

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*March 14, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Lent*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

Fourth Sunday in Lent (March 14, 2021)

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

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

C: Amen

P: God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

P: Fountain of living water,

C: pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

P: Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG: Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

THE GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: *And also with you.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray:

C: *O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, 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 Numbers 21:4-9

Lector

A reading from Numbers.

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 2:1-10

Lector

A reading from Ephesians.

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

C: Glory to you, O Lord

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross..

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Ryan Radtke

God saves. That's what God does. That's who God is. Even the name "Jesus" means something like "He Saves." The Bible – the account of God and God's people – our book of Scripture, is one story of God's saving acts after another, one passage after another, variations on this one theme. God delivers, God protects, God spares, God redeems, God intervenes, God defeats an enemy, God has mercy, God forgives, God heals, God feeds, God restores, God sacrifices. All different ways to say: God saves.

We heard it today in our lessons: God commanded Moses to construct the saving symbol of the bronze serpent on the pole, tall enough that anyone could see it. If anyone was bitten by the poisonous snakes, they could look at that bronze serpent on the pole, be healed, live, continue on their winding wilderness trek to the Promised Land, and thus be saved. And it wasn't just that the snake bites were healed, or that their griping was put to rest; when they looked at the serpent on the pole they would know that it wasn't really the hunk of metal that saved them, from the snakebites or anything else; it was always God who saves.

In John's Gospel, this story from Numbers is the same Scripture story that Jesus recalls to describe how the Son of Man must be lifted up, on a cross, in a way that will be seen by anyone, or at least in a way that was so memorable that it could never be forgotten. In this case, it was so that God could heal and repair so much more than just snakebites. Jesus was lifted up on the cross to save the world, all of creation. Jesus was lifted up on a cross to save the world that God loved and loves, a world God loves so much that He would send His only Son into it, and give His only Son in exchange for it, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal, and abundant, life. Jesus was lifted up on a cross so that all who look on it and believe that God Saves would continue on our own winding wilderness of sin and be brought to new life in Christ.

God sent the light into the world to save the world from the darkness of furtive hearts that we seem to love and prefer. God declared a judgment that the light has come, a judgment in favor of, and on behalf of, the world and that which is in it, to expose the evil acts of darkness and to put the spotlight on the cross on which Jesus, "He Saves," hangs.

It's no wonder that John 3:16 is for so many individuals the core and summary of the whole gospel, the whole good news: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." I even like John 3:17 a little better: "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

And then we have the passage from the letter to the Ephesians, our Lutheran bread and butter: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not our own doing; it is the gift of God." Through Jesus' death and resurrection we are saved from sin, death, and the devil, from our own selfish

tendencies and desires, from our own efforts to save our own selves or at the very least look good enough on paper that God won't have any choice but to save ones that are so good as us. Just like with the impatient, complaining, misguided Israelites in the wilderness, God saves us from ourselves.

We all hear this, these variations on a theme, week after week, day after day, Bible story after Bible story. I wouldn't be surprised if many of you, as soon as I started talked about how "God saves," just sort of mentally checked out: "God saves. Got it. Check. God's people are hard-headed, blah blah blah. Jesus dying and rising, yaddah yaddah yaddah. Grace and faith and works and all that jazz, etc., etc. What else you got? I wonder where we should eat after service is over? Did I finish the crossword puzzle this morning? Shoot – sermon's over! Time to sing!

In college I developed a condition related to all of this. I called it "poster desensitization." There were so many posters and flyers and ads and invitations all over campus – on the doors leading in and out of every building, in our mailboxes, on bulletin boards, on walls, in bathrooms, in the dorms, outside, everywhere. It got to the point that you just tuned them *all* out after a while. You looked past them or through them or around them, or you saw them and none of it even registered. After a while you just plain ignored them.

One year, one of my jobs for the fraternity I was in was to hang posters for our events. I knew what I was up against, so I would try to hang things in unusual or uncustomary places, like on the angled ceiling of the staircase, or *inside* the stalls in the bathrooms. Or I would hang them by the other posters, but at a slightly odd or crooked angle. I would do my best to design them with eye-catching words or images. But deep down I knew that, for the most part, it was a futile effort, and I carried on tuning all of it out, even the posters for things I would like, even my own posters, desensitized to the sheer, numbing, overwhelming wallpaper that they made.

