

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



July 18, 2021

Eighth 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

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 18, 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 Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak



1 Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in
2 Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead the
3 Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach the
4 Oh, fill us with your full - ness, Lord, un -



liv - ing ech - oes of your tone; as you have sought, so
wan-d'ring and the wa - v'ring feet; oh, feed us, Lord, that
pre - cious truths which you im - part; and wing our words, that
til our ver - y hearts o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and



let us seek your stray - ing chil - dren, lost and lone.
we may feed your hun - g'ring ones with man - na sweet.
they may reach the hid - den depths of man - y a heart.
glow - ing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.
Music: CANONBURY, Robert Schumann, 1810-1856

*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, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Lector

A reading from Jeremiah.

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the "flock" of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David's line to save Israel and Judah.

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 2:11-22

Lector

A reading from Ephesians.

The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole

structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

Pastor Ryan Radtke

We've been back inside the sanctuary for three weeks now. I think that, in general, it's like riding a bike – the routines and rhythms should be coming back to you pretty nicely. But, just in case you've felt at all rusty, I thought maybe I'd offer a little re-orientation. This thing up in front here is called the font. Not like Times New Roman or Comic Sans – it's where we baptize people,

and God writes on our hearts. There's a lectern over there for reading the lessons and prayers, and where I'm standing is the pulpit, for reading the Gospel and sharing a sermon. Some churches just use one stand; here at Messiah we want to stretch your necks equally. The choir area over there has a little bit of a fence around it, because, as you know, singers can sometimes get a little rowdy. The altar area also has a railing, because, as you know, sinners can sometimes get a little rowdy, and we need a place to lean or kneel when God meets us in the meal to forgive, save us, and give us peace.

Out there is the narthex, which is just a cool Latin way to talk about the lobby; this area up here is called the chancel; and in between, where the congregation sits, is called the nave. And, no joke, it's because many sanctuaries look like upside-down arks, or boats, so this is your "naval" sanctuary on the waters of life. And, as I've been saying for years, most Lutherans sit towards the back, clearly so that when we say "Go in peace, serve the Lord" at the end of a service, they are the first ones out. I can't think of any other reason why folks don't want to sit in the front.

I hope that helps you all get your bearings. It's ok to admit that maybe you were a little disoriented coming back after so much time away. And not just with the building or the worship service, either. Even when we are coming to church every single week, it's partly so that we can get re-oriented, by God, every single week. We get off track, we get turned around, we get turned in on ourselves. So, we re-center ourselves on God and God's grace and God's teaching when we gather together for worship, when we pray, when we read the Bible, when we receive the sacraments.

I have one other bit of reorientation to cover this week. I want to talk to you about the difference between "if-then" and "because-therefore." I would like to orient you away from the mindset and the lifestyle of "if I do x, then God will do y," and orient you towards the mindset and the lifestyle of "because God does this, therefore I can do that, I get to do that." And the first step in this reorientation is, of course, talking about God.

Our lessons today talk quite a bit about what God does, for us. In our Gospel reading today, it's Jesus, the Son of God and the Word made flesh, who leads the disciples. Jesus who knows when they need to go out and heal and when they need to go off and rest. It's Jesus who sees the desperate crowds and has compassion on them. It's Jesus who heals first. It's Jesus who teaches. In the verses our reading skips over today, it's Jesus who feeds the five thousand, and it's Jesus who walks on water. It's Jesus who crosses over to the other side, outside of the covenant, and extends grace there, too.

In Jeremiah we hear that the human shepherds have not been caring for their flocks of God's people. And So God says, "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock...I will bring them back to the field, and they shall be fruitful and multiply...I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing...I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." And Christians have long interpreted this prophecy to be about Jesus, whose justice and righteousness were the very healing and teaching we saw on display in Mark.

And in Ephesians we hear that, when some were strangers and aliens to God's promises, that God has taken those who once were far off and brought them near by the blood of Christ. "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two..." Through Christ God makes peace between even Jews and Gentiles. Through Christ God puts to death the hostility. Through Christ God proclaims peace to the far off and the near alike. Through Christ we all have access in one Spirit to the Father. In Christ God brings us from being strangers and aliens to being citizens and members of God's house. Through Christ God builds us together into a living dwelling-place for God in the world.

