

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*November 29, 2020
First Sunday of Advent*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
(November 29, 2020)

For video go to: <https://messiahmech.com/messiah-digital/>

GATHERING HYMN **Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn**



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen
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LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

P: We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C: Amen

Light the first candle.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray:

C: *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen*

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 64:1-9

Lector

A reading from Isaiah.

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,

and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Lector

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴"In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So

also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

The heaviest part of your body is your head. “Where your head goes, the rest of you goes,” right? But I don’t think it’s because of your brain and your skull and all of that. Nope. I think what makes your head the heaviest part of your body has got to be your eyelids. Sounds crazy, I know, but bear with me. Have you ever tried to keep those things open when you’re dead tired? Have you ever tried to fight your eyelids once they start drooping, when the weariness catches up? There is nothing in this world that will keep them open when you reach that point. Eyelids are surely heavy when you get that tired.

“Keep awake,” Jesus says. “Beware. Keep alert. Keep awake.” The Son of Man will return. You don’t know when. So watch for the signs and be ready. Beware. Keep alert. Keep awake. That’s your job. Pretty straightforward. Keep awake until the Lord comes. Throw in the lesson from a few weeks ago about the foolish bridesmaids and add some “be ready,” too, and you’re all set. When he comes, it will be unmistakable: signs and portents in the heavens, winds and angels and power. But it will come *suddenly* when it comes. So: KEEP AWAKE.

Well, friends, I’m trying. But my eyelids are surely heavy. We’re approaching month nine of this quarantine, and I’d love it for God to tear open the heavens and come down, to surprise us with unexpected relief and release, to make the name of God known as the savior once more. It just feels like this pandemic has stretched on to endlessness, to “the way things are now.” And we’re supposed to keep waiting, keep alert, keep awake, with our precautions, with our distancing, maintaining an airtight standard of caution. And while we wait we’re just seeing all the problems and divides and sins of our society, of our country, of our world, our homes & relationships, under spotlights and microscopes, the geologic layers of sin that have piled up like sediment among us.

If nine months of waiting for the pandemic to find resolution and relief are this hard, how the heck are we supposed to keep awake for the Lord? We don’t know how long we’ll have to wait. We don’t know when he’s coming again – no one knows, not even the angels, not even the Son – only the Father.

We're just supposed to stay alert and keep awake like eternal doorkeepers, watching for signs. I'm not seeing portents in the heaven yet – no stars falling, no darkened sun and lightless moon, no heavens shaking. But the longer this time of sickness – virus and sin – drags on, the more it feels like the sky is falling down and the world is falling apart. *Is the Lord at the very gates?* I don't know. My eyelids are heavy.

Brothers and sisters, am I ever tired. My Lord and my God, how long? How long do you want us to stay awake? As much as there have been outpourings of kindness and love of neighbor through all of this, there is just as much selfishness and pettiness that just prolongs the pandemic, and deepens the divisions too. Like I said – we're struggling with nine months; how do we stay awake for the Lord? Jesus said the return would come after a time of suffering. Are we there yet? Check, please. My eyelids are surely heavy. How are yours? I'm tired. How about you?

When I'm this tired, I want to sleep. I want to shut down and curl up and turn out the lights. I don't want to sit in vigil, waiting and watching; I'll just fall out of my chair anyway. My chin will hit my chest. I'll be dead to the world.

Now apply that spiritually: when we are spiritually tired, eyelids heavy and body wracked with weariness after endless waiting for the Lord to come, for the Savior to return, for the pains and ills and sins of this world to finally be put to rest and put to a stop for good, we want to sleep. We want to shut down and turn inward. No more watching, no more waiting. Let's just take care of ourselves, our own stuff, let's hoard the toilet paper, let's be numb, let's succumb to the fatigue, let's be dead to the world.

Here's the thing, though. If we succumb to the fatigue, if we don't stay awake and just turn in and turn numb, if we are dead to the world; then where does that leave the world? Where does that leave us?

Jesus says: "And what I say to you I say to all: keep awake." I'll say it a different way: keep kingdom-ing. Don't think of it as forcing heavy eyelids to stay open. We are only human, and that's a battle we aren't going to win. Instead, think of it as being a conduit, letting the kingdom of God enter into this world through you, in preliminary ways, until Jesus comes again in the ultimate way.