Maybe you can relate to this too, and not just in terms of hearing "God saves" every week. There are probably people in your life, maybe even those closest to you, that you see so often, that you know so well, that you might be a little desensitized to them. Especially after being stuck inside together for a year! On the plus side, it might mean that you're overlooking flaws or tuning out idiosyncrasies – yay! On the down side, it might mean that you're taking the good things for granted, just because you see and hear them all the time.

We are prone to desensitization, desensitization to people, to things, to routines, to the good and the bad. There might be people at school, at work, in the congregation, that just get so repeated, so commonplace, so blah-blah and yaddah-yaddah and broken record and "Time to make the donuts," that you don't register them anymore – even if they're important, even if you're very close to them. Sometimes *because* you're very close to them. And sometimes because they don't seem important – the overlooked, the forgotten, those in the periphery.

This can apply to broader things, too – problems in our communities, homeless people on the streets, litter on the sides of the road, prejudice in people's hearts, inequalities in our society, all of it. Sometimes we'll work to change it, but change is hard. And, frankly, we might be so used to the issues that we don't even really register them anymore. We get desensitized to sin.

And just as much as we get desensitized to sin, we get desensitized to the gospel, too. Because we hear about it and see it over and over and over, we can easily become numb to the power and the message of the gospel. But we need it. God, do we need it. We *need* to keep hearing the gospel, over and over and over. Even when we get desensitized to our own posters, our own messages, we *need* to post them, we need to hear it and say it and share it and see it and live it – God saves! God saves! God saves!

So we keep coming back to the story, to the gospel, like an old friend, like a beloved family member. We intentionally pray for the Word to speak to us, and we listen anew. We tilt our head to see it fresh, and we display it for others in both the tried and true acts of love and service, but also in uncustomary or askew ways, even uncomfortable ways, at odd angles, with eye-catching words or images or offerings of sacrifice. We do whatever we can to daily *re-sensitize*, to be exposed to and open to the truth again and again and again that God. Saves.

We need this truth. We need to know and believe that God saves, that this is what God does and who God is. We need to remember that we were inextricably joined to God's salvation in our baptisms and that our very existence and survival rely on the continuing presence and saving activity of our delivering, protecting, sparing, redeeming, intervening, defending, merciful, forgiving, healing, feeding, restoring, sacrificing God.

Just like the Israelites, we still journey through a life full of dangers. The snakebites didn't stop when Moses put the serpent on the pole; but we know where to look for healing and salvation, who to turn to, who to believe in when harm still comes. Say it with me: God saves!

We might know what a John 3:16 poster is referring to when we see someone holding it in a stadium, but it doesn't change the fact that there is still evil and darkness in the world, and that Christ's light chases the shadows and exposes the sin. We don't just hear the gospel; we respond to it, and the light reflects off of or shines through us, in order that the world might see it and be saved through the one shining it. The world needs to hear it: God saves!

And even if we eat our Lutheran bread and butter from Ephesians chapter 2, and we recite and assert that we are saved by grace, through faith – that it is *not* our own doing but rather a gift from God – we still regularly live as though we need to earn it and prove that we deserve it. The instant we stop trusting in God's promises and begin instead to operate like we had a hand in our own salvation, then it's no longer grace, and it's no longer a gift. We don't save. So we need to tell ourselves: God saves!

Why does God save us over and over again, and why does God try to constantly get our attention and remind us of the good news, over and over again, even knowing that we're prone to gospel-desensitization and we're just going to glaze over to God's grace? Because God never gets desensitized to us. God loves us just as fiercely today and every day as the day we were born, as the day we were baptized. We might be poster children for messing up and missing the point, but we're not posters. We're children. Of God. And no amount of careless snake-trodding or darkness-dwelling or gospel desensitization will ever change how much God loves us. And our failings will never change that who God is and what God does is to save.

So tell it to the world and live it to your people and display it for all to see and say it with me one more time: God saves! Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

For by Grace You Have Been Saved



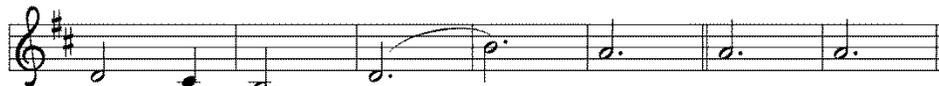
1 For by grace you have been saved and e - ven faith is not your
 2 "So my grace is all - suf - fi - cient for each child who is my
 3 So this weak - ness with con - tent - ment I'll ac - cept now in my -



own, it's the gift of God for you and not the works that you have
 own, for my strength is now made per - fect for each child who is my
 self, all my hard - ships, pains, and griefs that still lie deep with-in my -



done. Don't let an - y - bod - y boast, for this is
 own. When you're weak, then you are strong, for this is
 self. When I'm weak, then I am strong, for this is



God's great gift. A - men.
 God's great gift." A - men.
 God's great gift. A - men. A - men.

