

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*April 25, 2021
Fourth Sunday of Easter*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

The service will be livestreamed at 10:45 am on Messiah's FB page, and that video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. There is no pre-recording of the service on YouTube this week.

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Pastor: The Rev. Ryan Radtke

Church: (804) 746-7134; Email: MessiahMech@gmail.com; Website: MessiahMech.com

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2021

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome visitors! May the Spirit of Christ fill your heart as we worship today. You are invited to make Messiah your church home.

EASTER GREETING

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: ***He is risen, indeed! Alleluia***

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: **Amen**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

P: Gracious God,

C: ***have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG "Have No Fear, Little Flock"

- 1 Have no fear, little flock;
have no fear, little flock,
for the Father has chosen
to give you the kingdom;
have no fear, little flock!
- 2 Have good cheer, little flock;
have good cheer, little flock,
for the Father will keep you
in his love forever;
have good cheer, little flock!
- 3 Praise the Lord high above;
praise the Lord high above,
for he stoops down to heal you,
uplift and restore you;
praise the Lord high above!
- 4 Thankful hearts raise to God;
thankful hearts raise to God,
for he stays close beside you,
in all things works with you;
thankful hearts raise to God!

Text: Luke 12:32, st. 1; Marjorie Jilson, b. 1931, sts. 2-4; Text © 1973 Concordia Publishing House

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 Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.***

FIRST LESSON Acts 4:5-12

Lector

A reading from Acts.

Peter and John had been arrested the previous day because they were proclaiming the news of the resurrection to the people. In today's reading, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can proclaim salvation in Jesus' name to the religious authorities.

⁵The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.’

¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: 1 John 3:16-24

Lector

A reading from 1 John.

Jesus' death on our behalf is the clearest demonstration of divine love. This is the very love we share with others, not just through our words but especially through our deeds. In sharing such love we fulfill God's commandments..

¹⁶We know love by this, that [Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 10:11-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

[Jesus said:] ¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise to you, O Christ.*

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

Pastor Ryan Radtke

John Lewis was born into a large family of sharecroppers in rural Alabama. At 15, he heard Martin Luther King's speeches and sermons on the family radio during the Montgomery bus boycott and decided to become a minister. Suffering from a speech impediment, he practiced preaching to chickens in his parents' barnyard and at local Baptist churches. At 17, after becoming the first member of his family to graduate from high school, he attended the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, which allowed students to work in lieu of tuition. He worked as a janitor and simultaneously attended the all-Black Fisk University, graduating with degrees from the seminary and the university. He went on to participate in one of the first lunch counter sit-ins, and the persistence of these nonviolent protests eventually led Nashville's mayor and business leaders to agree to desegregate the downtown stores – the first Southern city to do so. He was also on the first Freedom Ride. In 1965, as chair of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), 25-year-old John Lewis led 600 protesters on the first march from Selma,

Alabama, to Montgomery, to intensify pressure on Congress to pass a federal voting rights law. Alabama state troopers, ordered to Selma by segregationist Gov. George Wallace, attacked the marchers as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Lewis was beaten so severely that his skull was fractured. "I thought I saw death. I thought I was going to die," Lewis recalled later. That day, March 7, 1965, came to be known as "Bloody Sunday," and television coverage of the massacre stirred the public's conscience. Six months later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

After serving as a 17-term member of Congress for the state of Georgia, Representative Lewis died last July of cancer. A documentary about his life shared a quote that maybe you've heard some version of before: "My philosophy is very simple," Lewis says in the film. "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, say something. Do something. Get in trouble. Good trouble."

When I read today's first lesson from Acts, I thought of John Lewis, who was arrested at least forty-five times in his life for his faith-strengthened protests for civil rights. Peter and John healed a man in the name of Jesus, and were arrested by the whole cohort of religious leaders in Jerusalem. And when they were brought before all of those powerful people, they said, in effect: "Are you questioning us for doing a good deed for someone who was sick? Yeah – that was us. And we did it in the name of Jesus Christ. The one you crucified. The one God raised from the dead." Oh, and then they quoted the same line of scripture that Jesus quoted that also made the leaders angry.