God does all of this, and more. And we get caught up in strategies and programs and planning about what we need to do as a church, or as individual Christians, and we make it all about us and our efforts. Well folks, that will leave us exhausted and disappointed. We must always start with God. So, please allow me to lead us in a little reorientation.

It's not "If I choose Jesus, then God will bless me." It's "Because God chooses me in the waters of baptism, and writes on my heart, therefore I can recognize God's blessings and be a blessing to others, in Jesus' name." It's not, "If I accept Jesus into my heart as my personal Lord and Savior, then God will save me." It's "Because God broke down the dividing wall by the blood of Christ, because God ended the hostility, because God brought me from far off, because God crossed over to the other side, because God saved me, therefore I can be sent out to heal and teach and proclaim the good news to others who feel far off."

It's not "If I pray right, or live right, or choose right, then God will make my life prosper." It's "Because God has compassion on our failings, our illnesses, our desperation, therefore I am able to be compassionate to others and be content with whatever I have." It's not "If I find inner peace, then I'll have a

better connection to God.” It’s “Because God is our shepherd, therefore I need not fear or dismay. In God, I will never be missing; in God will I find rest.”

It’s not “If I sit in this upside-down ark every Sunday, then I’m holy and righteous.” It’s “Because God builds us into a dwelling-place, therefore I can sit in the back pews and sprint out the door to be a living sanctuary for every single other human being in this world.” It’s not, “If I eat at this table, then I am justified to tell others how to live their lives.” It’s “Because God feeds me, therefore I can teach grace and embody compassion for anyone who hungers in this life.”

It’s not “If I maintain the appearance of living a perfect, problem-free life, then I can decide in God’s name who is worthy of healing or help.” It’s “Because God heals me and restores me, therefore I can be the hem of Jesus’ garment in this world for all those straining for just the lightest touch.” All of need a railing to lean on, to kneel at, sometimes.

We come to church every single week not just to hear nice things and feel good about ourselves. We come to get reoriented, back to God’s way of seeing, God’s way of loving, God’s way of forgiving, God’s way of feeding, God’s way of living, God’s way of compassion, God’s way of taking down divisions, God’s way of crossing over to the other side, God’s way of the cross. We come to get reoriented, for this field guide of Christianity, taught to us not just from the pulpit or the lectern, but from the table, and the font, and the peace, and the offering, from the Holy Spirit’s presence in the architecture, from the postures we adopt and the songs we sing.

Great crowds chased Jesus all over the countryside. They ran around a lake to catch up to him. They recognized him and they flocked to him. They wanted a shepherd. They wanted healing. They were desperate and pressing in to touch him, even the fringe of his cloak, to be restored to health and community. I pray that we have even a fraction of that sense of urgency to come here, to encounter God, to be healed, to worship together, and to be sent out. And it’s not, “If I do it right, then Jesus is all mine.” No; it’s “Because God gave all of Jesus for the sake of sinners like me, therefore I will follow him with all that I am, too.” Thanks be to God. Amen.

***HYMN OF THE DAY** We Come to You for Healing, Lord



1 We come to you for heal - ing, Lord, of
2 As once you walked through an - cient streets and
3 You touch us through phy - si - cians' skills, through
4 When nights are long with wake - ful - ness, through
5 We come to you, O lov - ing Lord, in



bod - y, mind, and soul, and pray that by your
reached toward those in pain, come, ris - en Christ, a -
nurs - es' gifts of care, and through the love of
days when strength runs low, grant us your gift of
our dis - tress and pain, in trust that through our



Spir - it's touch we may a - gain be whole.
mong us still with pow'r to heal a - gain.
faith - ful friends who lift our lives in prayer.
pa - tience, Lord, your calm - ing peace to know.
nights and days your grace will heal, sus - tain.