Text: Kari Tikka, b. 1946; tr. Michael Harper
 Music: ARMOLAULU, Kari Tikka
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CREED

**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

A: Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need. *[Brief silence]*

A: You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our partners in ministry, our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter (especially MCEF). Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, and 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. 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 Sondor, Starrett and Terry 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: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through 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 "LEAD ME, GUIDE ME"

REFRAIN:

*Lead me, guide me, along the way
For if you lead me, I cannot not stray
Lord let me walk, each day with thee
Lead me, oh Lord, lead me*

Verse 1:

**I am weak and I need thy strength and power
To help me o-ver my weakest hour
Help me through the darkness thy face to see
Lead me oh Lord lead me**

REFRAIN:

VERSE 2:

**Help me tread in the paths of righteousness.
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.
I am putting all my trust in Thee:
Lead me oh Lord lead me**

REFRAIN:

VERSE 3:

**I am lost if you take your hand from me,
I am blind without Thy light to see.
Lord, just always let me thy servant be.
Lead me oh Lord lead me**

REFRAIN:

Announcements

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Ryan's office hours for this week are listed below. You can also reach Pastor Ryan via email at messiahmechpr@gmail.com or by phone at 507-360-7276 if you'd like to talk or set up an appointment.

Wednesday-Friday 11:00 am-4:00 pm

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Here is this week's information based on our 2021 budget.

- Contributions to the general fund averaged \$3,520.79 (increasing from \$3,422.88 through March 7, 2021).
- We are \$4,702.12 behind the year-to-date budget needs (decreasing from \$5,113.12 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

MCEF DONATION INFORMATION (CURRENT NEEDS)

Today it feels like summer is here and the clothing closets are doing the same. Please, only spring and summer clothing that is clean and usable, there is no space for winter clothing. Other needs include boys new underwear (sizes S, M, M and L), small to medium sized men's jeans, men's short sleeved colored T-shirts, all sizes and tops for women in small and medium sizes. The linen closet is low on Double and King sheets (no stains or rips please). Food pantry needs include spinach, instant oatmeal and grits packages, pancake mix and syrup, toothbrushes (new) and jellies of any kind. Thank you for your continued support of your neighbors in need. Check out 4mcef.com for more information.

The "Fun Raiser" at Chicken Salad Chick continues on the 3rd Monday of each month, mention that you support MCEF and 10% of the sale is donated to MCEF. Thank you for your support of your of your neighbors in need through MCEF.

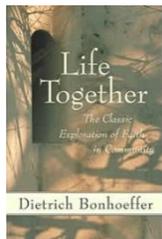
PRAYER LIST TO BE RESET

The current prayer list will be reset on April 4 to begin the second quarter. Please contact Davina with names that need to remain on the list. Email her at MessiahMech@gmail.com or phone 746-7134 with your requests.

WHO WILL WIN THE GOLDEN HALO?

Lenten Madness is back and getting ready for Lent 2021. In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women comprising the Church's Calendar of Saints, this unique Lenten devotion is now in its 11th year! Fashioned after NCAA March Madness, the format is straightforward: 32 saints are placed into a tournament-like single elimination bracket. Each pairing remains open for a set period of time and people vote for their favorite saint. 16 saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo. Go to <https://www.lentmadness.org/about/> to learn more about Lenten Madness and to fill out a bracket go to <https://www.lentmadness.org/bracket/>. Be creative and have some fun while learning about some amazing people!

LENTEN BOOK STUDY: LIFE TOGETHER (APART)



You are invited to join in a Lenten book study on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *Life Together*, Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. The Zoom link will be sent by email at a later date. This book was written out of Bonhoeffer's experience leading an "underground" seminary for church leaders in Germany in the build-up to WWII. What does genuine Christian community look like? And for us today, what does community look like when we are separated in so many ways? You should be able to find this book through bookstores, libraries, online vendors, or through some form of digital download.