Jesus says, "From the fig tree learn its lesson..." When you see those leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So watch for signs and be ready. Keep awake. I'll say it a different way: keep kingdom-ing. In the fig tree image, the leaves are what we're looking for, right? I say: be the leaves. Just sitting and waiting and watching and trying to keep awake will lead to heavy eyelids and God's people being dead to the world. So, how about this: instead of just waiting for "thy kingdom come" when Jesus returns, let's participate now. Luther says, "God's kingdom comes on its own without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us." And also in us. And among us. And through us.

So keep kingdom-ing. Be the leaves for others, so that they see the signs of God's love, God's working in the world, right now. Don't just watch; participate.

How do we do this? As Paul writes, "God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." And he says, "you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ." And he says, "He will also strengthen you to the end..."

How do we do this? We don't. Not on our own. God does it in and through and for us. God is faithful, the potter to our clay. We are all God's people. And so when Jesus says, "Keep awake," or I say, "keep kingdom-ing," well – we don't do it on our own. God is faithful to us to make it possible, to hold us while we wait, to steward our eyelids and everything else that might feel heavy. God is faithful to us and plants us in fellowship with Christ and with one another, so none of us has to keep awake, or keep kingdom-ing, on our own: we're in this together, by the grace of God, in the footsteps of Christ, with the guidance of the Spirit, for the sake of the world. God is faithful, and we are in fellowship, so that we can be the leaves, be the signs. God strengthens us and gives us spiritual gifts, and we are not lacking as we wait for our Lord.

God, I'm tired. Tired of pandemics and quarantines. Tired of divisions and hate and fear. Tired of selfishness and pettiness. Tired of suffering and sin. Tired of waiting and watching. And my eyelids are surely heavy. I just want to close 'em. I want to sleep. I want to be dead to the world. But God loves this world. Loves it to death; to the death of His only Son. Loves it to life once again, new leaves after a long winter, signs that the kingdom is coming, present tense. Loves us. God is faithful, and we are not lacking. We are in fellowship, and God gives us the power, all together, to keep awake, to keep kingdom-ing, to *live* for the world and for others, so that they see the signs of God's love, God's interventions, God's activity, in this world, in this pandemic, in these hearts, right now.

Welcome to Advent. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death



1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

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: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need. [*Brief silence*]

A: We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God

C: *Your mercy is great*

A: We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God

C: *Your mercy is great*

A: We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God

C: *Your mercy is great*

A: We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. (Local feeding or housing ministries may be named). Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God

C: *Your mercy is great*

A: We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (especially). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God

C: Your mercy is great

A: We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. 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 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. Hear us, O God

C: Your mercy is great

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 Delph & Dworak 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. Hear us, O God

C: Your mercy is great

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: 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: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

C: Amen

SENDING SONG, Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Here are Pastor Ryan's office hours for this week (posted below)! Pastor Ryan is also available via phone and email, which are: 507-360-7276 and messiahmechpr@gmail.com.

Pastor Ryan hours:

Tuesday: 1-5 pm (*drop-in 2-4 pm*) / Wednesday: 9-2 pm / Thursday: 1-5 pm

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting for Messiah Lutheran Church will be held drive-in style in the parking lot following our worship service on Sunday, December 6th. We will be voting on the 2021 budget and electing council members.

CORNUCOPIA OF PRAYERS

If you would like your name to be a part of this year's (virtual) Cornucopia of Prayers, please let the church office know as soon as possible. We'll let you know who you get to pray for in the year to come, and someone will be praying for you, too.

ADVENT MIDWEEK MESSAGES

Please email in your "Faith Ponderings" to Pastor Ryan. A Faith Pondering is any question or wonderment or curiosity you have about the Church, the Bible, Lutheranism, or faith in general. Your questions will be the basis of the Midweek Messages in Advent. Thanks in advance!

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 \$2,783 through November 22, 2020 (slightly down from \$2,814 on November 15).
- We are \$29,197.00 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$27,149.00 behind the budget the week prior).
- Weekly budget need is \$3404.00.

FUNRAISER FOR MCEF

The third Monday of each month from 4 to 8 p.m. at Chicken Salad Chick, mention that you support MCEF and 10% of sale will be donated to MCEF. It is located at 6575 Mechanicsville Turnpike, Brandy Creek Commons. Available for drive-through, carry out, curbside pick-up or eat in. A large variety of chicken salads and more on the menu.

