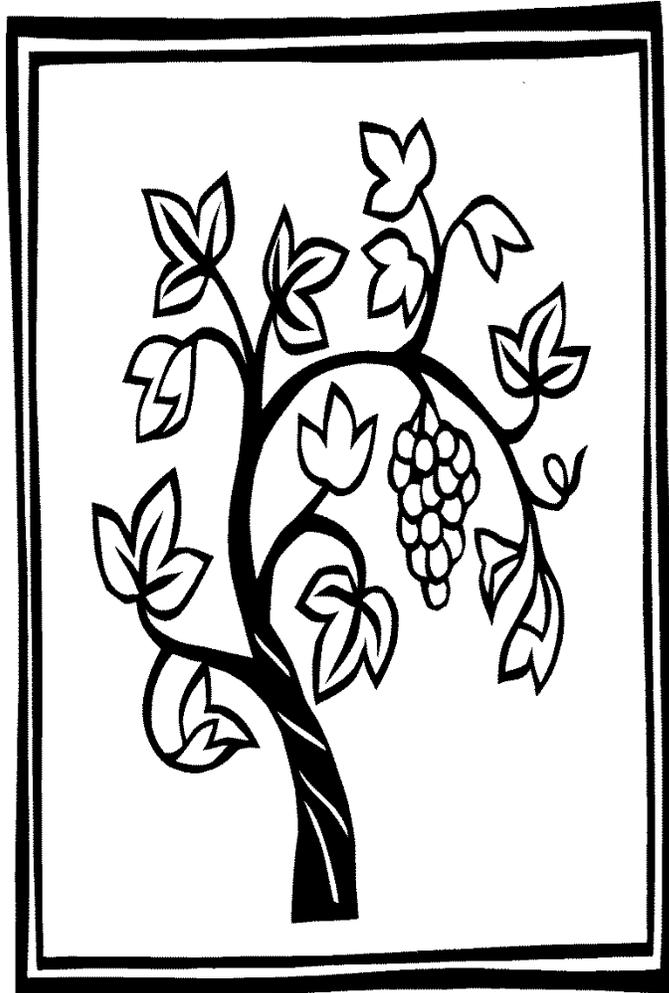


**Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia**



**May 2, 2021
Fifth 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

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 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: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen**

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: **Amen**

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

P: Most merciful God,

C: ***we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.***

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG

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.

Text: F Bland Tucker, 1895–1984

Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829

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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, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, 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 Acts 8:26-40

Lector

A reading from Acts.

Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had

come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?"

³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: 1 John 4:7-21

Lector

A reading from 1 John.

We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.

[Jesus said:] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

When Jesus would talk to people – the disciples, the crowds, whoever was there to listen – he would use examples and imagery from the world those listeners were familiar with. So, we have four Gospels full of things like seeds and wheat and landowners and debts that are owed and lots of stuff about sheep and shepherds. Last week we were in the pasture with Jesus the Good Shepherd; this week we move over to the vineyard with Jesus the vine.

Things like sheep and grapes and wheat were all around; they were everyday parts of the world for Jesus' audiences. If they didn't know about them firsthand, they were still familiar enough with them to follow what he was saying. Last week Jesus talked about how good shepherds protect their sheep at all costs. Sheep do indeed learn the sound of their shepherd's voice. Wolves are indeed a problem. Jesus painted a picture with his words that would teach the people something important about himself and why he had come and why people should learn to follow the sound of his voice.

This week Jesus paints a picture with vines and branches and fruit. And the picture he is painting is about God's love and life for us. God is the vine-grower; Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. Branches are supposed to bear fruit, fruit to sustain others, to feed others. To keep us branches healthy and alive and bearing fruit, we need to be connected to the vine. How do we stay connected? Love. God's love that abides in us, through Jesus. If we don't abide in Jesus, we can do nothing. Jesus abides in us through his teachings, through his love, through the Holy Spirit; and we abide in Jesus by loving others. Loving others = bearing fruit. It's all one stream of connection, one flow of love.

The letter of 1 John says the same thing, just without the vines and branches: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us."

God loves us through the Son, and we know what love truly looks like, feels like, should be. And because God loves us, we love one another. God's love is perfected in us – that is, it reaches its fruition, its full ripeness, when it flows not just to us, but through us. When it bears fruit. Fruit for others, fruit for the world. That's how the world gets to know God: through us and the fruit we bear. It's all one stream of connection, one flow of love – and it moves in just one direction: from God, through Christ, to us, and on to the rest of the world.

Jesus taught through the imagery and examples that people would recognize from the world around them. Perhaps...just perhaps, though...you and I aren't quite as familiar with things like sheep or the finer points of botany as it pertains to vines and branches. I'm sure we have some gardeners in attendance,

but still...what can we use from our world today to help us understand what Jesus is teaching us? I happen to have an idea...