That feels like good trouble to me.

Peter and John and many of the early disciples, apostles, and martyrs, were willing to witness and proclaim like this, for the sake of the gospel. Even if it meant putting themselves in harm's way. Even when they spoke truth to power. Even when they stirred up good trouble. Even when they laid down their lives for the sake of the gospel. Because, as it says in 1 John: We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another."

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lays down his life for the sheep. All the sheep. Not just the ones from our familiar flocks. All the sheep. Jesus is not the hired hand who doesn't care for the sheep, who runs away and leaves them to the wolves. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. All the sheep. Jesus freely laying down his life is one of the reasons the Father loves him. Jesus knows the sheep and the sheep know him. And we sheep know Jesus because he lays down his life for us. Because of that particularly-shaped love.

And so 1 John tells us that we know what love is because Jesus lays down his life for us. For the sheep. For all the sheep. And – therefore – we should lay down our lives for each other, too. For the sheep. For all the sheep. Like Jesus does. Even if there is risk, like Peter and John and so many others faced and still face. Even if you get into good trouble.

When you see it laid out in 1 John – Jesus the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, so we lay down our lives, too, just like he commanded – it really seems simple. Logical. Elegant and straightforward. But to go from understanding that chain of love to living it – like Peter and John and so many others did, and do – it gets really hard, really fast. It's really hard to live that kind of love. It's easy to understand. It's much harder to do.

1 John follows up that simple because/therefore with this: “How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?” Well, I'm no John Lewis. Most people aren't. I see people in need all the time, and I don't help. Sometimes not at all. Sometimes not as much as I could. I'm not really laying down my life. Or my time. Or my wallet. Sometimes I barely lay down my phone. I get distracted. Sometimes on purpose. I get vague about what people actually need, what I actually can do, until those needs I see just slip out of my consciousness. And I let them slip. And I rationalize why I'm busy or what other things need my help, my energy, my life. I get busy.

If I'm being honest, I don't lay down my life much at all. I lay down lots of words – I'm a talker, a writer – but 1 John says this: “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” And that's when we know we're abiding in Christ – when our actions speak for us. When our lives are laid down, and out, and good trouble is happening, and we keep loving anyway, no matter the risk, bearing crosses, for all the sheep.

Jesus didn't issue a ton of commandments, really. But he commanded us to believe in his name and to love others the way he loves us. And Jesus still bears the wounds of the cross, at the right hand of God. So there you go. There's your commandment, your directive, your playbook, your Christianity. Love others the way the Good Shepherd loves us, loves the sheep, loves all the sheep. Love till your life is laid down.

Simple. But really hard.

“All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in us. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.” It might seem like I've been preaching a Lent sermon so far; but this line right here – this line makes it an Easter sermon. We abide in the Lord when we love our lives

laid-down; but that's only possible – only possible – because the Holy Spirit makes it so that Jesus is abiding/dwelling/loving/living in us.

Our crucified-and-risen Good Shepherd Lord abides. In. Us. And that is the power of Easter. That is the power of resurrection. It's not the afterlife, the sweet by and by – it's the love of Christ for the here and now. This life. New life. Laid down life for us that gives us the sure and certain hope that God will raise us up, not just on the last day, but today, and tomorrow, and any day it's needed. God will raise us up, and others up, and all the sheep up, when our lives are laid low, or freely laid down for the low.

We dare to lay down our lives, to make good trouble, to risk the kind of love that Jesus loves us with, because Jesus laid down his life for us. And we can trust with all our hearts and our whole beings and our very lives that he will raise us up, that we will hear his voice, that he will know us, that he will hold off the scattering wolves. We can see the brothers and sisters who are hurting, in need. We can face off against the panels of power that disapprove of laid-down, all-the-sheep love. And we can love in truth and action.

