

*Messiah Lutheran Church  
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*July 11, 2021*

*Seventh 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](mailto:MessiahMech@gmail.com); Website: [MessiahMech.com](http://MessiahMech.com)

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 11, 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, 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.

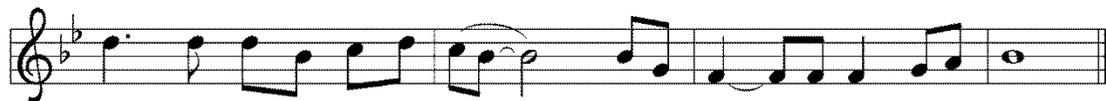
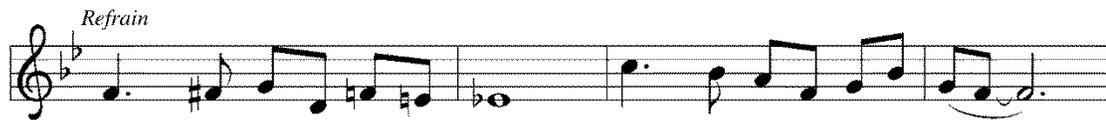
P: Gracious God,

**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 Just a Closer Walk with Thee



- 1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
- 2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?
- 3 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;



I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.  
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.  
guide me gent - ly, safe - ly o'er to thy king - dom shore, to thy shore.

Text: North American traditional  
Music: CLOSER WALK, North American traditional

## \*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, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

## FIRST LESSON: Amos 7:7-15

Lector

A reading from Amos.

*Amos is not the kind of prophet attached to temples or royal courts. Rather, he is an ordinary farmer from Judah (the southern kingdom) called by God to speak to Israel (the northern kingdom). God's word of judgment through Amos*

*conflicts with the king's court prophet Amaziah, whom Amos encounters at Bethel.*

<sup>7</sup>This is what [the Lord GOD] showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"See, I am setting a plumb line  
in the midst of my people Israel;  
I will never again pass them by;

<sup>9</sup>the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,  
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,  
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

<sup>10</sup>Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. <sup>11</sup>For thus Amos has said,

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,  
and Israel must go into exile  
away from his land.'

<sup>12</sup>And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; <sup>13</sup>but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

<sup>14</sup>Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, <sup>15</sup>and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 1:3-14**

**Lector**

A reading from Ephesians

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set

forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL: Mark 6: 14-29**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.*

<sup>14</sup>King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." <sup>15</sup>But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." <sup>16</sup>But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

<sup>17</sup>For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. <sup>18</sup>For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup>And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, <sup>20</sup>for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. <sup>21</sup>But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. <sup>22</sup>When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." <sup>23</sup>And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." <sup>24</sup>She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." <sup>25</sup>Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." <sup>26</sup>The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup>Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison,

<sup>28</sup>brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup>When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: *Praise to you, O Christ.***

## **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

### **SERMON**

**Pastor Ryan Radtke**

Let's talk some A-list celebrities. Alec Baldwin used to do it. Samuel L. Jackson's been doing it for a really long time. Jennifer Garner almost as long. And now Eugene Levy just started doing it, too. What am I talking about? A charity event? Nope. Some sort of kale cleanse? Not that either. No – all of these famous movie stars, and quite a few others, have all uttered the same line: "What's in your wallet?"

If you haven't seen these commercials, which have been airing since the year 2000! – congratulations! Just in case you haven't seen them, though, or you've tried to block them out, the general schtick is that a celebrity very cleverly and even smugly talks about how good Capitol One credit cards are, especially compared to other companies, and that if you don't have one you're missing out. And at the end of every commercial, the highly paid celebrity always looks into the camera – to you and me at home – and asks, to make sure that : "What's in your wallet?"

In light of today's Gospel reading about John the Baptist and Herod, I'd like to tweak that slogan tagline a little bit: What's on your platter?

John the Baptist enters the scene in the Gospels by setting up shop out by the Jordan River, the boundary between wandering in the wilderness and the Promised Land. He is calling on people to repent and offering a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. He wears weird clothes and eats weird things, and is not afraid to call the representatives of the Temple leaders "a brood of vipers." He points others towards Jesus, the coming Christ, and he baptizes Jesus in the Jordan to signal the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

From that point on, the focus of the Gospel is on Jesus. But that doesn't mean that John just stopped doing what God called on him to do. He still kept calling on people to repent. He still kept preaching and pointing folks towards the Messiah. He still was not afraid to call out powerful people and demand that they live righteous lives in accordance with God's law. Apparently, he called out Herod, the ruler of the region (this would be the son of the Herod from the Christmas story), because he married his brother's wife, Herodias. (There's a lot of Herods running around.)