Presiding Bishop Eaton recently put out a statement about getting vaccinated that included this line: "As Lutherans we believe that science and religion come from the same source, and that source is God. Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine does not mean we are being less than faithful by trusting science rather than God." So, there's your vaccine encouragement for the week. But also, and more to my point today, science and religion are not mutually exclusive, despite what you might have heard from some Christians or some scientists. Science strives to understand the world around us, the world God created. So, as we learn things from scientific study, it also helps us learn about God. Maybe some of our current scientific understanding about how plants work can teach us more about how God works.

Have you ever looked at a tall tree and wondered: "how does water make it all the way up to the leaves on those top branches?" For that matter, how does a tomato plant, or a dandelion, or a ficus get water to where it needs to go? Scientists wondered the same thing. It turns out that plants have a number of processes and mechanisms to move water from the ground, against the pull of gravity, into and up through the roots, and then up stems and branches and out to leaves and buds and growing fruit.

There are the forces of adhesion and cohesion, for instance. Imagine a drop of water. You can take a toothpick or a stick or a key or something and carefully drag it through the droplet. The droplet doesn't get cut into two smaller droplets; the water will pull out in a trail following the object because the water molecules cohere, or stick together. The bonds between the molecules cannot be cut, because they reform as soon as the object passes through.

Or imagine that you take a paper towel, or a piece of paper, and dip a corner of it into some liquid. What happens? The water starts to absorb and travel up the paper. The water molecules adhere to the paper, which is made of cellulose, just like the water adheres to the cellulose which makes up the cell walls in plants. Water molecules stick together, and they also stick to the channels that they move through inside a plant. And the channels get narrower the farther up from the roots you go, which increases the pressure, and up against the gravity the water goes, along with other nutrients the water is carrying. And that's called capillary action.

But all of cohesion and adhesion and capillary action won't accomplish the water's movement on their own; you also need something called transpiration pull. A plant's leaves have little pores on them called guard cells. When the plant needs to get more water moving, the guard cells open the channels to the air. This creates negative pressure, like when you suck on a straw. The tight pressure of the water columns inside the plant seek release, and are pulled upwards and outwards towards the open air. Most of the water a plant pulls up from its root system ends up just passing through the plant and into the air, along with the oxygen that the plant makes from photosynthesis.

In other words: as a plant takes the water it needs to grow and bear fruit up from the soil and distributes it throughout its stems and branches and leaves, it

ends up providing the stuff of life for the ecosystem it's a part of – moisture and oxygen into the air, and fruit and healthy vegetation for other creatures to eat.

So: now let's take these images that the study of plant biology has taught us, to understand a little bit more about what Jesus is saying about vines and branches: plants have a number of processes and mechanisms to move water from the ground, against the pull of gravity, into and up through the roots, and then up stems and branches and out to leaves and buds and growing fruit. Well, God provides people with lots of gracious ways and means to move God's blessings up from the water of baptism, against the pulls of sin and the world's distractions, into and up through our lives and relationships and connection to God through Christ, producing actions and words and love that nourish the systems around us.

We adhere – that is, attach ourselves – to God's teachings, through worship and devotion and spiritual practices, so that we are never separated from God, and so that we carry the nutrients of God's love along with us. We cohere – that is, hang on – to one another, so that nothing may separate us from one another, not even sin. The Holy Spirit opens up our guardedness and turned-in-ness so that God's goodness is pulled through us and out into the world, so that anything to do with the flow of God's goodness isn't dependent just on us. No, the flow of God's love moves in one direction: from the water of baptism, the abiding connection God has rooted us in, through us and into the world. From Jesus the vine, to us the branches, producing fruit for others.

We love because God first loved us. We bear fruit because God abides in us. A baptism into Christ is not just something that happened once, in the past, over and done with now; it's the ongoing connection and abiding and flow of God through us for the love of the world.

Look at the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. This pilgrim is an outsider multiple times over in Jerusalem. If we were in charge of the guard cells, our inclination might be to keep God's goodness to ourselves. But the Holy Spirit takes Philip right up to the chariot, and the baptismal abiding love of God flows through Philip as he interprets scriptures and shares the good news and accompanies this man on his spiritual journey. And when they see water in the middle of that wilderness road, and the eunuch says, "What is to prevent me from being baptized," Philip's actions provide the answer: nothing at all! And into the water they go.

But there are things that try to stop the flow of God's love, that try to interfere with the abiding. Things that constrict or obstruct the flow from the vine to the branches and beyond. Things that hoard the fruit or let the fruit rot on the branch. There is the fear that makes us think that we have to be good enough to earn God's love or to avoid divine punishment. God is love, perfect love; and perfectly ripened love casts out fear. There is the hatred that turns our fruit into sour-tinged hypocrisy: "Those who say 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen."

You can't see water vapor and oxygen coming out of a plant's guard cells on a leaf; but you sure can taste fruit. If we don't do all we can to abide back towards God's love through the vine of Christ; if we don't let God bear fruit in us, through acts of love and service; if we don't always and immediately answer the question, "What is to prevent me from abiding in God" with a hearty "Nothing at all!"; then we are depriving the world of the fruit God wants us to bear; and we are shutting off the flow of God's abiding love.

