

Messiah Lutheran Church Mechanicsville, Virginia



June 13, 2021

Third Sunday after Pentecost

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

Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 13, 2021

**Congregation standing*

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.

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy.

C: Amen

P: Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

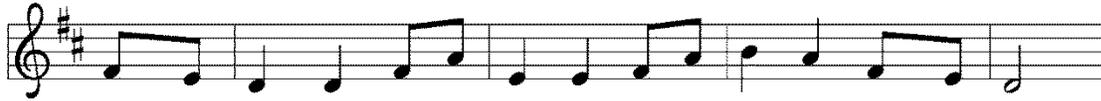
P: God, our provider,

C: *help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn? Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world Amen.*

P: Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, † the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

C: Amen.

*GATHERING SONG Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



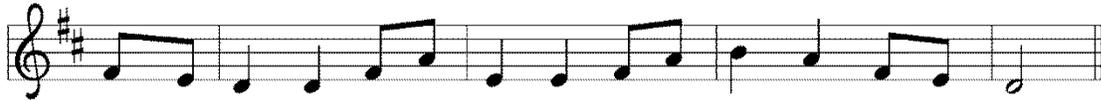
1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–1790, alt.

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

*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 are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST LESSON Ezekiel 17:22-24

Lector

A reading from Ezekiel.

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the LORD will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

²²Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;
I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.
Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;
I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17

Lector

A reading from 2 Corinthians

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

⁶So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;

even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: Mark 4:26-34**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON The Mystery of Growth

Rev. William Stewart

The farmer plants a crop. The gardener plants a garden. It was April and Phyllis and I planned what we wanted to plant in pots and hanging baskets on the balcony of our apartment in Charlottesville. Because of our limitations to "get out" this past year due to COVID-19, we were very anxious to work on our plans. We went to our favorite places to buy plants (3 tomato plants, flowers for the pots and hanging baskets, miracle grow soil and mulch).

Our problem was that we purchased all of this in April. The night temperatures and many of the days were NOT conducive for our project to succeed. SO, each evening and some days, I carried each of the plants into our apartment. I gently placed the plants on a tarp which I spread on a section of the carpet. We fertilized, cultivated, worried, prayed and waited. We did not know what the outcome would be like. There were too many uncertainties — it

was a colder spring than usual: would the 55 degrees during the day be too cold, what might be the cost be for the chiropractor if my back would go out from carrying the pots and hanging baskets twice each day. Ultimately, we could only hope and pray that the plants would survive. We just had to wait for the mystery of growth. We were fortunate – everything, now, looks great. However, Phyllis and I decided that next year we will wait until May to carry out our balcony plan.

Parents give birth to a child. They do a fine job of nurturing this gift from God: they feed, cuddle, and rock the child as a baby. Later, they play and read to the “kiddo”. They provide food and clothing and a warm, safe place to live. They see to it that there is an education provided, and they encourage the child to participate in extra-curricular activities—and show support by being in attendance for each event. Christian parents teach the child about Jesus, attend worship, expecting the child to participate in the life of the church. They do all they can to raise a healthy and happy child—BUT they cannot be certain they will succeed. The outcome is out of their hands; in spite of all they’ve done, our children will have to make their own choices. Mom and Dad can only hope that they will experience the mystery of growth.

Sometimes parents are disappointed. Sometimes the field or balcony farmer and gardener are disappointed. We can give 110% effort, but still the outcome may not be what we desired.

So it goes in life. Try as we might, we cannot control some things. We cannot control the process of growth. It is a mystery; we leave the results to God. That’s how it is with raising crops in a garden, a balcony or a field. That’s how it is with parenting. That’s how it is with many things.

And so, Jesus reminds us today, that’s how it is with the reign of God; it’s growth cannot be programmed, controlled, or predicted. But the rule of God WILL grow and produce an abundant harvest!

It starts small, Jesus teaches. A farmer scatters some seed, offers as much support as possible, watches and waits, and the seed, mysteriously, becomes a full-grown productive plant! Or, a tiny mustard seed takes root. At first it grows slowly; but then, it seems, almost overnight, it becomes a tall, impressive shrub up to 15 feet high.

Such is the mystery of growth. It starts so small: a wandering rabbi—Jesus—calls apart a group of misfits, trains them, and sends them out to do what they’ve been taught; they often let him down.

The rabbi dies, and his followers are disheartened. It seems like such a small and ineffective beginning. A rag-tag group of disciples, a crucified teacher, discouraged, grief-stricken students. How could it possibly amount to anything?

How could it possibly make a difference?

God has gone into hiding, it seems. Just as a tiny seed lies dormant in the ground, so Jesus lay in his tomb. And if God is around, if God is present, if God is at work—well, it surely isn’t very obvious what God is up to, is it? But the seed emerges and produces a plant, and Jesus emerges from the tomb, full of life!

