

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*November 1, 2020
All Saints Day*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To share the Good News of Jesus Christ
and to invite all to join us in faith, worship, and service.*

ALL SAINTS DAY
(November 1, 2020)

For video go to:

<https://messiahmech.com/messiah-digital/>

GATHERING SONG, "Shall We Gather at the River" (ELW 423)

Shall We Gather at the River



- 1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
- 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
- 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
- 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826–1899
Music: HANSON PLACE, Robert Lowry

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray:

C: ***Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen***

FIRST LESSON: Revelation 7:9-17

Lector

A reading from Revelation.

The book of Revelation is written to seven churches in western Asia Minor during a time of great oppression. Today's reading is a response to the question asked in 6:17: "Who is able to stand?" The writer gives the faithful the assurance of God's protection and a vision of victory.

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: 1 John 3:1-3

Lector

A reading from 1 John.

A saint is one who has been set apart by God for God's purposes. God, out of divine love, set us apart to be the children of God. Our holy hope is that we shall see God as God really is.

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 5:1-12

In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a unique description of those who are blessed with God's favor. His teaching is surprising and shocking to those who seek wealth, fame, and control over others.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

As you may know, I am still relatively new to this neck of the woods. I've only been on the ground here for a couple of months, and under a quarantine, so that limits my outings to a point. But whenever you're new to an area, or even just visiting, I think you find yourself asking the locals, the folks who have been there longer than yourself, "Where's the best place to fill in the blank." Where's the best place to get some Italian, get a good burger? Where's the best place to get some ice cream? Where do you go to bank? Where would you go for dry cleaning? Where would you go for a mechanic - my car's on the fritz. Maybe you are looking for something fun to do? What's the best park around here? Where do I catch a game? What's a good museum to go to?

I'd like to get out of town for a little bit, where's a good campsite in the area? What's the best place to go? Where would find these things?

As I look around the world today, I feel like no matter where you live and how long you've been there, there's a lot of folks asking, and not just for products or stores or services. I feel like there's a lot of folks that are desperately wondering where they could pick up some hope. Where do you go to find hope? These are dark times. This is hard, this life we're living right now. Where's the best place to fill up on hope? Where would you go? What would you recommend?

We're asking ourselves and each other this question more and more. I think that some of the places people go to find hope aren't working the way they maybe used to. Maybe you found hope in politics, maybe the party of your choosing, but nowadays folks are wondering about the whole system. Maybe you had somebody who really inspired you, some president or speaker or diplomat, that really changed your life as you learned their story, as you heard their words and were inspired. I'm not hearing as much of that lately.

Maybe you would watch the news, look for those good stories of people who came through adversity and survived. Stories of criminals who were caught, justice that was served, good things happening in your community. I watch the news nowadays and I just feel more hopeless, more depressed, more often than not.

Or maybe you'd watch sports and watch those incredible athletes, those amazing skills on display, underdogs winning, or the champions proving their mettle, whatever it might be. Maybe you watched sports as that getaway, as that escape, as that place to find somebody to root for, a place for hope. Even that's thrown off, because you never know which games are going to be cancelled because somebody tested positive. Then there are the athletes that are using their platforms and using their celebrity and their publicity to be able to bring forward valuable and worthwhile causes and topics; but maybe that's not what you tuned in for. Maybe you just wanted the sports; I've heard people say that. For one reason or another, maybe sports aren't giving you the hope, the escape, the outlet, that you once had from them.

Maybe you're spending more time online. Have you heard the new term – doom-scrolling? I find myself skipping over almost everything except memes that are funny, just to find that escape, some hope, or just a scrap of laughter. Maybe you turn to fiction, maybe you turn to games, maybe what once was a search for hope has just become a search for escape, just to get away from everything else. I think a lot of folks are looking around and asking one another, where do you find hope? What's the best place, in a town like this, in a time like this, to get a little bit of hope?

And with all of this, what I'm also seeing, and what has been a trend for many years (if not decades) is that less and less people look to God for hope, at least in our country. Less and less people look to church, or religion, for hope. Some will say that they're spiritual but not religious. "I don't like the church," or

"I don't like Christians, they're hypocrites." Whatever it may be. "But I'm spiritual. I believe in God. I believe in a higher power. But I don't want anything to do with that other stuff." The biggest growing demographic in terms of religion in our country is "none." N-O-N-E. Not the women in the habits. Just nothing. Not atheists, not agnostics, just "No thanks." Less and less people are looking to God for hope. They're still looking. I wonder if they're finding it.

