

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 14, 2020

For video viewing of music and service go to:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO_pAVddaeV1_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray together:

C: *God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen*

***THE FIRST LESSON**

Exodus 19:2-8a

²[The Israelites] had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

³Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

⁷So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do."

***THE SECOND LESSON**

Romans 5:1-8

¹Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 9:35—10:8

³⁵Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." ^{10:1}Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

The 2020 Summer Olympics were supposed to start next month in Tokyo, Japan. I always enjoy catching some of the events when the Olympics come around – you get to see amazing athletes, great stories about the competitors, all the fanfare of the opening and closing ceremonies, and plenty of sports that you don't normally get to see any other time – fencing and rowing and judo and archery and badminton, even trampoline! And of course one of the biggest categories in the Summer Olympics is Track and Field, which includes the relay race.

Did you ever run relay races when you were in school, like in P.E. classes? It's a simple concept – you have four people on a team; each one runs one section of the race; and in between each section, the runner has to hand off a baton to their teammate. Easy enough, right? But think about that on the Olympic level – runners are often going at speeds around twenty miles an hour; you only have a small little window where the runners are allowed to overlap and make the exchange, at full speed; you have to stay in separate lanes; and the new runner doesn't even look back – they take the baton blindly, trusting that their partner will find their hand. It's exciting!

Sisters and brothers, I was passed a baton this week. So were all of you, I suppose. It's a week of transition for Messiah Lutheran Church, and for me. This isn't an Olympic race – we have lots of time and not nearly as much pressure to hit our stride together. I know I'll do my best to do right by you, and you'll do the same for me. We might even drop the baton sometimes, and that's ok – there's

nothing that says you don't just pick it back up and keep going. And I take comfort in the fact that the first "official" Gospel lesson I found in front of me as your pastor is also about a transition and a baton being passed.

Our reading from Matthew's Gospel today starts with disciples, and ends with apostles. It happens in the matter of two sentences: "Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles..." and you get the list of names. Chapter ten, verse one – you have disciples: folks who follow, folks who are in the discipline of Jesus' teachings. Chapter ten, verse two – you have apostles: literally meaning, the ones who are sent out, entrusted with a job, a mission. That's a quick baton pass!

The disciples see Jesus going everywhere, teaching and proclaiming the good news, healing people and having compassion on them because they are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. They see Jesus shepherding these people, and the disciples are there to help and follow. And then Jesus makes the pivot, passes the baton. He says to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest."

I can just picture the disciples nodding their heads, saying, "Sounds good, Lord! We'll get right on that prayer. More laborers – check." And then the realization dawning on them: "Oh. We're the laborers. You want God to send us." And two verses later you've got yourselves twelve freshly-minted apostles.

Fellow disciples of Messiah Lutheran Church, you might be looking around the world lately thinking, "A little more Jesus in the world would be good right now. Some shepherding might be in order." It would be good to see Jesus going everywhere, to every city and village, teaching and proclaiming the good news, healing people and having compassion on them because they are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. I know I'm seeing lots of harassed and helpless in the world – how about you?

Wouldn't it be nice to have Jesus going everywhere – maybe not to every city and village, but to every faction, every political party, every side on every issue, every person, every broken heart, every worried mind, every troubled soul, to bring hope and peace and justice?

Wouldn't it be nice for Jesus to teach people once more that the last are first and the first are last, to show compassion, to pick up your cross, to love your enemies, to care for the least of these as though you were caring for your Lord, and not just everyone for themselves?

Wouldn't it be nice to see Jesus casting out the demons of prejudice and violence and long-broken systems to bring healing and restoration to all people, especially those who have been the most on the outs or beaten down?

Wouldn't it be nice for Jesus to get back out there and preach the good news that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, and that God has come down to us in our brokenness to call us to repent and turn back to God? That God loves this world and that Jesus saves and forgives?

