

The

MESSENGER



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

FEBRUARY 2021

Highlights from the Messiah Church Council meeting

Messiah Church Council met for a regular monthly council meeting on 01/19/21. The following are highlights of the meetings.

- **Pastor Ryan** reported on the Congregational Life of the Church, stating that we were able to celebrate Christmas Eve with a drive-in service, despite some of the worst weather our drive-in services have had. He has eight confirmation students and had the first class via Zoom. He met with the Shepherd Team. He discussed with Council the Lenten services and Ash Wednesday.
- The Treasurer's Report shows that we ended the year with about a \$2000 positive balance. This was quite a miracle in terms of the pandemic and loss of some of our donations. It was made possible due to not having a permanent pastor for most of the year, as well as our PPP grant that was secured by **John Cline**. We also received one-time donations from members' RMD's at the end of the year and the beginning of this year, rather than weekly donations from those members.
- **Shawn Warmbrod** acknowledged receiving a check for \$1000 from the Newell memorial.

- Council said "thank you" to **Becky Col-lie** for her two terms of service on Council. Her work and dedication has been greatly appreciated.
- Council welcomed two new members: **Dianne Absher** and **Debbie Walker** for their two-year terms.
- Council elected officers for 2021: President – **James Anderson**; Vice President – **Donna Shaw**; Secretary – **Karen Morris**; Treasurer – **Shawn Warmbrod**; Financial Secretary – **Bill Weaver**
- Liaisons to council were re-assigned: Christian Formation – **Anita Philps**; Evangelism – **Donna Shaw**; Fellowship – **Karen Morris**; Finance – **James Anderson**; Property – **Roger Schroeder**; Social Ministry – **Dianne Absher**; Stewardship – **Diana Sodor**; Worship – **Debbie Walker**.

- submitted by **Karen Morris**

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VISIT OUR MLC WEBSITE:
<http://www.messiahmech.com>

Your 2021 Church Council And Associate Members

James Anderson Council President
Donna Shaw Vice-President
Karen Morris Secretary

Dianne Absher **Anita Philps**
Roger Schroeder **Diana Sondor**
Debbie Walker

Council Liaisons

Christian Formation **Anita Philps**
 Evangelism **Donna Shaw**
 Fellowship **Karen Morris**
 Finance **James Anderson**
 Property **Roger Schroeder**
 Social Ministry **Dianne Absher**
 Stewardship **Diana Sondor**
 Worship **Debbie Walker**

Shawn Warmbrod Treasurer
Bill Weaver Financial Secretary
Sue Gilnett, RN... Parish Nurse

YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

Thank you for all of your contributions of time, talent and gifts given to Messiah Lutheran. Your contributions are vital for us to continue to be a strong church within the Mechanicsville community. Please continue to consider ways you can help the church and it's outreach programs through both monetary and non-monetary efforts in the upcoming months.

- Diana Sondor
 Stewardship Liaison

Pastor Ryan's office hours

Pastor Ryan's office hours are posted for the upcoming week in each Sunday's bulletin. You can reach out to him to schedule an appointment or for any other reason at the following:

messiahmechpr@gmail.com
 And 507-360-7276

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

Pastor's message

Between love and ashes

Three years ago Ash Wednesday happened to fall on the same day as Valentine's Day. I remember lots of church-folks commenting on that juxtaposition, and how it was significant to talk about our own mortality on a day dedicated to love, and how Jesus was like God's Valentine to us sinners, and other things like that. And we also talked about how it was kind of weird to be drawing crosses with ashes on people's heads, when many of those heads were probably full of thoughts of chocolates and punch-out valentine cards at school and what the Hallmark channel might have on for a cheesy movie that night.

This year the two days are separated; Valentine's Day is on a Sunday; Ash Wednesday is on the 17th. Three days of separation. But maybe that's even more significant.

Filter out all of the romantic stuff about Valentine's Day and how commercialized you think it might be, and at its heart it's a day about love. Meanwhile, Ash Wednesday is pretty unfiltered all by itself. It's a day about admitting your own sin and mortality. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." And, this year at least, there's just three days in between love and ashes.

It was three days from what seemed like the ashes, the end, the death of Jesus' ministry and savior-ship, until Jesus rose from the grave, left the tomb empty, and showed the ultimate act of God's heart, God's love for the world: new life through Christ. Three days between love and ashes.

I'm not sure how Ash Wednesday will feel this year. Who wants to confront their mortality this year, after nearly 400,000 Covid deaths in our country alone, and damage done economically to so many

lives as well? Who wants to confront mortality for those who have barely left their houses in nearly a year? For a country living in fear. For a country divided. Who wants to be reminded of the harsh reality of sin and death, and our unequivocal need for God to save us?

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Got it.

In reality, we need Ash Wednesday as much as ever, especially since it kicks off the season of Lent, that leads to Holy Week, and the story of the Passion, and then – and only then – to Easter. Because, without God's intervention, and salvation, and love – without those three days of separation – we would not have the inseparable love we now have through our baptisms into Christ Jesus.