Herod the younger has John arrested and thrown in prison for speaking out against him and his wife. But he still listened to John; he was perplexed by him, but he liked him. Herodias the wife, though – not so much. She wanted John killed. He was undercutting the honor of Herod, and therefore weakening his power and authority. She wanted him to go. At a very public party full of very important people, Herod's daughter – also called Herodias, and in other places named Salome – does a dance that makes Herod foolishly promise her anything. She asks her mom, and her mom says: John the Baptists' head on a platter. Herod can't back down from the oaths he made in front of the important guests, so...John's head on a platter it is.

What happens to John isn't an isolated incident. Look at the story of the prophet Amos: he's a simple herdsman whom God calls out of his routine in the southern kingdom of Judah and sends up to the northern kingdom of Israel to deliver a message to God's people there. God can no longer deal with their idolatry and injustice, and Amos is sent to tell them that consequences are coming, exile and defeat. What does Amos get for his trouble? The king's prophet, Azariah, twists Amos's words and tells Amos to hit the road. He tells Amos not to say such things in the king's sanctuary.

Amos keeps his head; but his words fall on unlistening ears, because he dared to challenge the king's supremacy. Many other prophets face threats and harm from the rulers they are sent to as messengers. Jesus calls the Temple leaders hypocrites, challenges their authority, upends their interpretations of scripture, claims to be the Son of God, and even flips some tables over. And those leaders use the Romans to arrange a crucifixion.

Let's talk some A-list Bible figures. Amos did it. John the Baptist followed in Elijah's footsteps. Jesus did it, too. And then Paul and his companions. And, while we're at it, many other Christians, from the early martyrs to Martin Luther to Martin Luther King, Jr., faced similar threats and harm and imprisonment and death. What is it that they all did? They all spoke truth to power, in God's name. And power doesn't always like having truth spoken to it. Power doesn't usually like being challenged or called out. Power will do its best to shut you up. Power will do what it needs to to run to the kitchen and get out a platter.

I have a provocative proposition. I propose that, when it comes to speaking truth to power, most Christians in North America today are much less likely to end up with our heads on a platter, and much more likely to be polishing the silver. Or at least just standing in the crowd, spectators.

Let me elaborate. I'm not talking about any one politician or political party. I'm not talking about isolated issues or single planks in any platform. I'm

talking about the Kingdom of God. I'm talking about the radical roots of Christianity, that all people are created in the image of God and therefore worthy of love and life. I'm talking about how the last will be first and the first will be last. I'm talking about the plumb-line in Amos's vision, the measuring tool God was using to see if Israel's walls were straight and strong, or leaning and on their way towards a fall.

For us, the plumb-line is the overall message of Scripture, of a merciful God who loves us so much that He gave His only beloved Son to die for us and save us from our sin and free us to love others in the same footwashing, cross-shaped way that Christ loved us. The plumbline is the prophet's accountability and the Passion's costly grace. The plumbline is woven from the future promises of a heaven without tears or strife, with all peoples praising God around the throne, and God's people in this life trying to usher in that promised kingdom of God right now, right here.

Question: are we sticking our necks out? Look around: there is injustice aplenty that we could call out in God's name, that we could raise a ruckus over. There is hunger and crippling poverty. There is discrimination and disenfranchisement, seen as less than the image of God. There is hatred and greed. There is the degradation of the creation we are supposed to steward. There is apathy and indifference. There is corruption and injustice, procedures and policies to make sure that all peoples do not have equal access. Are we speaking truth to power, to today's Herods? They aren't always kings anymore. Usually it's something much harder to talk to, like ingrained systems that benefit some while leaving most others to suffer.

There's a difference between trying not to offend others by being "too political," or partisan, or petty, and not doing anything at all. We have the plumb-line; we can work for justice. We can speak for the voiceless. We can name injustice. We can participate in and change the systems that are broken and harmful. But we can also defer to the platter and the power so that we don't offend our guests, don't go back on our unspoken oaths to always and above all be "nice." We can spectate.

So: what's on your platter? What are you risking for the sake of the gospel? Is it your head, or your wallet, or your reputation, or your social standing, or even your life? Or does your platter carry the more demanding version of Jesus, who touches lepers and calls out hypocrites and speaks to truth to power and bears a cross and the wounds that come with it? Is that what's on your platter, so that you can keep the cozier, safer version of Jesus in your back pocket instead?