I pray for all of this. I pray for God to fix all of our problems, to heal all of our hurts. It would be more than nice – it would be that whole “thy kingdom come/thy will be done thing” thing. Why is there so much pain and heartache and sin in the world? Where are your laborers, God?

...oh. I see. I'm a laborer. We're the laborers. God has already sent us disciples to also be apostles. The baton has been passed, is passed every day we remember our baptisms, that we have died to sin and been raised to new life in Christ. The answer to my prayer for God to fix and heal, for the kingdom to come and God's will to be done – God answers that prayer, in part, through me. Through all of us who bear his name. Martin Luther says: “In fact, God's kingdom comes on its own without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.” “In fact, God's good and gracious will comes about without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us.”

The baton is passed – each day, each week, each encounter with the gospel. The baton is passed – each day, each week, each declaration of forgiveness that we receive and extend. The baton is passed – each day, each week, each time we are blessed in order to be a blessing.

We are part of a long relay race, a long line, of batons being passed. Our reading from Exodus today has God's people remembering how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt, and how God is now sending them to be a priestly kingdom and a holy nation, a people set apart among the other peoples of the world to shine God's light and covenant. Our reading from Romans today has Paul reminding the church that Jesus died to save us, and therefore we suffer on his behalf in order to boast of the hope we have in him and pass the good news on.

Last week's Gospel reading had the resurrected Jesus telling the disciples on the mountain that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.” And then he re-apostles them and sends them out to baptize and teach and love. Today Jesus gives his authority to the disciples as he names them as apostles for the first time. The baton is passed, and the disciples – and us still today – have the very authority of Christ to cast out unclean spirits, to cure every disease and sickness, to proclaim the good news that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers. You know – little stuff. No big deal.

Even if you don't take everything on that authority list literally, what it boils down to is this: Jesus gives us, his disciple-apostles, his sent-out followers, the authority to have God's will be done in and among us for the sake of all the hurting, harassed, shepherd-less sheep in the world, in our communities, in our lives. We're not shepherds ourselves; but God gives us the authority to be compassionate sheep, pointed in the right direction to help others see who's leading us.

Are we going to drop some batons? You bet we are! We will have missteps. Ruts. Inaction. Conflict. Apathy. We will hold on too tightly to our comfort zones. You name it, we'll mess it up. We'll miss the fact that God answers our prayers, in part, through our own selves. But that's the ELCA's slogan, right?

"God's work. Our hands." We'll drop the baton, to be sure; and then God is right there with us, every step of the way, to help us pick it back up and keep going.

The good news is: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." God's love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. What God passes to us, over and over and over again, is grace and peace, love and acceptance and forgiveness. No matter how many times we drop it. It just keeps coming. Whether we're disciples following or apostles sent out, it is Jesus the one we follow and Jesus the one who sends. The baton is passed. We don't even need to look back; God forgives us our sins and we can trust that God will find our outstretched hand, every time.

We're in this race together – it's a team event. And I look forward to running alongside you.

***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: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world. (*A brief silence.*)

A: Holy One, you bring us together and call us your own. Bless theologians, teachers, and preachers who help us grow in faith (following the examples of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the teacher Macrina, whom we commemorate today). Guide your church, that we might be a holy people. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy One, the whole earth is yours. Where there is fire, bring cool air and new growth. Where there is flooding, bring abatement. Where there is drought, bring rain. Inspire us to care for what you have provided. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy One, we have created divisions you will not own. In places of conflict (especially), raise up leaders who work to develop lasting peace and reconciliation. Encourage organizations and individuals who care for all forced to leave their homes. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy One, you care for those who are harassed and helpless. Protect and defend those who are abused. Heal those who are sick. Feed all who hunger. Empower all whose voices go unheard, and help us respond to the pressing needs of our neighbors. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy One, you provide a plentiful harvest of gifts and resources. Prepare us to labor and gather the fruits of this congregation, that we might discover new ways of living. Minister to us in our work, that we do not lose heart. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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 loved 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. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Ewing, Firebaugh, Ford 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. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus 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: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

C: Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME PASTOR RYAN!