We need Ash Wednesday as much as ever, since our world has an ashen cast this year, and we pass through the ritual of ashes and confession and recognition eagerly, ready to come face to face with God's love, ashes only temporarily highlighting our baptismal crosses.

Three days between love and ashes this year. But there is nothing that comes between God's love overcoming our sin, and the freedom to love others in turn. May God work through each of us to display that love, as clearly as the cross on our heads, to this world around us, to tell the good news that there is life after, and even amidst, the ashes.

- **Pastor Ryan**





| February 2021 | | | | | | |
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| 28 | | | | | | |

Dear Messiah family,
I honestly don't know where to begin - thank you for the cards, the flowers, the texts, and the prayers and concern for **John**. He certainly loved all of you. His faith was strengthened from the relationships which made him want to do more. I would not be able to get through this past month if it weren't for God's help and my Messiah family. Thank you.

In Christ's name,
Rosalie

Charlie and Judy send love and appreciation to the Messiah family for prayers, calls, texts, and emails during Judy's new bout with chemo, Charlie's VA visits, and his uncle's illness and hospice with subsequent death. We have confidence that he's at rest now.

Judy and Charlie

Many thanks to all of those "servants" who have served so faithfully at the drive-in services

Blessings,
Sally Bennett, MLC Worship Team Leader

- 2 THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD
7 10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran:
Worship Service
14 TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY
10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran:
Worship Service
15 Presidents Day
Church Office Closed
16 6:15 PM Council Meeting
17 ASH WEDNESDAY
21 10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran:
Worship Service
Manna Sunday—MCEF
28 10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran:
Worship Service

* Watch the Messiah website and Facebook page for any updates

Women's Bible study

Women's Bible Study group will be starting a new study for 2021, called *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* by Kathie Lee Gifford.

Please join us on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. Please bring your own chair and snacks.

If you have any questions please contact **Valerie Williams** (240-638-6162 or vswilliams2005@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you all there!





- 2 **Taylor Starrett**
- 7 **Jean Martin**
- 21 **Victoria Gustafson**
- 23 **Grace Anderson**

If you would like **YOUR** birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please call Davina (746-7134) or send an email to messiahmech@gmail.com.



The power of love

By comparing love to everything from oxygen and fire to wind and war, songs and poetry emphasize its immense power — for good or for ill. Christian author Patrick Morley uses metaphors that focus on love's practicality in everyday life: "Love is the glue that holds us together and the oil that keeps us from rubbing each other the wrong way." He also calls love "the WD-40 of relationships" because it "can seep into tight places where logic, threats and even promises just can't seem to penetrate."

St. Augustine, who predated WD-40 by centuries, knew that love not only eases friction in personal interactions but, with God's help, can change hearts and lives. "Love all [people], even your enemies," he advises. "Love them, not because they are your brothers, but that they may become your brothers. Thus you will ever burn with fraternal love, both for him who is already your brother and for your enemy, that he may by loving become your brother."

Global Barnyard thank you!

"Thank you for your donation to support the mission and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through ELCA Good Gifts. Your generous gifts are making a difference in the world — responding to hunger and poverty, sharing the gospel, equipping leaders, and growing the church. Thank you for all that you have graciously given so that others may experience God's love."

Our \$630 purchased: 10 Clinic visits for a child; Feeding 4 children for a month; 3 groups of Goat/flock of chickens; 5 Fruit tree seedlings; 5 Sets of Honeybees; 4 Sets of Soap and Sanitation Supplies. Thank you to all who donated! A great way to begin 2021!



MCEF Notes

2020 was a year with so many changes in so many ways. The climate with Covid changed operating procedures, clients, volunteers and donations. Protocol has been followed with social distancing, masks, temps and number of persons at the OSS. Many volunteers (primarily those more senior than others) have elected not to volunteer, which has led to seeking out willing volunteers to man the operations necessary to meet the needs. Donations to the facility have increased, both in groceries, clothing and financial contributions.

MCEF thanks all for your continuing support of the 8 local missions.

For more information and specific needs go to 4mcef.com.

- submitted by **Gladys Hubert**



We pray for each other:

Debbie Anton; Johnnie Collie; Kenneth Deere; Wendy DeGraff; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Ted Ford; Bill Fulop; Steve Gilnett; "Doc" Kondaki; Mac McAllister; Lois Schroeder; Ruth Schroeder; Judy Schwerdtfeger.