Lord knows I don't usually rock any boats. I'm really good at burying that little voice of conscience when the problems seem too big, too complicated,

too insurmountable. But the thing is: God wants us to speak up, to speak out, to be agents of change and ambassadors of the gospel in the world. Whether you are an Amos, plucked out of your routine; a Paul smacked upside the head with a holy two-by-four and forever changed by it; a John who is perplexing and pleasing at the same time; a you; a me.

God wants us to speak up, to speak out, to be agents of change and ambassadors of the gospel in the world. God wants us to risk things for the sake of others, just like God risked Jesus to the cross, for the sake of all. And we can speak. And act. And risk. And stick our necks out. And we hear how and why in Ephesians: God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We are adopted as God's children through Jesus Christ and his amazing grace that is bestowed on us. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. He has made known to us the mystery of his will, and we have obtained, in Christ, an inheritance of faith and mercy. In him we have heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, and we've been marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

We have forgiveness, life, and salvation! We have peace that surpasses all understanding! We are freed from securing our own redemption and freed for uninhibited love and service to our neighbors and the world. We have promises that we are in God's hands, through our baptisms, no matter what. We know God's love! We know how truly and deeply good it feels to be loved by God, unconditionally, our mistakes wiped out and forgotten, our souls filled, our prayers heard. We have faith in God's promised future, and strength from the Spirit to usher in even a glimpse of that future now. We have nothing to fear, and with God all things are possible! Even speaking truth to power. Even sticking our necks out in love.

My main question to you today was: What's on your platter? But let me remind myself and all of you that we need to be mindful of our subjects and verbs when it comes to God. Because when I ask, "What's on your platter," it's a valid and necessary question for our lives of faith; but it still makes it about us. So I want the last word today to be about the God who makes all things possible: What's on God's platter, for us? Nothing less than Jesus' body and blood. It still speaks of the cost; but it was paid to save us, and to change the world.

I'll end with a line from one of my favorite hymns. What's on God's platter? "Christ's own body, blessed and broken, cup o'erflowing, life outpoured, given as a living token of [God's] world redeemed, restored." May we become what we receive. Amen.

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY** Let Justice Flow like Streams



1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spar - kling wa - ter, pure,  
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,  
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



en - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans - ing, sure.  
an ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans - lat - ed in - to deed.  
and jus - tice, right, and peace per - vade this world our whole life through.

Text: Jane Parker Huber, b. 1926

Music: ST. THOMAS, Aaron Williams, 1731–1776

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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 parent, you welcome your people into one family and gather all things to yourself. Bestow your grace upon your beloved church, lavish your wisdom upon us, and redeem us from our faults, that by our witness all might

praise your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: *hear our prayer.***

A: Awesome Creator, you steadfastly tend to the smallest of seeds and the mightiest of sycamore trees. Spring up green growth from the earth, nourish the growth of fruit, grain, and other crops, and bless the work of farmers and laborers. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: *hear our prayer.***

A: God of the oppressed, turn the ears of those who are in power to the voices of prophets in our own day. Protect those who speak difficult truths when it is risky to do so. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: *hear our prayer.***

A: God of strength, you are near to those who endure difficulty. Comfort all who are survivors of violence, guard the refugee and the immigrant, and protect all those who are victims of prejudice and discrimination. We also lift before you today... Lord, in your mercy,

**C: *hear our prayer.***

A: God of love, we pray for this holy house and all those who worship here. We pray especially for those whose efforts behind the scenes often go unnoticed; for those who keep the building clean and the building and grounds maintained, for our office staff, and for all of our volunteers. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: *hear our prayer.***

A: We thank you, God, for the saints, martyrs, and prophets who have died in the faith. We remember those in this community who have recently died. United with them as God's children, assure us that we are yours forever. 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 Jung, Kiser and Laveck 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-IN-PLACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: *And also with you.***

*\*\*Please share signs of peace with those in your immediate vicinity only. If any are not comfortable making physical contact during the peace, please share peace in other ways.*

### **THE GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

*\*\*Offering baskets are located near the doors to the sanctuary. Please place your offerings in the baskets at the end of the service as you depart.*

### **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**

*\*\*Please process up the center aisle as directed by the ushers. Please maintain social distancing between family groups while processing. Bread and wine will be available from the pastor and the first lay assistant, with empty cups available on your way to the front. Prepackaged grape juice and wafer servings will be available from the second lay assistant. Baskets for empty cups will be set out. Please return to your seats down the side aisles.*

### **\*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    God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens



