

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



August 29, 2021

Fourteenth 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

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 29, 2021

**Congregation standing*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome visitors! May the Spirit of Christ fill your heart as we worship today. You are invited to make Messiah your church home.

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C: Amen

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

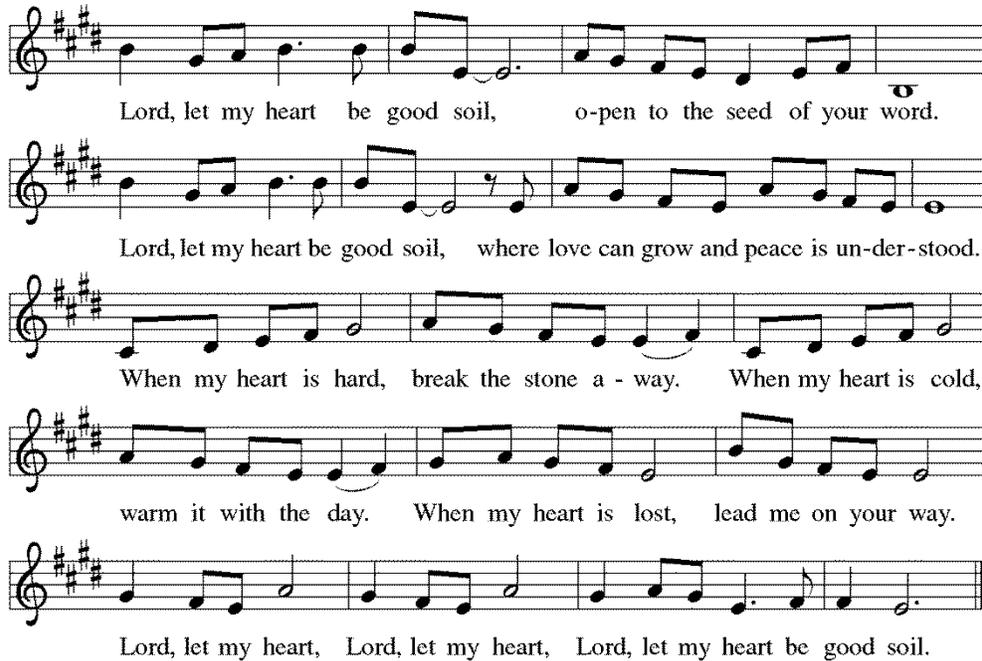
P: God, our provider,

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

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

C: Amen.

*GATHERING SONG Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950
Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson
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*THE GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray:

C: ***O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

FIRST LESSON: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Lector

A reading from Deuteronomy.

The Israelites believed the law was a divine gift that provided guidelines for living out the covenant. Moses commands the people to obey the law and to neither add to nor subtract from it. The Israelites are also to teach the law to their children and their children's children.

¹So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ²You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the

commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

⁶You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" ⁷For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? ⁸And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

⁹But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: James 1:17-27

Lector

A reading from James.

The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

'This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."

²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise to you, O Christ.*

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

Pastor Ryan Radtke

When it comes to God, us humans are often downright forgetful. That's why we had the wrist-wear equivalent of a string around our fingers in those WWJD bracelets. Are those still a thing? They prompted wearers to ask, in whatever the situation was: "What would Jesus do?" That's also, I think, why folks like to hang up the Ten Commandments, or put up artistic signs on the walls of our houses with Bible verses: we really want to remember God's directives, in part because we know how easy it can be for them to slip our minds.

We are so forgetful, that one of those commandments even says, “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.” *Remember* the Sabbath, God tells us, because we forget to set aside time for God, time for rest. Our lives are busy. We are easily distracted. And, of course, a lot of the Old Testament is basically God reminding the Israelites what God has done for them, rekindling in them the stories of God’s mighty and saving acts, and telling them to pass those stories down to their children. Inevitably, though, within a verse or a chapter or a book, you see God’s people forgetting God’s deliverance, God’s commands, and God’s presence. Going their own way, doing their own thing, time after time. Forgetful.

One way to think about sin is as a turning in on yourself. If you’re turned in on yourself, it’s tough to remember – let alone to notice at all – everything around you: God’s world, God’s people in need, God’s commands, and the opportunities to love and serve that God is putting in our path. Our three lessons today each touch on this forgetful and turned-in tendency of ours, as well as the consequences that our forgetfulness can carry.