Is it frightening, unnerving, uncomfortable? Gosh, yes. And I don't expect anyone to go from comfortable Christianity to John Lewis-levels overnight. We'll get there by pieces, by fits and starts, by faith. But his story, his life, his love, can inspire and motivate us. And his isn't the only story, the only witness, the only action, the only love that we can learn from. Not by a long shot. We know love because the Good Shepherd laid down his life for us. And by the power of that first Easter morning we can love, too, without fear. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY "Shepherd Me, O God"

Refrain
All

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from

death into life. life.

to stanzas 1, 2, 3, 5 | *to stanza 4*

Leader or All

1 God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want, I
2 Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul, you
3 Though I should wander the valley of death, I

rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love, I
lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth, my
fear no evil, for you are at my side, your

Refrain

walk by the quiet waters of peace.
spirit shall sing the music of your name.
rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope.

Leader or All

4 You have set me a banquet of love in the face of

Refrain

hatred, crowning me with love beyond my power to hold.

Leader or All

5 Sure-ly your kind-ness and mer-cy fol-low me all the days of my life;

I will dwell in the house of my God for-ev - er - more.

Final refrain
All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be -

yond my fears, from death in - to life.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Psalm 23
 Music: SHEPHERD ME, Marty Haugen
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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: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love. *[Brief silence]*

A: Loving Shepherd, you know your own and your own know you. Your voice calls us to your loving embrace. Strengthen your church throughout the world that we bear witness to your expansive love. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Gracious Shepherd, you are generous with the gifts of goodness and mercy. Restore your creation to wholeness so that cities and towns, countryside and wilderness, may abound with life. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Hope-giving Shepherd, the nations and peoples are your heritage. Place into the hearts of all leaders and rulers the passion to serve. Crucify any desire to overpower others and give leaders joy in lifting up the lowly. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Abiding Shepherd, your love flows as we reach out to those around us. Move us with your Spirit, so that we lay down our lives for those in need (especially). Help us love one another in truth and action. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Saving Shepherd, you restore us to wholeness. Help our community in our life together and give us vigor as a people of faith. In the midst of challenges and opportunities, fill us anew with you Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Eternal Shepherd, you hold us securely in your loving hands. In the assurance of resurrection hope, we remember our loved ones who have died in you. Bring us, with them, to dwell in your house forever. 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 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.
Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

THE GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

C: Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: *Christ has died.*

Christ has risen.

Christ will come again.

P: O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

C: *Come, Holy Spirit.*

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

C: *Come, Holy Spirit.*

P: With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

C: *Amen.*

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.***

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

C: ***Thanks be to God.***

COMMUNION

A: The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

C: ***Amen***

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

A: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that you have received strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: ***Amen***

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

C: ***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 Sent Forth by God's Blessing



1 Sent forth by God's bless - ing, our true faith con - fess - ing,
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er - liv - ing,



the peo - ple of God from this dwell - ing take leave.
the tasks of our ev - 'ry - day life we will face—



The sup - per is end - ed. Oh, now be ex - tend - ed
our faith ev - er shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing,



the fruits of this ser - vice in all who be - lieve.
em - brac - ing God's chil - dren, the whole hu - man race.



The seed of Christ's teach - ing, re - cep - tive souls
With your feast you feed us, with your light now



reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for God and for all.
lead us; u - nite us as one in this life that we share.



Your grace shall in - cite us, your love shall u - nite us
Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks - giv - ing



to work for your king - dom and an - swer your call.
give hon - or to Christ and his name that we bear.

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.

Music: THE ASH GROVE, Welsh folk tune

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DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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WORSHIP ASSISTANTS – SUNDAY, April 25, 2021

Pianist: Debbie Walker
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Gladys Hubert (2nd Lay Asst.) Lois Schroeder
Lectors: Lois Schroeder
Acolyte: Grace Anderson
Ushers: LeRoy Albertson & Gordon Gunn
Altar Guild: Gladys Hubert & Rosalee Cline
Counters: Marilyn & Gordon Gunn

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 \$3,225.53 (slightly up from \$3,205.88 through April 18, 2021).
- We are \$11,267.25 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$10,861.62 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

WORSHIP OUTSIDE YOUR CAR

Starting this Sunday, you are invited to worship outside your car! Please bring your own chair(s), and stick to the following guidelines:

- Sit in front of your cars
- Maintain social distancing between your car's occupants and other cars' occupants (don't mix households).
- If you visit before or after the service, wear a mask or face-covering.
- You should be able to hear everything from the amp that's set up for the livestream.
- Check the weather ahead of time and dress/do sun-prep accordingly.
- Keep in mind that this is also a gauge: if you can handle this, it shows you can handle coming back in the building when the time comes. (:

We're excited to try this out before the weather really turns hot and humid. And maybe we can hear each other singing! If you have any questions, please check in with your Church Council members or Pastor Ryan.