1 God, who stretched the span - gled heav - ens in - fi - nite in time and place,  
2 We have ven - tured worlds un - dreamed of since the child-hood of our race;  
3 As each far ho - ri - zon beck - ons, may it chal-lenge us a - new:



flung the suns in burn-ing ra - diance through the si - lent fields of space;  
known the ec - sta - sy of wing-ing through un - trav-eled realms of space;  
chil - dren of cre - a - tive pur - pose, serv - ing oth - ers, hon - 'ring you.



we, your chil - dren in your like-ness, share in - ven - tive pow'rs with you;  
probed the se - crets of the at - om, yield-ing un - i - mag - ined pow'r,  
May our dreams prove rich with prom-ise; each en-deav-or well be - gun;



great Cre - a - tor, still cre - at - ing, show us what we yet may do.  
fac - ing us with life's de - struc - tion or our most tri - um-phant hour.  
great Cre - a - tor, give us guid - ance till our goals and yours are one.

Text: Catherine Cameron, b. 1927

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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## \*DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*\*\*Please exit through either set of doors, maintaining distance between family groups. You are welcome to enjoy fellowship time outside in the parking lot.*

## POSTLUDE

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**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS – SUNDAY, July 11, 2021**

Pianist: Debbie Walker  
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Dianne Absher (2nd Lay Asst.) Donna Combs  
Lectors: Donna Combs  
Acolyte: TBD  
Greeters: Rosalee Cline  
Ushers (Inside) Roger Schroeder & Bill Weaver  
Ushers (Outside) LeRoy Albertson  
Altar Guild: Dianne Absher & Anita Philp  
Counters: Donna Combs & Erna Jung

\*\*\*\*\*

*Announcements*

**PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS**

Pastor Ryan is back from his travels and will be in and out of the office this week. Please call or email him to set up an appointment, at 507-360-7276 and/or messiahmechpr@gmail.com.

**WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE**

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

- Contributions to the general fund averaged \$3,091.69 (slightly up from \$3,042.13 through July 4, 2021).
- We are \$24,281.50 behind the year-to-date budget needs (decreasing slightly from \$24,670.50 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

**"NEW NORMALS ARE MESSY: CONVERSATIONS IN EZRA AND NEHEMIAH"**

"It's so good to be back in the sanctuary after so long apart and away!" That's not something that you'll hear only from churches getting back together as the pandemic wanes. It's also something said by the people of Israel after 70 long years of exile. But there were some bumps on reentry. Our midweek messages for the next few weeks will explore the post-exile books of Ezra and Nehemiah and see what they have to teach us today.

**THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!**

A sincere thank you to all of the volunteers that came during several days over several weeks as well as on an outside cleanup day to get Messiah ready for our eventual return inside. Special thanks go to volunteers from All Souls who helped with the sanctuary lighting and the anonymous donor who paid to get the pews and carpets cleaned.

Many hours were spent by groups of people to declutter, rearrange, paint, fix lighting, and clean throughout the church. The time is arriving that we're able to come together in a space we've missed so long. Praise the Lord! God is Good!

### **ALTAR FLOWERS**

If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, please follow the procedures below. Pick an empty date on the chart and write your name.

- Pick an empty date on the chart and write your name. Make your check for \$46 payable to "Messiah Lutheran Church" with the word "Flowers" on the outside of the Envelope, and place it in the offering plate. Please pay for your flowers at least 2 weeks in advance, or they cannot be ordered. If you would rather make a general donation for altar flowers to help ensure that we have fresh flowers on the altar weekly (except for Lent), as needed for vacant Sundays, follow the directions above, but instead write "line-item altar flowers" on the Memo line on your check and on the outside of the Envelope or pay online as above.

### **'DOPESICK' THANKS MESSIAH**

"On behalf of the Cast and Crew we would like to **thank you** for your participation in the filming of 'Dopesick'. We have enjoyed working in Virginia and truly appreciate your support. ~Location Department~" (Pacific 2.1 Entertainment Group, Inc. used our parking lot on different occasions while filming the Hulu series in and around Mechanicsville. The series focuses on the opioid epidemic and will air sometime in the near future).

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY MISSION PARTNER DISPLAYS**

One of the best parts of any Synod Assembly is the collection of displays presented by all the Synod's mission partners. You get to see where your mission support is going and talk to the individuals who are guiding those ministries. Since our Synod Assembly was virtual this year, so were the displays. In a way, it provides an opportunity for everyone to learn more about our mission partners. Check out this website for videos and links to all our partners in ministry:

<https://www.vasynod.org/2021-assembly-mission-partner-displays/>

### **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>.

### **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.

### **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/>

### **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](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp).

### **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](http://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](http://smile.amazon.com) for easy access every time you shop. You must add the "smile" for this program. Thank you all and happy shopping!