I’ll start with James, and what I’m calling “inactivity-induced amnesia.” James is a book, by the way, that Martin Luther would have liked to forget – (he wasn’t a fan). James talks a lot about the importance of good works, but praising the benefits of good works made Luther a little fidgety. Luther lived in a time and place where good works were seen not as opportunities to serve or ways to thank God or even just as a way of life, but rather as points to be earned towards heaven, like some cosmic board game. In actuality, though, James doesn’t talk about good works that way at all: he had the opposite problem on his hands. He was seeing Christian believers who would only *hear* the word, hear the good news that Jesus had died to save them, and then just nod their heads and feel good about themselves, completely forgetting the whole “love others/actions” part.

James said that “if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in the mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they look like.” In other words, if we don’t *do* the word, if we don’t live out and live *in* the saving grace that God has showered on us by in turn living that grace, *doing* that grace, towards others, then we forget who we are and whose we are. Faith in action – not passive, “sit back and nod your head and feel good about yourself” faith – that’s what James is talking about. The ELCA’s slogan captures the same sentiment: “God’s work. Our hands.” This should serve as a constant reminder of what God has done for us, for the world, and what He desperately wants others to experience, actively, *through us*.

Unfortunately, inactivity-induced amnesia seems pretty rampant. It is a frequent – and often accurate – criticism of Christianity that we too often are only hearers of the word, not practicing what we preach (or hear preached; or read in the Bible; or pray for; and so on). It is not enough only to *hear* God’s Word; it isn’t even enough that God’s Word guides us into purer living; in the

end God's Word inspires and challenges us, tries to pick us up and thrust us out into the world to share, in word and deed, the same crazy, undeserved, unexpected, disproportionate love that God gives us. We forget about that part, forget to do and not only hear. And if we only ever hear, and forget to do, we actually forget who we are.

Which brings us to Mark's Gospel lesson, and what I'm calling "overactivity-induced amnesia." Today we heard about some Pharisees who were so concerned with doing or not doing or not doing enough or doing too much or not doing it right – aaah! – that Jesus needs to remind them what their "doings" were all about, and to offer them some perspective.

These particular Pharisees are upset with Jesus because his disciples hadn't washed their hands before eating. They're upset because a rule in Leviticus – strike that, years' worth of accumulated tradition and interpretation *about* a rule in Leviticus – said that touching certain things made you ritually unclean and therefore required that you wash yourself before doing anything else. This was all well and good for the Pharisees; but for people like farmers and fishermen, travelers like Jesus and his disciples, and most other working folks, coming into contact with unclean stuff was inevitable and taking time to wash or having water handy usually weren't options. All these Pharisees could see was a rule being broken. Jesus quotes Isaiah to them: "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." In other words, these Pharisees were so concerned with the letter of the law, they forgot the *intent* of the law. They couldn't see past their accumulated rules and interpretations of rules to see the world around them in any sense of reality.

Jesus reminds them that it doesn't matter what goes into your body or how clean your hands are when you eat it (religiously, that is – please wash your hands!). Jesus reminds them that what you put in all comes out the same, in the end. (: What matters to God is what's in your heart, and what comes forth *from* it, whether it be sinful or righteous, charitable or selfish, turned out or turned in. Jesus reminds them that the point of the law is to help give structure and guidance to what comes *out* from your heart, and that, by comparison, God isn't as concerned about things like dirty hands or eating the wrong kind of food or most of the other hundreds of individual laws. Jesus says in another place that he came to fulfill the Law, and in so doing he expands it and abolishes it and redefines it all at once, so that we can remember why we try to live by it in the first place: because God gave it to us to help us live and serve. Through Jesus' death and resurrection the law dies and is born anew as well, and we need to remember that our doings and not-doings don't save us – God saves us. But we forget, and we get caught up in rule-worship just like the Pharisees, constantly keeping score.