CALMED WATERS, STILLED STORMS: WHEN JESUS MEETS CHAOS

Since we can't get together with our friends from All Souls this Lent for worship and soup suppers, Pastor Ryan and Rev. Katherine reached out to some of our neighboring churches to work together. We are happy to present you with a Lenten series that will feature five ministers from our neighborhood called "Calmed Waters, Stilled Storms: When Jesus Meets Chaos." Each week one of us will share a brief message based on Jesus stilling storms and walking on water, while we are still hanging out in our "boats" during this pandemic. And, as a bonus, each week we'll share a soup recipe from one of the churches! This week's video is from Rev. Katherine Dougherty from All Souls Episcopal Church in Mechanicsville, VA. Check out this link each week for new videos and recipes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuvfwCfUzng>. If you have a soup recipe you'd like to share, please email it to Pastor Ryan.

NATIONAL LUTHERAN CHOIR VIRTUAL HYMN FESTIVAL, TODAY @ 4 pm

Join the National Lutheran Choir and guest artists, the Keith Hampton Singers, for a FREE virtual program blending spoken reflections, songs, and familiar hymns of joy and hope with new music that speaks to our present time, inviting all people of faith to sing in joy together! Sunday, March 14 at 4 PM (Central Daylight Time) at NLCA.com For more information, click [here](#). This online presentation is FREE for all. For a Virtual Subscription to exclusive content (\$10/month), visit NLCA.com

INFORMATION ON VACCINATIONS

The Virginia Department of Health recently released a downloadable Virginia COVID Info Toolkit with information on vaccines and the vaccine registration system. You can access the information at: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/patient-education/>. If you need to register for the vaccine, confirm your registration, or update your record, go to: <https://vaccinate.virginia.gov/>

NOW ACCEPTING REPAIR PROGRAM APPLICATIONS!

Thanks to a grant, Hanover Habitat for Humanity is able to serve low income senior citizens in the 23111 or 23116 Zip Code in the Hanover suburban service area, or 'Old Mechanicsville.' Repair work will be for health and safety issues or code violations. However due to COVID, we will only be able to do exterior repairs at this time. If you or a loved one is in need of a repair in this area, please visit their website at <https://www.hanoverhfh.org/programs/critical-repair-program/> for more information and an application. Repairs will be based on a first come, first serve basis while funding is available.

LENTEN OFFERINGS

Many of our ministry partners have felt the effects of the Covid restrictions this past year. One who has felt it in particular are the good folks at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center. We encourage you to give a special Lenten offering this year to Caroline Furnace. Just mark on your check, envelope, or electronic donation to Messiah that it's for the camp, and we'll send the collective offerings at the end of Lent. We pray that they'll be able to have a full load of campers soon, and we thank God for the amazing things that happen at camp!

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!

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!**

Even though the most recent holiday shopping season is behind us, the Stewardship team would like to remind everyone to sign up and use 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!



Thank you for all of your prayers and support, the cards, and for the lovely flowers and balloon! My recovery is going well, and I am feeling better every day.

--Liz Radtke

Prayer List

WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Debbie Anton
Johnnie Collie
Leroy Deere
Adam Dworak, Sr.
Bonnie Dworak
Ted Ford
Bill Fulop
Steve & Sue Gilnett

“Doc” Kondaki
Linda Krupa
Mac McAllister
Lois Schroeder
Ruth Schroeder
Judy Schwerdfeger

WE PRAY FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

The Allen Family, relatives of the Whirleys.
Bonnie Altobelli, sister of Brenda Laveck
Cathy Cadd, friend of Dianne Absher
Dwayne Collie, Johnnie's brother
Robin Dillon, friend of Dianne Absher
John Drazenovich, former member of Messiah
Al Driggers, friend of the Whirleys
Family and friends of Lois Florio, Pastor Lou's mother
Family, friends, and fellow LEO of Capt. Donald Lambert, Jr.
Carolyn Leonard, sister of James Anderson
Junie Loving, friend of John Mahovtas
Suzanne McEwen, friend of Linda Mahovtas
Michael Morin, son of Sally & Charlie Bennett
Lori Mullen, friend of Dianne Absher
Christina Nibali, sister of Anita Philp.
Brenda Ramsey, friend of Charlie and Judy
Pat Ruffner and Mr. Ruffner, friends of the Whirleys
Roger Sabanosh, cousin of Karen Morris
Dee Schroeder, sister-in-law of Roger.
Tim Schroeder, nephew of Roger.
Charles Schwerdfeger, Jr., son of Charlie.
Karen Seward, sister of Debbie Walker
Sandy Street, sister of Donna Shaw
Elaine Turner, friend of Becky Collie
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
Those affected by fires and hurricanes and winter storms
For all who travel