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 1923–2007
Music: MARTYRDOM, Hugh Wilson, 1764–1824
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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: Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation. *[Brief silence]*

A: Tend your church, O God. Encourage bishops, pastors, and deacons in their proclamation of the gospel. Raise up new leaders and encourage those pursuing a call to ministry. Embolden all the baptized to embody your love and justice. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Restore your creation, O God. Sustain croplands and pastures and safeguard all farm animals and livestock. Preserve lakes, rivers, and streams that offer refreshment. Revive lands recovering from natural disasters and protect coastlands threatened by rising oceans. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Reconcile the nations, O God. Break down the dividing walls that make us strangers to one another and unite us as one human family. Equip leaders to deal wisely with conflict and guide diplomats who seek peaceful solutions. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Heal your people, O God. Look with compassion on immigrants, exiles, and all who are afraid or feel lost. Give rest to those who are weary, comfort to those who are grieving, and recovery to those who are ill (especially). Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Nourish this congregation, O God. Prepare a table where we receive food for our hungering spirits. Renew our commitment to provide for one another and revitalize our ministries of feeding and nurturing hungry neighbors. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: You lead us home, O God. We give thanks for all who have died, now citizens with the saints (especially). As you have received them into your heavenly home, so welcome all of us to dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, and our church as we face the challenges of coronavirus. We pray for those who grieve; 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. 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 Knepper and Kondaki families as well as our Messiah family. Guard all of our hearts that we may display love instead of hate, anger, or bitterness. Lead us all to be grateful for your abiding love and enable us to glorify you by sharing that love with others. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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 Healer of Our Every Ill**

Refrain

Heal - er of our ev - 'ry ill, light of each to - mor - row,

give us peace be - yond our fear, and hope be - yond our sor - row.

- 1 You who know our fears and sad - ness, grace us with your
- 2 In the pain and joy be - hold - ing how your grace is
- 3 Give us strength to love each oth - er, ev - 'ry sis - ter,
- 4 You who know each thought and feel - ing, teach us all your

peace and glad - ness; Spir - it of all com - fort, fill our hearts.
 still un - fold - ing, give us all your vi - sion, God of love.
 ev - 'ry broth - er; Spir - it of all kind - ness, be our guide.
 way of heal - ing; Spir - it of com - pas - sion, fill each heart.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL, Marty Haugen
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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

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

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS – SUNDAY, July 18, 2021

Pianist: Debbie Walker
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Becky Collie (2nd Lay Asst.) Heather Williams
Lectors: Susie Weaver
Acolyte: TBD
Greeters: Lois Schroeder
Ushers (Inside) Roger Schroeder & Gordon Gunn
Ushers (Outside) Jake Addair
Altar Guild: Dianne Absher & Anita Philp
Counters: Becky Collie & Rosalee Cline

Announcements

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Ryan 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 \$3,041.54 (slightly down from \$3,091.69 through July 11, 2021).
- We are \$26,584.97 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$24,281.50 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.

HELPING MCEF FAMILIES

Schools will be reopening sooner than we can imagine! Students will be needing essential supplies and these supplies can be costly! In mid-August MCEF will have "Back to School" hours for clients to help with clothing needs and school supplies. (Hanover Co. does not provide supplies for students) Items needed include:

- Basic school supplies such as pencils, pens, notebook paper, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, spiral notebooks, hi-lighters, binders, glue sticks, markers, pencil pouches, and composition books (blk/white).
- Current clothing needs include: girls sizes 4 & 5 summer or early fall, boys jeans size 6 & 7, boys clothing size 10, clothing styles/sizes for teen girls, underwear (girls size 14-16) (boys size small & med.) (men's and women's for older teens) reminder for men and boys—boxer brief styles, hooded sweatshirts and light weight jackets.

I know you will soon be asked to help with school items for enCircle (Luth. Family Services) . My hope is you can help both organizations. Having school supplies on the first day is a BIG step toward a good school year!!! If possible, please be a part of this! You can leave MCEF supplies in the MCEF basket in the narthex or give to Gladys Hubert or Donna Combs. Thanks!!

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. Please 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. 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.

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.

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!