Which brings us back towards the beginning, to Deuteronomy, to the giving of the Law in the first place. And for this lesson I don't have any cute amnesia-related names: God is worried about plain ol' forgiveness here. In the

first part of our lesson, Moses is pretty excited: “won't the other nations think we're so lucky and that our God is so awesome – all they have to do is look at this body of religious law we follow!” OK, not what would get me going, but the law meant identity, and the Israelites knew that because of the Law they would feel like God's chosen people, even when they were surrounded by hostile peoples and nations.

But as much as Moses and the Israelites (and, later on, the Pharisees) were keen on the Law, our lesson today ends by telling the Israelites to not “forget the things that your eyes have seen nor let them slip from your mind all the days of your life.” In other words, it's not the laws, first and foremost, that you need to remember; not the laws, first and foremost, that you need to pass down to your children; not the laws, first and foremost, that will impress the neighbor nations. The thing never to forget, never to let slip from your mind, is what you saw God do for you: deliver you, guard you, protect you, rescue you, guide you, provide for you, choose you, keep promises to you. In other words, God loved you and keeps loving you. That is what the law signifies beyond all the individual rules; that is what you should remember and never forget. In all the days of your life, do not let it slip from your mind what God has done and still does and will do for you.

But we do forget. We get turned in on ourselves instead of turned towards God. We get overactivity-induced amnesia and get worked up about the rules and who is or isn't following them, and we forget about the God who gave them, and the heart of the law. Or we get inactivity-induced amnesia, nodding our heads and feeling good about ourselves, and forgetting that we respond to God's salvation by loving others the way God loves us, expressed in good works and acts of service. We let our identity as God's people slip from our minds like a forgotten reflection when we don't live out for others the love and grace we ourselves receive.

One more recap, in case you already forgot. God never stops working to make sure we don't forget who, and whose, we are. Deuteronomy teaches us that if you forget what God has done for you, you won't remember how loved and cared for you are. So God's people were gifted with rules and structures to help them remember. James teaches us that if we don't practice showing that same love for others, we won't remember who God asks us to be. And so God gives us plenty of opportunities to love others, and plenty of opportunities, like at this rail, to see what godly love looks and tastes like. And Jesus teaches us that if we get caught up in the rules and laws, but forget to foster God's love in our hearts, then nothing we do in God's name will be recognized as coming from God. So God shows us grace and forgiveness to shape our hearts accordingly towards others.

We are forgetful creatures; but God never forgets us. Hear this, and remember: you are loved. Amen.

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

Guide My Feet



1 Guide my feet
2 Hold my hand
3 Stand by me while I run this race.
4 I'm your child
5 Search my heart



Guide my feet
Hold my hand
Stand by me while I run this race.
I'm your child
Search my heart



Guide my feet
Hold my hand
Stand by me while I run this race,
I'm your child
Search my heart



for I don't want to run this race in vain.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: GUIDE MY FEET, African American spiritual

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Introductions

P: People of God, do you promise to support and pray for these new members in their life in Christ?

C: **We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

Let us welcome these sisters and brothers in Christ to this community of faith.

C: **We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

***PRAYERS**

A: Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *[Brief silence]*

A: We pray for the church, that it is a safe haven for all who seek your presence. Fill it with pastors, deacons, and leaders who echo your expansive and generous welcome. Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

A: We pray for the whole of creation, that plants and animals have the habitat and resources to thrive and flourish. Inspire us to protect threatened habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

A: We pray for individuals in positions of authority. Raise up wise and discerning leaders in federal, state, and local governments and guide them to seek the benefit of every person. Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

A: We pray for all who are in need. Support and encourage those who are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing poverty. Bring food, shelter, clothes, and stability for daily life. We especially pray today for... Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

A: We pray for this congregation, especially those beginning a new school year. Empower teachers and school administrators. Guide students in their learning and development. Accompany parents, foster parents, and caregivers who provide encouragement and love. Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

A: We give thanks for the faithful departed who showed us how to honor God with our heart. Inspire us by their example and renew our faith, trusting that we will be united with them in glory. 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 Schroeder and Shaw 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: Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; 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.

