

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



July 25, 2021

Ninth 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

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 25, 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: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

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

C: Amen

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

P: Most merciful God,

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

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

C: Amen.

*GATHERING SONG Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



- 1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
- 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
- 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
- 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com - fort in all strife.
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: UNSER HERRSCHER, Joachim Neander, 1650–1680

*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: ***Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. Grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

FIRST LESSON: 2 Kings 4:42-44

Lector

A reading from 2 Kings.

Today's reading is part of a larger section of 2 Kings that describes the miracles of Elisha, the successor to Elijah. Here the prophet gives food to a hungry crowd.

Though there is not enough food to go around, Elisha trusts God, who provides enough and even more to satisfy the need.

⁴²A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to [Elisha,] the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat." ⁴³But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So he repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.' " ⁴⁴He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 3:14-21

Lector

A reading from Ephesians.

We have been rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our lives are continuously strengthened and empowered by the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: John 6:1-21**

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are called "signs," because they reveal the true character of God. As such, they remain within the mystery of God and cannot be brought under human control.

¹Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise to you, O Christ.*

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

Pastor Ryan Radtke

Let's cut right to the chase: I think that we have all heard this story before. It's one of the few that's in all four of the Gospels. We've heard it so many times that we pretty much have the stats line memorized: five thousand people, five loaves, two fishes, twelve baskets of leftovers. One astounded crowd who is ready to make Jesus King by sheer force. And, for dessert, twelve disciples astounded in their boat at the sight of Jesus walking on the water. And don't

forget the appetizer story from 2 Kings, too, about Elisha performing pretty much the same feeding miracle. Less familiar story, but the same kind of message: God's abundance outstrips our expectations.

Not only were the crowds' physical needs met and the day's hunger sated on that grassy plain, but there were leftovers a-plenty and amazement galore in Jesus' wake, as he provided well beyond their needs. Miracle stories like this point to God's love and provision for us overall, beyond merely our physical needs; they point to the extravagant, overwhelming love that God showed us through Jesus' life and ministry, through his death and resurrection, through the Holy Spirit's movement: satisfying so much more than just our empty bellies. Through Christ God defeats sin and death, gives hope, works for justice and reconciliation, forgives sins, and makes us free.

When I read through our lesson from Paul's letter to the Ephesians for the first time, I thought that it was backing this theme up rather nicely, with phrases like "the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge" and "able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine." I was thinking that this sermon today would be all about the mind-blowing love that God shows us, and that I would be reminding all of you to be open to experiencing that love in your lives. But then I kept reading this passage of Ephesians, and realized that this sermon had to go further than that, because Paul went further than that, because God goes further than that.

The lesson isn't just about how amazing God's love is, how it defies our logic and definitions; the prayer we heard from Paul today is dedicated to God who "by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine." It's more than just experiencing God's love, sitting back and rubbing our full tummies once we're fed – we have a part to play in all of this. A God-given part to play. We are not just grateful spectators or, ooh-ing and ahh-ing at the wonderful things God does for us. Paul is praying that this gracious, amazing love of God's would be delivered and implemented through us. Through this church. How about that?!

This letter was written to the Ephesians, the churches in and around Ephesus. This was a region very much in line culturally with the Roman Empire, and the recipients of this letter were almost certainly Gentiles. As we heard last week, these Gentiles were not originally part of Israel, not originally heirs of the promise, members of the same body, a central part of the story of God's people. They were "far off." Jesus dying on the cross broke down those separating walls and Paul carried this gospel, this good news, to Gentiles all over the place. And many heard the good news and were changed. But, as is often the case, change takes time. These Ephesians, these Gentiles, were new to all of this, and they were growing into their identities as Christians, discerning what it meant to be Christian when the main Christians were Jews. They were thinking about their purpose, their part in God's story.