From small beginnings come surprising results. That's the mystery of growth. There will be results; that's the assurance Jesus gives us. That's the assurance we are given in his death and resurrection.

Now, on the surface, the gospel doesn't seem terribly effective. That was true in New Testament times, and it's just as true today. The first Christians walked an incredibly challenging road. The twelve disciples were not the elite of society; they were peasants and outcasts. There was hostility to contend with: the hostility of their Jewish ancestors and neighbors, and the hostility of a Roman government which didn't like talk of freedom and liberation. There was the scandal of differences within the church.

Today, we still worship the same crucified Lord, and many still find that notion outlandish. 20% of the world's people claim faith in Jesus, but 80% don't. The church still must endure its share of scandal and division, and still, in many places, the church finds itself in a hostile setting. More and more that's true in our case.

The average age of someone sitting in a pew in a mainline church is 10 years older than the average age of our society. What does that say about growth? For over 30 years in this country, the mainline church has been losing members. Can this be called growth? In the 1950's and 60's, many churches flourished; now these same churches struggle. Is this growth?

Jesus prepares us for disappointment.

Did you notice something in this story? Yes, the mustard seed grows incredibly! But what does it grow into? It grows into a mighty mustard...bush. 10-12 feet tall on average, sometimes 15-20 feet, the mustard seed grows not into a beautiful tree, but a shrub.

That's the mystery of growth: from small beginnings, there are impressive results; not always all we might hope for, but impressive just the same. From the tiny seed of the gospel, sown in a minor outpost of the mighty Roman Empire, rooted in, of all things, a death and resurrection, there has grown a movement that has lasted twenty centuries. From that little seed, there has grown a movement that has outlasted scandals, setbacks, persecution, and even a pandemic or more. From that tiny beginning, there have grown lasting, significant, life-changing, world-shaking results!

This is the mystery of growth.

The good news is this: there is always, always, always reason to live with hope. After all, didn't Jesus die and rise again in triumph over sin and death and fear and despair? Hasn't the gospel of the Lord provided a foundation for countless lives through the centuries? Hasn't God been faithful to God's promises? Yes, there is ALWAYS reason for hope! The seed may not grow as abundantly as we wish, but it DOES grow! And it doesn't always take much to plant the seed.

On this Father's Day, I think of the many ways fathers have carried out their responsibilities. Many haven't done anything flashy or spectacular with their life. Many have never been noticed by the media, and there will not be a best-selling biography of their life written someday. But many a father's love has been a steady and reliable presence in their family's life. They may not have not been

highly-educated, but their common sense and problem-solving skills may have saved the day numerous times.

The smallest acts of caring and kindness, of love and faith, can plant the seed of the gospel. It might be a ride given to someone in need. It might be a hammer or paintbrush lifted to help a family or service organization needing a boost. It could be a kind word, or a thoughtful card, or a heartfelt prayer. From the smallest of seeds can come surprising growth!

That's how God works in the world. Steadily, persistently, patiently, through the surprising death and resurrection of Jesus. That's how God works. To outward appearances, there might not seem to be much growth. Instead of a majestic tree, the gospel may produce a common, modest shrub.

There will be setbacks and discouragements, to be sure. It will require patience, hope, trust, and a willingness to change on the part of the church. We can't know the future of our lives, or the future of our church. Those things are in God's hands. BUT we can know this: the gospel of Jesus Christ WILL produce growth! In God's own time and God's own mysterious way, God is at work to bring about growth. That's God's promise. And we can count on God!

*HYMN OF THE DAY

For the Fruit of All Creation



1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.



For these gifts to ev - 'ry na - tion, thanks be to God.
In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.



For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,
In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,
For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con - found us,



fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional

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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: Let us come before the triune God in prayer. *[Brief silence]*

A: Holy God, you plant the seeds of faith in every nation. Enliven your church, so that the good news of your grace may root and grow throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Creator, even the trees, shrubs, and flowers delight in your goodness. From the depths of the soil to the highest mountain, bring forth new plants. Restore growth to places suffering drought. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Judge of nations, we pray for our leaders and those in power. Grant them the ability to regard those under their charge with humility, dedicating their lives in service to others. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Divine comforter, you show compassion to those in need and provide relief to those who call on you, especially... Bless all who suffer, especially people trapped in cycles of poverty and homelessness. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Sovereign God, this house of worship belongs to you. We give thanks and pray for all who make and lead music in our church. We dedicate to you the joyful

noise that comes from this place; the cries of children, the melody of voice and instruments, and the songs from our hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Eternal God, we give thanks for our ancestors in the faith who are now at home with you. We look forward to that day when we are reunited in your new creation. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