The thing is, whether it was these strange times of Covid and pandemic, or the times before: hope shouldn't be that hard to come by. And the hope you might find from these other sources: eventually you'll keep having to go back for more. They're not going to bring the same hope that God brings. Hope shouldn't cost you anything. But all of these other hope outlets – sports, politics, the news, escapes, whatever – they all come with a markup, or with fine print, or with some kind of price, some kind of diminishing returns. But it's God who has the best hope in town, at the low, low price of free. But less and less people are looking to God to get a hold of that hope.

It is really hard to be hopeful these days. Hurricanes, fires, now earthquake and tsunami. Terrorist attacks. There's so much fighting in the world today, arguing, name-calling, there are threats of violence. Can we even have a peaceful election? Is this a question you ever thought you'd ask in your lifetime? Everything that we took for granted, all the institutions, all the routines, just seem like they're challenged today, threatened, sometimes changing for very good reasons, but change is still hard. And of course there's Covid and there's quarantine, and there are all the things that we're missing, all the things we chafe against – not just the masks, but everything. And people are scared that they could get sick, as numbers spike.

We also live in a world where, more than any other time in history, there are so many choices and decisions and demands and we're constantly being faced with. People are full of fear and they're full of hate, and everybody keeps telling you, it will never get better, unless...you turn to me for hope. And then there's the price. The hope that the world offers comes with a price. It's not always advertised, but you definitely pay it.

One of my favorite prayers comes from the evening prayer, or vespers, service: O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's the free hope of God. It's free to us; but it cost God sorely, the death and resurrection of Jesus. But it's freely offered, freely given, to us. It's this hope that even in the midst of times like these, of perils unknown, paths obscured or unventured, endings unguessable, we don't know where we're going, but we know that God is leading and supporting. That is the hope that we have, that no matter what else is going on, God will get us through it. Shepherding us, like the Lamb on the throne. God is shepherding us.

As we read these lessons that we had today, from Revelation and from 1 John, what we get is the hope of promises. In other parts of scripture we hear about the hope of promises already fulfilled. There was the promise of a Messiah, and then Jesus was born. There was a promise that God would change everything and make a new covenant, and in come the Gentiles. Because of these promises that have been fulfilled, we can trust that God's future promises will also be fulfilled. In 1 John and Revelation, we get the hope of what is to come, these glimpses of promised future hope that has begun but is not yet fully happening. We get these glimpses of the hope that is still to come to carry us forward. Future promises for present hope.

Revelation is a strange book. It's got all the stuff with beasts and dragons and the four horsemen of the apocalypse. It can be a lot to handle. But underneath and among and around all of the strange parts, the scary parts, it's a vision full of promises, and the promises themselves are straightforward and pure and easy to understand. It promises that we will come through the great ordeals in our lives. It promises that we will gather around the throne in praise and worship, that we will be sheltered by the Lamb on the throne, that we will hunger no more, thirst no more. The sun will not scorch us, and the Lamb is our shepherd, we will be guided to the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. That's the promise of what is to come. That's the future promise to give us hope to get through anything now.

1 John basically says: we don't know the future. What will be has not yet been revealed, but what we do know, right now, is that we are children of God. We are loved. We've been made pure through the forgiving power of God's love in Christ, purified from fear and worry and sin and death. We don't know what's coming, but we know the promise. We know that we will see God as God is, just as God sees us. And that future promise of unity and union, of seeing fully, helps us get through now when we can't see the way out of the fear and the darkness and the worry. This future promise gives us present hope.

Death has no power over us. Fear has no power over us. We are children of God, and we have hope.

The future glimpses give us high-quality, high-octane hope. So much so that we are overflowing with the stuff and can't help but spill it out into the world, because people need it. We are so full of this high-powered hope that we are inspired to love and serve others, no purchase necessary, offer never prohibited or voided. The price never varies: the hope that comes from God is always free to us, always available. It's not while supplies last; it's unlimited, and it's free to everyone. Listen to the first part of our Revelation reading: "there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands," praising God. Everybody. Every language, every tongue, every nation – this freedom to love, this hope that gets us through these times – these sure promises from the future that break into our lives now, they're for everybody. No exceptions.

The future promises give us present hope, inspiring us and blessing us to live Beatitude lives now, for this life. To be saintly, to be blessed, to be the fearless meek, to mourn with hope, to risk being poor in spirit as we love the best we can, to accept persecution and revulsion in the name of Christ, and for being purveyors of hope ourselves. To hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, to be peacemakers, to approach the world not with something to sell like all the others, but to offer free samples and life-time supplies of hope, peace, and justice, factory direct from God in heaven to you and you and you and me. Everybody. That's the hope that we have, the hope that turns us into living Beatitudes, blessed to be a blessing.