Our lesson today from Ephesians is a prayer. This prayer is an empowering prayer, and when you listen to it really does seem that Paul is praying for God to

in-power the Ephesians, to pour power in to these members of the church. Paul is saying, "Look what God has done through me, a lowly man who once tried to destroy the very thing I am now seeking to increase on God's behalf. Look what God is doing through me, and just imagine what God will do through you." It doesn't matter if you're new to all of this, or if you're still searching and figuring things out, or if you're still hungry for meaning. God will fill you up, yes; and there will also be abundance left over, abundance to share, so that nothing, and no one, will be lost.

Even though I hear, plainly, that this Ephesians prayer is asking for us to "know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge" – to know something that is beyond knowing – still, the power and promise of these words inspire me and make me truly believe and have faith that I really can know the un-knowable, and that I can really be a channel for God's unbelievable love, flying in the face of all logic and reason. /

Twenty-five years ago, before seminary, I knew practically nothing about the Bible, about being Lutheran, about being Christian for that matter. I'm not exaggerating. Our fellowship hall at church was called the Martin Luther Room, and I was almost in high school before I realized that Martin Luther was, you know, important, and our namesake, and stuff. I just went to church every Sunday and did what was expected, and the people were nice, but that was it. I didn't yet know that there was more. I didn't know about the power at work within us that is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

I ended up being a pastor. That's my call from God. Each of us has a different call: in our professions, in our passions, in our families. We are all different members of the body of Christ. We all have different gifts, different abilities, different talents, different hearts that God is at work in. Paul is inviting the Ephesians to seek out and embrace their unique gifts and callings, their unique ways to be open to God's working through them and accomplishing abundantly far more than they could ask or imagine. I invite all of you – both individually and as the family of Messiah – to do the same. Seek out your gifts. Embrace your abilities. Because the Holy Spirit is moving us from passive awe to active work, multiplied by God to feed the world in love.

I also invite you to go back and read this Ephesians passage again in the coming days. And each time that you do, substitute the word "ability" for the word "power." In Paul's time, that's what was meant by "power": the capacity, the ability, the potential, to do something. If we read this passage in that light, we hear Paul praying that God would strengthen us in our inner being with ability through his Spirit, as we are rooted and grounded in love. Paul prays that we might have the ability to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, the cosmically vast dimensions of God's love. Paul prays to our God who by the potential and ability at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or

imagine. There will be so many fragments left over, ready to astound us, yes, and ready to nourish so many others, so that nothing, and no one, may be lost.

My hope is that when you hear this prayer in this way, you'll realize that every one of you has the ability and the power to move from passive awe to active work, to full participation in God's kingdom work in the world. Each one of you has a vital part in God's Kingdom, in God's mission. To listen and respond, to encourage and challenge, to teach and share, to give and advocate, to forgive and reconcile, to love and serve. Imagine the possibilities of what is happening in your lives, through all your relationships and interactions and callings. We aren't just recipients of God's love. Each one of us is an instrument of God's love, of God's will, and God's provision.

We forget this sometimes. Sometimes we just sit back in awe, stuck in "receive" mode. Sometimes we are like the disciples on the lake, gobsmacked and terrified at the lengths (and depths and heights and breadth) that Jesus goes to find us and say, "Don't be afraid." Sometimes we try to contain or control the power, the ability, the gifts; we try to not use them the way they are intended to be used, like the crowd trying to force Jesus to be an earthly king. Sometimes we do not allow ourselves to be used the way God intends. We say things like "We can't – we're not able" or "That's someone else's job, someone else's gift." And sometimes we forget that all of this is a process, and that any change and growth takes time.

God loves us despite all of that resistance and hesitance and impatience and forgetfulness. God still uses us as instruments of God's incomprehensible love, uses us to bring about the kingdom and feed people who are hungry – for food or love or anything else. God has still given us the ability to pray as Paul does in Ephesians, that we would feel the power of God working through us, the love of Christ filling us, and the presence of the Spirit strengthening our inner being and animating our actions. We are grounded, firmly rooted, in God's love, and through that love anything is possible. I pray that we may all have faith that God's love does work through us, in small and large ways, able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

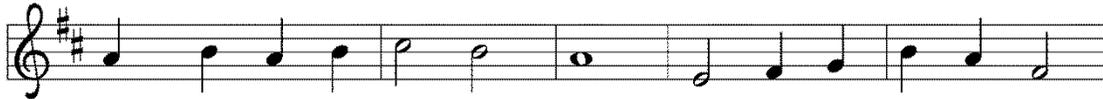
What makes all this possible is beyond our ability – it is God's power, God's ability that is working in us. For God is able. God is able not only to feed, to walk on water, to do all these miraculous things we read about. God is able to all of this, through us! Can you believe that? I pray the answer is yes!