We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

The Allen Family, relatives of the Whirleys; **Bonnie Altobelli**, sister of Brenda Laveck; **Cindy Bowers**, friend of Anne Mason; **Cathy Cadd**, friend of Dianne Absher; **Dwayne Collie**, Johnnie's brother; **Robin Dillon**, friend of Dianne Absher; **John Drazenovich**, former member of Messiah; **Kathy Fleming and family**, cousin of the Schwerdtfegers; **Carolyn Leonard**, sister of James Anderson; **Suzanne McEwen**, friend of Linda Mahovtas (Covid 19); **Michael Morin**, son of Sally & Charlie Bennett; **Lori Mullen**, friend of Dianne Absher; **Christina Nibali**, sister of Anita Philp; **Pat Ruffner**, friend of the Whirleys; **Roger Sabanosh**, cousin of Karen Morris; **Family and Friends of Jessi Schalley**, niece of Schwerdtfegers; **Dee Schroeder**, sister-in-law of Roger; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Charles Schwerdtfeger, Jr.**, son of Charlie; **Hunter Townsend**, friend of the Whirleys; **Elaine Turner**, friend of Becky Collie; **Family and friends of Billy Vaughan**, Charlie's Schwerdtfeger's uncle; **Family and friends of Dorothy Wells**, friend of Schwerdtfegers; **Aimee West**, MCEF vol-

unteer; **Family and friends of Sam Williamson**, friend of Schwerdtfegers.

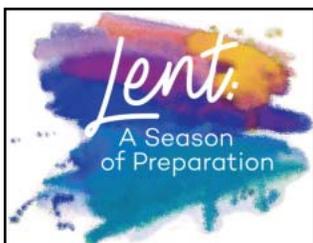
Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families, All law enforcement, firefighters and first responders; The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry; Hospitals, nursing homes, & other health care facilities; The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; The World Health Organization; Medical researchers and scientists; Schools, Workplaces, Government institutions and municipal agencies; Those affected by fires and hurricanes; For all who travel; All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Yemen, and Iran.¹

¹ Open Doors World WatchList 2021
<http://www.opendoorsusa.org>

From the Shepherd's Team

If you have asked for someone in your life to be on the prayer list, please remember to share updates on how they're doing with the pastor or the church office. It helps us in our work of prayer.

Also, if you've been staying home during this pandemic, please know that our parking lot services at church involve interaction only if you want them to. Ushers and lay assistants wear gloves and masks when they collect offerings and distribute Communion. And you don't ever have to get out of your car. If you would like to keep staying home, our love is with you! But know that we are thinking about you, and you are missed. God be with you till we meet again.



CFFY – Lenten activities for the entire family

As you begin to plan for Lent which begins on February 17, please look at the following movies, books, and activities. It is hoped that you find them a helpful resource when we begin the season of sacrifice, fasting, and discipline.

Movies:

The Chosen (2017) is an episodic biblical series based on events surrounding the ministry years of Jesus Christ. It follows the backstory of a few well-known characters before they first meet Jesus and interact with Him. The film received Dove approval for ages 12+, 9.7/10 from IMDb, and 100% from Rotten Tomatoes. It can be found on YouTube.

The Prince of Egypt (1998) is an animated film about two men — brother and prince, of the greatest empire on earth. One will someday rule Egypt. The other will become one of the greatest heroes of all time. A lie made them brothers — but the truth will destroy a dynasty and forever separate them — in faith — in heritage — in destiny. The film received Dove approval for all ages, 7.1/10 from IMDb, and 80% from Rotten Tomatoes. It can be found on many of the streaming stations, Hulu, Amazon Prime, and YouTube.

The Miracle Maker (2001), with the use of Claymation and graphically striking two-dimensional animation, brings the story of Jesus. As a sick

little girl encounters Jesus through different stages of His life, we are given a remarkably accurate retelling of Christ's ministry. The film has received a Dove approval for all ages, 6.9/10 from IMDb, and 86% on Rotten Tomatoes. It can be viewed on Tubi for free and is on Amazon Prime.

Books:

The Lent Experience Journal by Eric Ferris is exactly that...an experience...for normal people like you and me. It's not just more teaching. It's not just more information. It's not some stuffy, religious obligation. It's an invitation to do something different.. The Lent Experience Journal is a companion to help you both process and absorb this experience to the fullest. This book is available through Amazon and most booksellers.

There are numerous devotional guides for Lent...pick the one that's just right for you.

Activities:

Give up Something as a Family for 40 days. Maybe it could be giving up dessert, watching a favorite TV show, something that you enjoy and want to do/eat/have.

40 bags in 40 days. Instead of OR in addition to giving up something for Lent, purge a bag's worth of stuff every day. Make it a family affair. One item per day could equal a lot to someone in need.

Read through the four gospels and focus on the themes of repentance and forgiveness.

Screen fast. Pick one day/evening out of each week that you're going to fast from screens — TV, phones, computers, video games, all of it. It'll be hard but you can do it!

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CFFY

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Build a Lenten Cross. This is similar to an advent wreath, except that you would have the shape of a cross and 6 candles. You could make your own with 6 votive candles placed in a cross shape. Light one or more candles each night during dinner for the entire Lenten season.

Give up caffeine, or something you do daily. Something that's REALLY going to be hard for you to do, just to see how hard it is!

Fast one or two days a week to reflect on what Jesus gave for us.

Keep a journal and reflect on the ways in which the cross and resurrection impacts your story.

- submitted by **Donna Shaw**

The DEADLINE for the
March, 2021
edition of *The Messenger* is
Sunday, February 21st
(Please contact me,
if you need a "grace period")

Please call **Susie Weaver** with your
submission, hand me a written
submission OR email
susiew51@comcast.net



Join Messiah on Facebook!