I want to share an All Saints Day quote with you from a book called *Calendar* by Laurence Stookey. "All Saints Day is not a glorification of human achievement by ordinary folks. All Saints Day is a thanksgiving for the grace and power of the risen Christ at work in ordinary folks." All Saints Day is when we lift up the folks that God has blessed, the Beatitude-livers, the hope-purveyors, both the famous ones and the personal ones. The saints who impacted our lives by living Christ-like lives, by loving unconditionally, by handing that hope out by the bushel, because they had a firm grip on the hope-filled promises of God. That's what we're celebrating today, that's who we're celebrating today.

Last week I had this strange sensation about today, about All Saints Day. Like today, I was standing inside with some of the people, and the rest the folks here were out in their cars, and we couldn't see each other. It was weird to be worshiping together but unseen. And I had this feel wash over me, this feeling of faith. This feeling of hope. I felt like I was receiving this glimpse of the communion of saints, with some already in God's presence and some still on our earthly journeys. We can't see each other, we're not quite together, but we are all together, united in Christ. Separate but together for now, with the promise that we'll all be together one day, no separation at all, around the throne.

We get these glimpses of future hope, just like the sound of the cars honking outside in the parking lot while were inside the building. Unseen but surely there, full of love, giving us hope. Future promises breaking into the our present reality, giving us hope to make it through anything this world can throw at us.

It says in 1 John: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are." We are children of God. We are saints now. We know where to get the best hope, and it's free. And God blesses us to live blessed lives, to be a blessing. God blesses us to live beatitude lives, saintly lives, living embodiments of future hope, freely offered to a world that needs it. As people are walking around saying, "Where do you find hope?" we have an answer. We can be part of the answer. We can be living embodiments of unity in Christ no matter the divides, for a world that separated and broken. We can be living embodiments of promises kept for a world desperately asking, "Where – where, oh where – can I find some hope?"

Thanks be to God for all the saints. Thanks be to God for promises kept, and promises still to come. Thanks be to God for the hope that is in us, freely given and free to share. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY, "Give Thanks for Saints"

Give Thanks for Saints



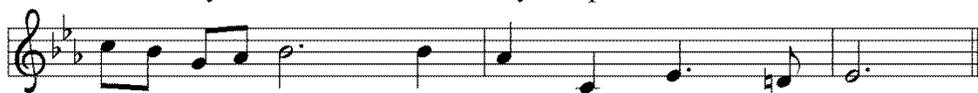
1 Give thanks for those whose faith is firm when all a -
2 Give thanks for those whose hope is clear, be - yond mere
3 Give thanks for those whose love is pure, a spar - kling
4 Give thanks for saints of a - ges past and saints a -



round seems bleak: on God's good prom - ise they re - ly, so
mor - tal sight: who seek the cit - y God has planned, the
pre - cious stone: they show by what they say and do an
live to - day: though of - ten by this world de - spised, their



while they live and when they die how force - ful -
true, e - ter - nal prom - ised land, and steer on
in - ward beau - ty, warm and true, for God's con -
hearts by God are rich - ly prized. Give thanks that



ly they speak— the strong, who once were weak!
toward that light, a bea - con ev - er bright.
cerns they own— God's love through them is known.
we may say we share their pil - grim way.

Text: Martin E. Leckebusch, b. 1962
Music: REPTON, C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918
Text © 2003 Kevin Mayhew Ltd. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

REMEMBRANCE OF ALL SAINTS

P: Let us remember all the saints before God.

O God of the pilgrim's way, we give thanks for those in generations past who have been examples for us of God's love at work in the world. As we pray, we know that we are surrounded by this great, rejoicing cloud of witnesses. Yet even as we name these holy ancestors, we thank God for others whose names we never knew or have forgotten, who showed us the meaning of life in Christ. We also pray for those newly baptized into this life of Christ, witnesses of our present generation and time. Gracious God, in this life and the next, teach us to take Jesus' words to heart:

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
And you will find rest for your souls.

Honoring the Saints

Honored Saints: In this time of silence, please remember before God and one another those who have died in the year that has passed.

Baptized Saints: In this time of silence, please remember before God and one another those who have been baptized in the year that has passed.

Holy God, we honor these, our ancestors in faith and members of our family.

We, too, seek to do your will. Guide us. We, too, desire to be your servants. Strengthen us. We, too, long to know you clearly. Teach us. And in time, bring us to our eternal home of peace and joy. Amen.

