome plated Christ fish symbol on trunk. So, naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car!"

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." There IS something expected of those who go by the name of Christian. We will not be perfect. We will still sin. Nevertheless, we are called to love one another as God has loved us. Jesus reminds us that those who know His commandments and keep them are those who love Him; and, Jesus says, I will love them and reveal myself - make myself known - to them. This is the God we know - and this is the God who knows and loves us. Amen.

## **\*NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,**

**the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

**the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten not made,  
of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

**he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,**

**and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen**

## **\*PRAYERS**

**A:** Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *(A brief silence.)*

**A:** Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**A:** You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures (local bodies of water may be named). Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way (especially). Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as they face the challenges of coronavirus. We pray for those who grieve the loss of love ones, for the sick and their families, for those fearful of an unknown future. We pray for the millions of unemployed, for children and others at home - that they be safe from abuse. We pray for those who are alone and isolated during this time that they may feel your loving presence. We pray for all the hospital and health care workers, and all first responders, that they receive needed supplies and be kept protected in the work they do. We pray for those making decisions about how to live into the future and when that will happen. Keep us all in your care as we wait for a new day. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Bradley-Combs, Buckholz and Carr families. For the talents and good things You have given each of them. Keep them united and faithful to You and each other. Guide them, protect them and equip them to do Your will. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## **\*THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**C: *Our Father, who art in heaven,***

***hallowed be thy name,***

***thy kingdom come, thy will be done,***

***on earth as it is in heaven.***

***Give us this day our daily bread;***

***and forgive us our trespasses,***

***as we forgive those who trespass against us;***

***and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,***

***forever and ever. Amen.***

## **\*BENEDICTION**

P: May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C: *Amen***

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **PASTOR CARBAUGH'S OFFICE HOURS**

For the time being Pastor Carbaugh will be working from home. If you need to reach him, his email address is: messiahmechpr@gmail.com. In the event of a pastoral emergency, he can be reached at 540-760-4089. Please be safe and take care during this challenging time for us.

## **WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Beginning March 8<sup>th</sup>, we began providing a summary of the financial well-being of our congregation. Here is this week's information:

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$3109 through May 10<sup>th</sup> (up from \$3083 on May 3<sup>rd</sup>).
- We are \$5601.41 behind the year-to-date budget needs (up from \$5777.41 behind the budget the week prior).

## **WE REMAIN CLOSED**

Although Governor Northam is initiating Phase One openings in Virginia, Messiah will remain closed until June 10, 2020. At the May 19<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting, the current reopening date will be reviewed and updates will be provided soon thereafter if changes are made. The Virginia Synod office has recommended that churches remain closed throughout Phase One, possibly longer. Church Council is working through guidelines provided by the state and the Virginia Synod to determine the best way to open safely when we're ready to do so. Until then, Davina will continue to hold office hours during the week and we will continue to publish our Mid-Week and Sunday Services on YouTube, the church website, and Facebook. We will also continue to keep you updated on future developments when they occur. Stay well and safe until we are physically together again. We remain God's Church even though we are apart. Peace be with you all. - Your Church Council

## **LOAN RECEIVED**

It is with great pleasure that Church Council can announce that our loan of \$15,000 from Thrivent has been approved. When received, it will be sent to A+ Roofing to continue payment for our roof replacement completion. Remainder of payment to A+ will occur in the near future! God is good!

## **PANDEMIC HOPE: A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL FOR LIFE DURING COVID-19**

Built around "Faith 5", *Pandemic Hope* is a Devotional for families that focuses on the new realities we are all living in each day. It provides daily readings and activities for 8 weeks to work together with those who you are staying safe at home with. To read and download this devotional go to:

[https://www.vasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pandemic\\_Faith\\_Devotional.pdf](https://www.vasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pandemic_Faith_Devotional.pdf)

## **EVENTS CANCELED**

During this pandemic time, the Virginia Synod has canceled the following events for this year: Synod Assembly, Power in the Spirit, Kairos, and Launch. The Junior-High event in July is still on the calendar at the present time. For more information, go to the Synod website: <https://www.vasynod.org/>.

## **JOAN BARNES SCHOLARSHIP**

Church Council is pleased to announce that applications for the Joan Barnes Scholarship have been made available by our scholarship team. Hopefully all members have received an email with information concerning the changes in the scholarship process. Please note that all applications are due no later than June 22<sup>nd</sup> to the church office. All information along with the application has also been put on the church website. If you have specific questions about the scholarship or application process, please contact Sally Bennett at [sallybennett3317@gmail.com](mailto:sallybennett3317@gmail.com) and she will assist you.

## **THANK YOU!**

Church Council would like to thank all members who have been able to continue donating regularly to Messiah. Your generosity has helped us to continue to fully pay staff members as well as meet all current monthly obligations without seeking financial assistance to do so. Even though apart, God is among the good people of Messiah! Stay safe until we are together again!

## **LWR COVID-19 PROJECT**

COVID-19 is threatening vulnerable communities, and Lutheran World Relief urgently needs cloth face masks to send to them. The cloth mask you sew in your living room will provide love and protection to a neighbor in need halfway around the world. How many will you make to help stop the spread? To sign up and get more information go to: [www.lwr.org/masks](http://www.lwr.org/masks).

### **ARE WE DESIGNATED?**

Over the years Messiah members have enrolled in donation programs through Kroger's Community Award Program and Amazon Smile that allow for you to choose a charitable organization to receive a small donation based upon what you spend in these places. If you would like for Messiah to be your designated organization at one or both of these businesses, please enroll directly with them and specify us. If you've already enrolled and would like us to receive donations, please check to see if Messiah is your charitable organization. With God's will and your generosity, Messiah will continue to survive!

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

To continue in your faithful giving, mail in your offering to the church office, 8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, or use on-line giving through Vanco which is available on the church website. See [messiahmech.com](http://messiahmech.com) for more details.

### **BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'ebulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at [dmshaw70@gmail.com](mailto:dmshaw70@gmail.com) by Wednesday for inclusion.

# Prayer List

## WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Kenneth Deere	"Doc" Kondaki
Adam Dworak, Sr.	Linda Krupa
JoAn Firebaugh	Mac McAllister
Bill Fulop	Roberta McMillen
Elisabeth Gardner	Pat Motley
Werner Gardner	Nathan, Ruth Schroeder & family
Steve Gilnett	Judy Schwerdtfeger
Geoffrey Honan	

## WE PRAY FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

**Danny Allen**, friend of the Whirleys  
**Boyd Allison**, friend of Jean Wightman.  
**Family and Friends of Dennis Anderson**, father of James Anderson.  
**Joe Griffin**, friend of Anne Mason.  
**Pete Gunn**, friend of the Schwerdtfeger's  
**Family and friends of Maeby Anne Haislip**  
**Christina Nibali**, sister of Anita Philip.  
**Dee Schroeder**, sister-in-law of Roger.  
**Tim Schroeder**, nephew of Roger.  
**Family and friends of Wanda Umlauf**, Vicar Ginny Banister's mother  
**T.J.**, grandson of the Whirleys.

**Pastor Carbaugh**, as he walks with us in this interim time  
**Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families**  
**All law enforcement, firefighters & first responders**  
**The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine**, of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry

**Hospitals, nursing homes, other health care facilities**  
**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
**The World Health Organization Medical researchers and scientists**  
**Schools, workplaces, government institutions and municipal agencies**  
**For all who travel**