FOSTER CHILDREN CHRISTMAS GIFTS

It is time to think of our Foster Children and Christmas gifts. This year is going to be different. After polling the families, they are asking for things they can do at home. The Social Ministry team decided that gift cards, which the families have suggested, are the best gifts. They will be able to purchase whatever they want or need. They are requesting cards from Walmart, Target, Amazon, Kroger or Food Lion. The cards need to be in the amount of \$25 each, in order for them to be distributed equally. If it is difficult for you to get to a store, you can give any amount of money to a Social Ministry member and we can add to or just purchase the card. Please drop them off during the month of November, the latest being Nov. 29th. There will be a decorated box, for the cards, at the door of the Fellowship Hall, where we will be worshipping. Also you can drop them off at the church office during the week. If you have any questions please call Sharon Addair, 543-9709. Other Social Ministry members are, Diane Absher, Marilyn Gunn, Sheila Whirley, and Debbie Walker. Thank you, for your generosity!

YOU CAN STILL CONTRIBUTE!

For those wishing to contribute to the memorial fund for Pastor Waltonen...you still can! Please make your check out to Messiah with Pastor Waltonen written on the memo line. We will take donations up through Dec. 6. After that time, we will send the monies collected to the Lewey Body Dementia Association in his memory. Help us honor this gentle man who helped Messiah become the church it is today.

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!

NO ROOM AT THE INN

Experience A Thrill of Hope In this year of fear and struggle we need the hope and joy of Christmas. Our 13th annual No Room at the Inn will be a virtual event with a live online Preview Gala on Friday December 4th, 2020. The virtual Nativity Exhibit will be available online through Christmas. Funds raised will be shared with My Path Forward, MCEF's emergency housing assistance program, and AFAL in Haiti building modest homes for their neediest families. Visit churchredeemer.org/no-room or call 730-7980 for details. Like and Share us on Facebook by searching for us on Facebook at No Room at the Inn Mechanicsville VA.

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.

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 worshipping 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. Thanks!

UPDATED: REBUILD RVA GRANT PROGRAM

On October 28, the Governor's Office released information about an expansion of the Rebuild Virginia Grants. The grants are available to small businesses and non-profits. Unlike the last time round of Rebuild Virginia grants, the expansion specifically says that an organization can receive funding even if the organization received CARES Act Funding. Qualified recipients can receive a grant of up to three months' worth of expenses to help with salaries, mortgage, utilities, etc. The FAQs aren't as entirely clear, but when you combine the FAQs with the application guide (pg 4 in particular addresses what is excluded for those with CARES Act funding), it appears that most organizations in Virginia are eligible. This funding may prove particularly helpful for child care and preschool ministries that had issues with part-time employees and PPP Loan calculations. One potential hurdle for an application is the requirement for a DUNS number. The DUNS numbers appear to be standard practice in the for-profit world and almost unheard of in the non-profit world. It is possible for a church or non-profit to apply for a DUNS number, but the online process to get the number can be confusing.

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.

SMILE! MESSIAH RECEIVES .5% DONATION WHEN YOU SHOP ON AMAZON!

This holiday season, online holiday shopping is expected to increase over 33% more than last year. More people will be browsing Amazon this year more than ever. With the shopping season among us, the Stewardship team would like to remind everyone to sign up for Amazon Smile! Signing up is easy and does not interfere with Prime Membership benefits. Amazon donates .5% of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

Step 1: visit smile.amazon.com

Step 2: sign in with your amazon account credentials

Step 3: Search for "Messiah Lutheran Church Mechanicsville"

Step 4: Start SHOPPING! *please remember to bookmark smile.amazon.com for easy access every time you shop. You must add the "smile" for this program.

Thank you all and happy shopping!

GLOBAL BARNYARD PROJECT CONTINUES!

As you might remember, during last year's Sunday School, we were collecting money for Global Barnyard through the ELCA. Since the project was halted in March due to the virus, we'd like to finish what we started! Your role is to find those 'Piggy Banks' you were filling up, continue to add to them, and then bring them to church by Dec. 20. There are still some banks left if you want to get one some Sunday when you're at church (we can have an usher bring one to you). Also, between now and Dec. 20 be on the lookout for a short survey from Survey Monkey that will be used to help decide what will be bought with our collection. You should expect to see the survey in the next week or so. Right now, there is \$175.79 in our Global Barnyard Fund. Let's see how merry we can make someone's Christmas in another part of the world! Thank you for your participation in completing what we started! If you have any questions, please contact Donna Shaw, dmslaw70@gmail.com, 804-205-2943.