While Pastor Ryan is not physically here yet, he will be available by email at messiahmechpr@gmail.com; and by phone at (507)-360-7276 . His 'office' hours will be 11am – 8 pm our time since California is three hours behind Virginia. This is such an exciting but strange time for us as we continue to worship from afar. Pastor Ryan will begin his Midweek Messages this coming Wednesday, June 17. We wish Pastor Ryan and family a safe transition to Virginia when they are able to do so. Church council will continue to provide future updates to the congregation as necessary.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RYAN

Thank you, Messiah! I have already begun to receive warm messages of welcome. And seeing the pictures of the church sign brought huge smiles to our faces! I am frustrated by our housing situation and not being able to move quite yet, but we are almost done with construction and we'll be listing soon. Either way I'll be getting out there as soon as I can, and I'm excited to begin our ministry together. Please look forward to some phone calls in the next couple of weeks from me so I can start getting to know everyone. Until then, peace be with you and stay safe.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$3104 through June 7th (down from \$3141 on May 31st).
- We are \$6884.21 behind the year-to-date budget needs (down from \$5790.21 behind the budget the week prior).

CHRISTIAN FORMATION BLAST

Although Sunday School is 'out' for the summer, the Christian Formation Blast will continue for a while with information on worship activities as well as Christian Formation activities such as Daily Devotionals. If there is something that you would like to see added to the blast, please let Donna Shaw, dmslaw70@gmail.com, know.

CAROLINE FURNACE UPDATE

Camp at Home starts with a Campfire Kickoff on June 14! Can't wait until Summer Camp? Sign up today at <https://carolinefurnace.campbrainregistration.com/>.

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is looking for volunteers to work with us on our "Civic Engagement Summer" - we have 3 different opportunities: student interns, volunteers, and team captains. With this effort, we're hoping to increase voter turnout among congregations and activate folks in our network this year. This will be mostly virtual and we're looking for a geographically diverse set of folks. Visit the following for more information www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/about/open-positions.

JOIN THE 75,000 MORE! FACEMASK CHALLENGE

When Lutheran World Relief launched the 75,000 Face Mask Challenge less than a month ago, they knew the compassionate response would be overwhelming – and that good people like you would meet the challenge. They just had no idea you'd pull it off so quickly. Thank you! To reach even more people in dire need, Lutheran World Relief is collecting 75,000 more masks! How many will you make to help stop the spread? Sign up for more info. www.lwr.org/masks.

POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is hosting a virtual march taking place on June 20th. The Poor People's Campaign is a revival of the historic Martin Luther King Jr.- led movement of the same name organized 52 years ago. For more information you can visit: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>.

THANK YOU TO OUR CHRISTIAN FORMATION VOLUNTEERS

With great appreciation Messiah thanks Lois Schroeder and Marilyn Gunn (Preschool Sunday School class); Diana Sondor and Wendy DeGraff (Elementary Sunday School class); Becky Collie (Teens & Tweens Sunday School class); Daren Williams (Adult Sunday School leader and BAM coordinator); Tracey Anderson (Gospel Fun Time coordinator); Valerie Williams (Women's Bible Study and BAM coordinator); and Donna Combs (substitute teacher and event organizer). Thank you everyone for your selfless gifts of time and talent. Messiah is truly grateful for all that you do!

PLEASE APPLY BY JUNE 22: JOAN BARNES SCHOLARSHIP

Church Council wants to remind possible candidates that applications for the Joan Barnes Scholarship are available on the church website, <https://messiahmech.com/> under the "ABOUT" tab. Please note that all applications are due no later than June 22nd 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 and she will assist you.

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 for more details.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'ebulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at dmslaw70@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
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 Ryan, as he begins his journey with us
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