CREED

P: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

- A: Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need. *[Brief silence]*
- A: Lord of all the saints, we praise you for evangelists and martyrs whose sacrifices witness to your gospel across time and space. Inspire us by their courage to carry our faith to new people and places around us. Hear us, O God.
- A: Lord of every place, the universe proclaims your greatness from generation to generation. Bless the work of naturalists, conservationists, and park rangers who train our attention to the wonders of the world you have made. Hear us, O God.
- A: Lord of every nation, guide this country—red states and blue states, rural voters and urban voters, young and old—as we share in another national election. Kindle hearts eager to understand our common needs and seek our common good. Hear us, O God.
- A: Lord of every blessing, your Son's blessing came to those living with poverty, grief, hunger, thirst, and persecution. Shape our vision of the saints to match his own. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer. Hear us, O God.
- A: Lord of every venture, anoint us with the missionary spirit of the early church. Bless all new missions of our synod (especially). Empower testimony from new communities of faith to shape a diverse witness to your saving power. Hear us, O God.
- A: Lord of every time, countless are the multitudes you have called by name and gathered to yourself. Comfort us as we grieve those who have died in the past year (here the names of those who have died in the previous year may be read). In faith, may we join with them in ceaseless praise. Hear us, O God.
- A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as we 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. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

A: God of all families, you have given us families to be sanctuaries of blessing, comfort, and love for each other. Under your protection fill us with harmony, hope, and health. We pray this week for the Ash, Bennett, and Berg families as well as our Messiah family. Guard all of our hearts that we may display love instead of hate, anger, or bitterness. Lead us all to be grateful for your abiding love and enable us to glorify you by sharing that love with others. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

BLESSING

P: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✠ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C: *Amen*

SENDING SONG, "For All the Saints"

For All the Saints



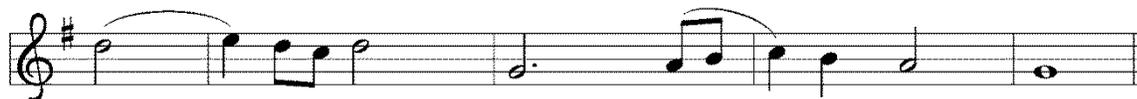
1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who
 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might; thou,
Stanzas 3-5 below.
 6 But then there breaks a yet more glorious day: the
 7 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through



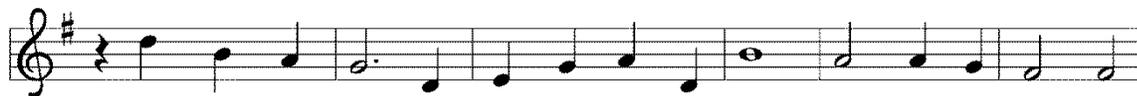
thee by faith before the world confessed, thy
 Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight; ..
 saints triumphant rise in bright array; the
 gates of pearl streams in the countless host, ..



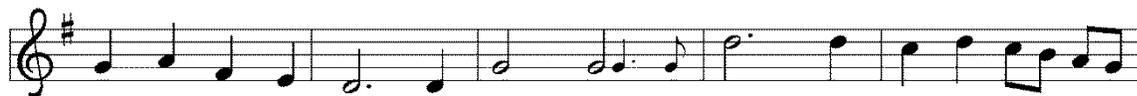
name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
 thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
 King of glory passes on his way.
 singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



3 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine, we feebly struggle,
 4 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the
 5 The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful



they in glory shine; yet all are one in thee, for all are
 distant triumph song, and hearts are brave a - gain and arms are
 ser-vants com-eth rest; . . . sweet is the calm of par - a - dise the



thine. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 strong.
 blest.

Text: William W. How, 1823-1897

Music: SINE NOMINE, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

Music from *The English Hymnal* outside the USA © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Here are Pastor Ryan's office hours (posted below)! Dedicated drop-in hours (= Pastor Ryan is there if you want to drop in) will be: Tuesdays from 2-4:00 pm. Otherwise during posted hours he will either be in the office or making visits, but still in the area. Other times Pastor Ryan will be working from home (to help with his kids' distance learning), and will still be available via phone and email, which are: messiahmechpr@gmail.com and 507-360-7276. Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

Pastor Ryan in the office - Tuesdays 1-5; Thursdays 1-5 and Fridays 9-3

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found, the annual Virginia Synod weekend retreat for youth in 7th and 8th grades and their adult advisors, will be DIGITAL this year! The event will take place via Zoom during four blocks of time on Nov. 20-21, 2020 (Friday 6 PM to Saturday 7:30 PM). For more information and to register for this year's event, visit <https://www.vasynod.org/event/lost-and-found/>.