MCEF UPDATE

Mechanicsville residents in need are being served with food, clothing, linens, and financial assistance for qualified services throughout this year of Covid. The Senior Rides program has been awarded a grant which will help to rebuild the program post-Covid. Rides are continuing to be offered. MCEF was gifted 4 cemetery plots at

Signal Hill Cemetery which are available for a donation. If interested, call Pat Hubert, 814-449-2612. Current needs of the One Stop Shop include canned peaches, black-eyed peas, jelly of any flavor and mayonnaise. Clothing needs are knit boxer briefs for men, kids' underwear in all sizes and women's' underwear in average sizes, all new please. Thank you to all for your generous donations.

MCEF FUN-RAISER AT CHICKEN SALAD CHICK FOR MAY 17

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.

OFFERING ENVELOPES REMINDER

If anyone is still using last year's offering envelopes, please cross out the number in the corner. Last year's numbers are not the same as the current ones and an offering might be credited to wrong the member or you can still pick up this year's current envelopes on the table in the narthex.

WEEKLY SUNDAY PRAYERS

Now that we have begun to offer livestreams of our worship services, you might notice that the lay assistants are only saying the first names of people we are praying for. With so many scams going on, even with folks pretending to be pastors or bishops, we won't be giving out any excess personal information that could be used in such ways. It is clear that scammers are using the information from church websites for nefarious purposes. The congregation and God will know who we are praying for even with just first names. When giving information to Pastor, Davina, or the church for the prayer lists, the full name will be included in the drive-in bulletin, but only the first names will be read.

2021 JOAN BARNES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

We are pleased to announce that the applications for the Joan Barnes Memorial Scholarship will be available beginning May 3, 2021. Please go to the church website, <https://messiahmech.com/> and click on the "About" tab. The Application(s) and Application Information for the scholarships will be found on the drop-down menu. Applications should be postmarked on or before the deadline of June 21, 2021 with no exceptions. There are applications for first time applicants and a different application if you have received a previous scholarship. You can contact Sally Bennett at sallybennett3317@gmail.com if you have any questions.

NEW MIDWEEK MESSAGE SERIES STARTING ON APRIL 28TH

Please check the first in a series of five Midweek Messages called "One Chapter Wonders." Maybe you've heard of a "one-hit wonder"? You know, a band that only ever had just one big hit? Well, there are five books of the Bible that are only one chapter long (and one more that's only two). Each week you'll get a bite-sized Bible study on one of these books. First up: Obadiah. Please tune in!

OUR JOURNEY TO EMMAUS

All ages are invited into a synod-wide faith formation experience: Our Journey to Emmaus. **Participants will engage the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24) in seven movements over seven Sundays beginning on May 2.** Each weekly email will have a

portion of the story, reflections for all ages, and movement activities for all types of bodies. You can sign up for weekly emails by registering below. You may participate with your congregation or ministry or on your own. If you have questions, please contact **Pastor Kelly Bayer Derrick** (bayerderrick@vasynod.org). Here is the link to register: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMGfBsa5A5pD5sBlwf96UqeYoUGA00J6V7YxebaSAKYeoyjQ/viewform>

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/>

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!

REBUILD! VA – SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

All available funds for the Rebuild VA Grant Program have been exhausted at this time. They are hopeful that Congress will soon pass a stimulus package that provides additional relief to small businesses. To be notified of any additional developments, please sign up at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7TRWMD6>.

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 payments for eligible households. This includes financial assistance for rent payments past due beginning April 1, 2020 and onward. 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!