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; for the sick and their families; for the anxious – comfort them. We pray for those who have lost businesses and jobs – restore them. We pray for those working and schooling at home, and for those who remain isolated – sustain them and protect them. We pray for all hospital and health care workers, and all first responders – provide for them and protect them. We pray for those who are making decisions about how to live into the future and the shape such a future will take – guide them. We pray with thanksgiving for vaccines and treatments; for those who develop them, test them, and administer them – encourage them. Keep us all in your care as we continue to love our neighbors near and far. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

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 Gigante, Gilnett and Glatfelter 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

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: Jesus, Bread of life, you have set this table with your very self, and called us

to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world. 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, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, 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: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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. Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C: *Amen.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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

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

C: *Amen*

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: 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.

Jesus, Bread of life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray.

C: *Amen*

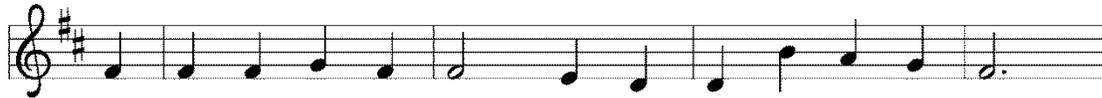
***BLESSING**

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**

O Living Bread from Heaven



1 O liv - ing Bread from heav - en, how well you feed your guest!
2 My Sav - ior, you have led me with - in your ho - liest place,
3 You gave me all I want - ed; this food can death de - stroy.
4 Oh, grant me then, well - strength - ened with heav'n - ly food, while here



The gifts that you have giv - en have filled my heart with rest.
and here your - self have fed me with trea - sures of your grace;
And you have free - ly grant - ed the cup of end - less joy.
my course on earth is length - ened, to serve you, free from fear;



O won - drous food of bless - ing! O cup that heals our woes!
for you have free - ly giv - en what earth could nev - er buy,
My Lord, I do not mer - it the fa - vor you have shown,
and bring me home to praise you where none can peace de - stroy,



My heart, this gift pos - sess - ing, in thank - ful song o'er - flows!
the bread of life from heav - en, that now I shall not die.
and all my soul and spir - it bow down be - fore your throne.
where I will ev - er raise you glad songs in end - less joy.

Text: Johann Rist, 1607–1667; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: AURELIA, Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

(Text used by permission of Augsburg Fortress license #11886-S)

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS – SUNDAY, June 13, 2021

- Pianist: Sandy Dacus
- Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Gladys Hubert (2nd Lay Asst.) Roberta McMillen
- Lectors: Roberta McMillen
- Acolyte: Ella Anderson
- Ushers: Daren & Max Williams and Jake Addair
- Altar Guild: Becky & Johnnie Collie
- Counters: Donna Combs & Erna Jung

Announcements

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Ryan will also be taking in some continuing education from the 13th-19th at camp. We welcome Rev. Bill Stewart as our guest pastor today, and we welcome Sandy Dacus as our guest accompanist. While Pastor Ryan is away, if there is a pastoral emergency please contact Pastor Chris Carr from First English Lutheran Church. His number is 804-998-7526.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

- Contributions to the general fund averaged \$2,871.67 (slightly down from \$2,892.89 through June 6, 2021).
- We are behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$24,273.50 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 or on the grassy, shaded area.
- If you are not vaccinated, for whatever reason, continue to maintain social distancing between your car's occupants and other cars' occupants (don't mix households).
- If you are not vaccinated, and 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.

MIDWEEK MESSAGES FOR JUNE – LUTHERAN STORIES

Pastor Ryan will be sharing some Lutheran stories for Midweek Messages for the month of June. The stories will be selected from two relatively recent books: *Together by Grace: Introducing the Lutherans*, and *Stories from Global Lutheranism: a Historical Timeline*. Both books feature a multitude of short essays about Lutherans and Lutheranism throughout history and around the world, and look forward to what comes next in this, the sixth century of the Lutheran movement.

COMMUNITY- ALL SOULS COMMUNITY GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

Help put the "Community" in the Garden! The All-Souls Community Garden depends on the good hearts of volunteers to plant and harvest the vegetables. The Garden is located on Atlee Rd. in Mechanicsville. Items are shared with MCEF and other Mechanicsville food banks. Church and community groups as well as individuals are needed. Students in middle and high school, and even college ages are especially welcomed. Garden lessons are available for younger children. Jobs include planting and picking produce, tilling, pulling weeds, washing and weighing produce, and delivery to food banks. To schedule a time to volunteer, contact Lee Hanchey at lghanchey@gmail.com or by phone 804- 514-3020.

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.

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.

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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!