DIGITAL WORSHIP/CHURCH TEAM

We are searching for **1** more person as we form a new team here at Messiah. In our digital world, the last several months have shown us that the digital platform has allowed us to worship together although apart. We realize offering Worship and Christian Formation opportunities through digital means has become an important part of being Messiah. Building on information that has been presented by Synod, Council is seeking to establish a team of individuals who have an interest in helping us use digital platforms in the best possible way. We currently have 5 people, but would love to have just **one** more. Please let Pastor Ryan, Karen Morris, or Donna Shaw know if you're interested. We can't wait to see where this journey takes us!

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 \$2801 through October 25th (slightly down from \$2840 on October 18th.)
- We are \$25,902.50 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$23,690.50 behind the budget the week prior).
- Weekly budget need is \$3404.00.

PASTOR WALTONEN MEMORIAL DONATION

Church Council would like to offer the opportunity for members to help Messiah honor Pastor Waltonen by making contributions to a designated fund in his name. Monies given to this fund will be sent by Messiah to the Lewy Body Dementia Association in honor of Pastor Tim. It is such a privilege for Messiah to honor this gentle giant of a man who was among us for 2 years (prior to Pastor Lou) as an interim pastor. When donating, please make any checks payable to Messiah and then designate your contribution to the "Pastor Waltonen Fund" and put it in the weekly offering plate by December 1, 2020.

SMALL GROUPS

If you'd like to have a small group or committee meeting at the church, please check out the Small Group Meetings and Cleaning Protocols. You can contact Davina when wanting to schedule a time for your group to meet and get the latest protocols. The only areas open at this time include the Fellowship Hall, the hallway to the restrooms, and the restrooms. All other parts of the building remain 'closed' for now. There are also copies of the forms at church on the kitchen counter for you to use at your meeting along with necessary cleaning supplies. Davina will maintain the completed forms in her office. Thanks for all you do! Stay well everyone!

VIRTUAL THANKOFFERING SERVICE

The **Virginia Synodical Women's Organization (VSWO)** is very excited to announce that they will be hosting a virtual Thankoffering Service on Saturday November 21st beginning at 10 AM. Thankofferings are a long-standing custom among Lutheran women, to show gratitude for God's blessings and give an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. This year's VSWO event will be using the *Light the Way for Justice, Light the Way for Love* Thankoffering service. Lisa Plorin, the Women of ELCA president will join to deliver the sermon.

In addition, before the service the VSWO will host breakout room opportunity. This will allow for time to reconnect and share with each other, since the organization has not been able to meet in person and connect as a community this year.

The event will be hosted on Zoom, with registration required to join. To register for the event, please check out the **VSWO Facebook page**.

WEBSITE CHANGE

A new tab has been added to our church website entitled "E-Messages". Under this tab you will find links to Bible Study Handouts, weekly Sunday Bulletins, and the monthly Messenger. Hope you find this change helpful when you're looking for these items.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: HURRICANES AND CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Following the devastation caused by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, as well as the impact of wildfires across California and the Northwest, Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) is responding. You can help LDR as they assist the communities who have been impacted by these natural disasters, through prayer and giving through Lutheran Disaster Relief. Your gifts designated for "Hurricane Response" or "U.S. Wildfires" will be used entirely (100%) for direct response until it is complete. Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes or wildfires.

REBUILD RVA GRANT PROGRAM

The Rebuild VA Grant Fund is a program to help small businesses and non-profits whose normal operations were disrupted by COVID-19, including restaurants, brick and mortar retail, exercise and fitness facilities, personal care and personal grooming services, entertainment and public amusement establishments, and campgrounds. Businesses and non-profits that are approved for a Rebuild VA grant may receive up to 3 times their average monthly eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$10,000.

WEBSITE CHANGE

A new tab has been added to our church website entitled "E-Messages". Under this tab you will find links to Bible Study Handouts, weekly Sunday Bulletins, and the monthly Messenger. Hope you find this change helpful when you're looking for these items.

VIRGINIA RENT AND MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAM (RMRP)

The Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic. Depending on availability of funds and household need, the RMRP may provide financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments for eligible households. This includes financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments past due beginning April 1, 2020 and onward. Financial assistance is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funding and the household's need for additional assistance and continued eligibility. For more information please visit: Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT – COMING BACK

We're continuing the getting-back-together process. Small groups have already been meeting, and now we're making the first go and worshiping inside together again. As we come back together in person, we also encourage you, prayerfully and as you are able, to come back in your giving, too. Thank you for the generosity you have already shown through these difficult times! Please 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. Thank you!