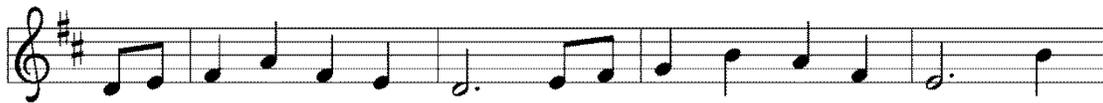
C: Amen

***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 This Is My Father's World



1 This is my Fa-ther's world, and to my lis-t'ning ears all
2 This is my Fa-ther's world; the birds their car-ols raise; the
3 This is my Fa-ther's world; oh, let me not for-get that,



na-ture sings, and round me rings the mu-sic of the spheres.
morn-ing light, the lil-y white, de-clare their mak-er's praise.
though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the rul-er yet.



This is my Fa-ther's world; I rest me in the thought of
This is my Fa-ther's world; he shines in all that's fair. In the
This is my Fa-ther's world; why should my heart be sad? The



rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the won-ders wrought.
rus-ting grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me ev-'ry-where.
Lord is king, let heav-en ring; God reigns, let earth be glad!

Text: Maltbie D. Babcock, 1858–1901

Music: TERRA PATRIS, Franklin L. Sheppard, 1852–1930, adapt.

*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, August 29, 2021

Pianist: Sandy Dacus
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Karen Morris (2nd Lay Asst.) Sally Bennett
Lectors: Sally Bennett
Acolyte: Ella Anderson
Greeters: Pat Hubert
Ushers (Inside) Bill Weaver
Ushers (Outside) Gordon Gunn
Altar Guild: Gladys Hubert & Rosalee Cline
Counters: Jake & Sharon Addair

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 \$2,948.53 (slightly down from \$2,988.09 through August 22, 2021).
- We are \$35,443.97 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$33,095.97 the last time reported).
- Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

CHURCH DIRECTORY IS BEING UPDATED

Davina will be updating the church directory in the near future. Please let her know if you've had changes to your address, phone number, or email address. There is a printed church directory in the narthex if you wish to update there or you can email her with your updates or changes at messiahmech@gmail.com

NEED MASKS?

As kids are going back to school, some families might consider stocking up on masks so their kids aren't wearing the same mask day after muggy day. MCEF graciously shared some bounty of masks (and hand sanitizer) with the church. If you or someone you know could use these items, please contact Pastor Ryan or Davina.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome new members to Messiah today! You are invited to stay after the service for some light snacks and get to know them and show them some Messiah love!

SERVICE OF HEALING, CELEBRATION, AND REMEMBRANCE

Following today's new member reception, you are invited to come back into the sanctuary for a service of healing, celebration and remembrance. There will be an opportunity for anyone who so desires to come forward and receive a prayer of healing, especially after this long pandemic trial we've undergone. We will also give thanks for the members of Messiah who have died during the pandemic. Not everyone was able to attend their services, and some have not been able to have a memorial service yet. We'll celebrate their lives and have a chance to share some stories and memories.

INSTALLATION SERVICE

On Sunday, September 12th, at 3:00 pm, you are invited to attend the Installation service for Pastor Ryan. Pastor Katie Pocalyko, our Richmond Conference Dean, will preside. There will be a reception with refreshments to follow.

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. The final installment of this series is this week, and we will conclude our exploration of the post-exile books of Ezra and Nehemiah and what they have to teach us today.

MCEF NEWS

Save the date: Saturday, September 11, 2021 for the annual concert by the John Marshall Alumni Band at 7:00 at Walnut Grove Baptist Church, 7046 Cold Harbor Road. This is a "Food and Fund Raiser" for the MCEF Pantry with admission being a donation of \$2 and a nonperishable food item (canned or boxed). Come and support MCEF's local missions. Current food needs are pork and beans, applesauce, ketchup and large cans of soup (18.5 oz.) size. Your support is always greatly appreciated.

HELP WANTED

Now that we're back to worshipping in the sanctuary, being a greeter or an usher is much easier. Less walking. No standing in the hot sun, rain, or freezing air. How easy is that! The other thing is that almost anyone can do either of these ministries. And, yes, these are ministries of service. So what are you waiting for? All you have to do is contact Sally Bennett at sallybennett3317@gmail.com. She will make a place for you on her schedule. Sign up today!

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.

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.

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!

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: HAITI AND WILDFIRES

Please visit ELCA.org/disaster for information on how to help those affected by these natural disasters and the long period of recovery ahead.