God is at work, and God is able. God is so gracious that God even works through us, grants us gifts, gave us the gift, Jesus the Christ, so that we might grasp and comprehend and believe and pray that we are more than only recipients but also instruments of God. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God, filled with some left over to be shared, so that nothing, and no one, may be lost. Amen.

***HYMN OF THE DAY** Break Now the Bread of Life



1 Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, as once you
2 Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me, as when you
3 You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, your ho - ly



broke the loaves be - side the sea. Be - yond the sa - cred page
blessed the bread by Gal - i - lee. Then shall all bond-age cease,
word the truth that res - cues me. Give me to eat and live



I seek you, Lord; my spir - it waits for you, O liv - ing Word.
all fet - ters fall; and I shall find my peace, my All - in - All!
with you a - bove; teach me to love your truth, for you are love.

Text: Mary A. Lathbury, 1841–1913, alt.

Music: BREAD OF LIFE, William F. Sherwin, 1826–1888

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: We pray for the church. Bless the ministries of our neighboring congregations. Empower churches throughout the world and encourage missionaries who accompany global neighbors. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration, that all people may know your loving works. Hear us, O God. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and come to the aid of those enduring sweltering heat. Nurture wheat and barley crops grown for the nourishment of your people and conserve aquatic habitats and fish populations. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We pray for those who govern. Cast out arrogance, selfishness, and corruption and instruct those who lead to practice compassion and humility. Inspire them with a vision of the common good and a commitment to ensure that all who hunger are fed. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We pray for those bowed down by heavy burdens: those who are unemployed or underemployed, those unable to find affordable housing, and those without health insurance. Console those who grieve and hear the cries of those who call to you for healing (especially). Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We pray for this assembly. Deepen our resolve to use what we have to serve those in need. When we worry that we do not have enough resources for ministry, assure us of your abundance. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We give thanks for those who have died. As you sustained them through all their days, so dwell in our hearts, that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. 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 Mahovtas, Major and Martin 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.

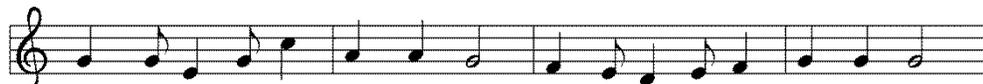
C: Amen

***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 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ**



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:
2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,
3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - 'ry - where!



Refrain
Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929
Music: LINSTEAD, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter, 1925-1980
Text and music © 1975 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
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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 25, 2021

- Pianist: Debbie Walker
- Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Karen Morris (2nd Lay Asst.) Marilyn Gunn
- Lectors: Anita Philp
- Acolyte: Ella Anderson
- Greeters: Becky Collie
- Ushers (Inside) Roger Schroeder & Bill Weaver
- Ushers (Outside) TBD
- 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 \$3,064.35 (slightly up from \$3,041.54 through July 18, 2021).
- We are \$26,872.97 behind the year-to-date budget needs (slightly increasing from \$26,584.97 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

FOSTER CHILDREN SCHOOL SUPPLIES

We are collecting school supplies for our Foster Children. The items are written on post it notes, on a poster, in the Narthex. Take the notes, for the supplies that you would like to purchase, and please bring them back to church, by the deadline of August 15th. Place them in the collection box in the Narthex. Social Ministry and Lutheran Family services are so grateful for the kindness of our congregation. If you have any questions, call Sharon Addair at 543-9709. Thank you for caring! Your Social Ministry Team

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 Glady 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>.

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/>

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.

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!