And Jesus doesn't mince words about branches that don't bear fruit. If they're bearing only some, but not all they can, they get pruned and trimmed. If they aren't producing any fruit, they get cut out and turned into firewood for the next bonfire. God is love; God abides in us; God's love flows to and through us to bear fruit. No fruit, no good. Trim out the dead wood.

Does that seem bleak? Like a lot of pressure to turn out fruit? Like God's love is conditional after all? Then consider this: when there was a big debate in the early church about whether or not Gentiles had to become Jews first before becoming Christians, here was God's response: I will graft those branches in.

Jesus dies on the tree that is the cross in order to keep God's love flowing, eternally. If we fail to bear fruit and God trims back that which is fruitless, believe that God will always be grafting us back to the branch, back to the source and the channel of those baptismal promises, inviting us again and again to abide and bear fruit. God is love. And that love carries the spiritual nutrients we need to bear fruit, even if we mess up: forgiveness and reconciliation and grafting. The Father is the vine-grower. And we are lovingly included in God's vintage for the world.

God's life and love for us comes from a never-ending source and stream, and we are called to be open to that flow, and to abide in Christ, the vine, who died and was raised so that we might have abundant life and love and fruit for the world. Don't cut off the flow of God's love. Don't constrict the path of God's grace. Cohere to one another and adhere to and abide in Christ. Let all experience what transpires through you: God's love, pulled from the water of baptism, bearing fruit.

May the botany and biology of baptismal waters burst forth from us who are blessed to be branches and break forth in bounty for the world. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY "O Blessed Spring"

1 O blessed spring, where word and sign
embrace us into Christ the Vine:
here Christ enjoins each one to be
a branch of this life-giving Tree.

2 Through summer heat of youthful years,
uncertain faith, rebellious tears,
sustained by Christ's infusing rain,
the boughs will shout for joy again.

3 When autumn cools and youth is cold,
when limbs their heavy harvest hold,
then through us, warm, the Christ will move
with gifts of beauty, wisdom, love.

4 As winter comes, as winters must,
we breathe our last, return to dust;
still held in Christ, our souls take wing
and trust the promise of the spring.

5 Christ, holy Vine, Christ, living Tree,
be praised for this blest mystery:
that word and water thus revive
and join us to your Tree of Life.

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: God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in
you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth
so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all (especially). Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. 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 Blumberg, Bradley-Combs and Buckholz 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*

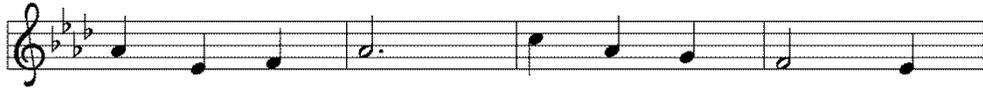
BLESSING

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

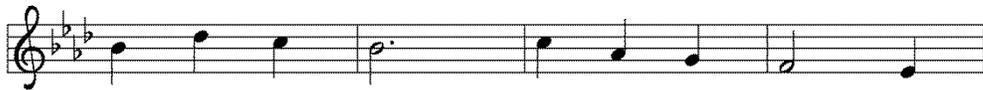
Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en!
 2 Walk - ing the way, Christ in the cen - ter
 3 Je - sus the vine, we are the branch - es;
 4 Weep - ing, be gone; sor - row, be si - lent:
 5 Cit - y of God, Eas - ter for - ev - er,



Trum - pets re - sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light!
 tell - ing the sto - ry to o - pen our eyes;
 life in the Spir - it the fruit of the tree;
 death put a - sun - der, and Eas - ter is bright.
 gold - en Je - ru - sa - lem, Je - sus the Lamb,



Splen - dor, the Lamb, heav - en for - ev - er!
 break - ing our bread, giv - ing us glo - ry:
 heav - en to earth, Christ to the peo - ple,
 Cher - u - bim sing: O grave, be o - pen!
 riv - er of life, saints and arch - an - gels,



Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!
 Je - sus our bless - ing, our con - stant sur - prise.
 gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.
 Clothe us in won - der, a - dorn us in light.
 sing with cre - a - tion to God the I AM!

Refrain



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise.



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926
 Music: David N. Johnson, 1922-1987
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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, May 2, 2021

Pianist: Debbie Walker
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Diane Absher (2nd Lay Asst.) Heather Williams
Lectors: Susie Weaver
Acolyte: Ella Anderson
Ushers: LeRoy Albertson & Pat Hubert
Altar Guild: Marilyn Gunn & Donna Combs
Counters: Becky & Johnnie Collie

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 \$3,109.03 (slightly down from \$3,225.53 through April 25, 2021).
- We are \$13,977.50 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$11,267.25 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

WORSHIP OUTSIDE YOUR CAR

Our new step forward in this long journey is that you are all 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 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.

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.

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.

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 received or postmarked on or before the absolute 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.

MIDWEEK MESSAGE SERIES STARTING ON APRIL 28TH

Tune in this week for our second Midweek Message from "One Chapter Wonders." This week: Philemon. 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, that will hopefully still fill you up. 😊

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 today.** 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!