

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



December 12, 2021

Third Sunday of Advent

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To share the Good News of Jesus Christ
and to invite all to join us in faith, worship, and service.*

The service will be livestreamed at 10:45 am on Messiah's FB page, and that video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. There is no pre-recording of the service on YouTube this week.

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Pastor: The Rev. Ryan Radtke

Church: (804) 746-7134; Email: MessiahMech@gmail.com; Website: MessiahMech.com

Third Sunday of Advent

December 12, 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 alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

P: God for whom we wait.

C: *in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.*

P: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ☩ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

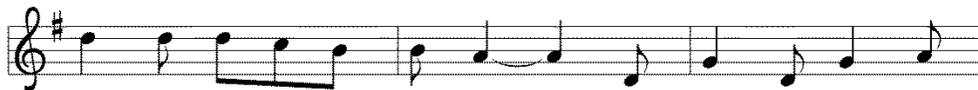
C: Amen.

*** GATHERING SONG *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn (ELW 242)***

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



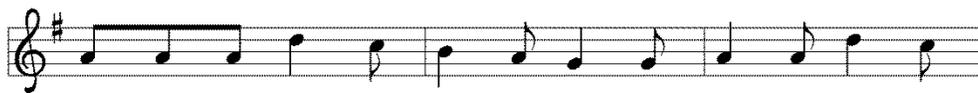
1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen
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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.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

P: Dear God, In the height of our Advent walk, grant us the courage to experience joy. Joy in the face of apathy, Joy in the face of sorrow, Joy in the face of uncertainty.

C: **Amen**

Light the three candles.

Sing ELW 240, "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah," v. 3



3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray:

C: ***Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.***

FIRST LESSON: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Lector

A reading from Zephaniah.

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst,

a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,

he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,

so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors

at that time.

And I will save the lame

and gather the outcast,

and I will change their shame into praise

and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home,

at the time when I gather you;

for I will make you renowned and praised

among all the peoples of the earth,

when I restore your fortunes

before your eyes, says the LORD.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON: Philippians 4:4-7

Lector

A reading from Philippians.

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: Luke 3: 7-18**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

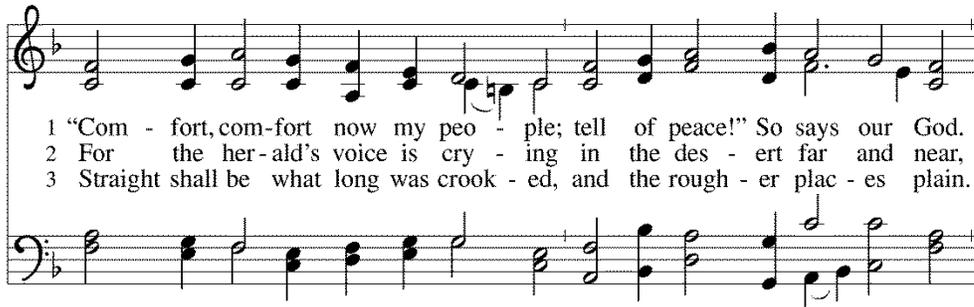
P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

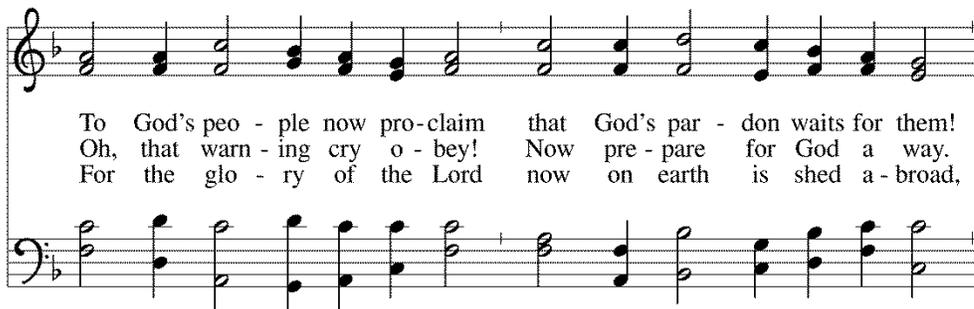
Pastor Ryan Radtke



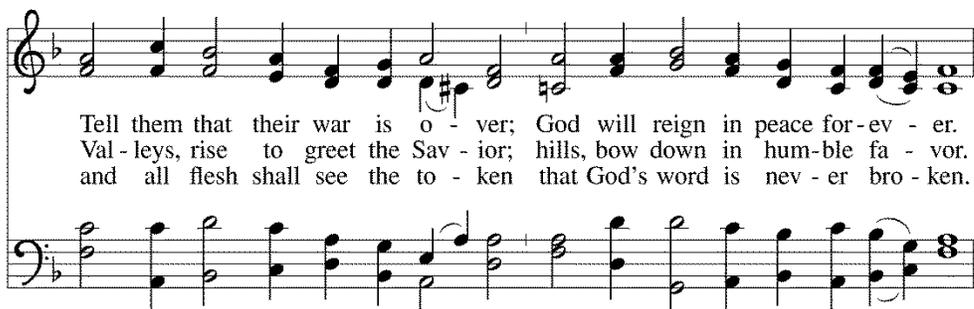
1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

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: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence. *[Brief silence]*

A: Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day (especially). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of this assembly and bless the ministry of church musicians. With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace. By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

A: Heavenly Father, You have generously blessed us with families. Thank you for your guidance and protection. As you love and care for us, may we also always love and care for our families and keep them in our prayers. We pray this week for the Griffin, Griffis and Gunn families as well as our Messiah family. May You keep us all from danger and sickness and guard our hearts so that we are reminded of Your Grace. Hear us, O God.

C: *Your mercy is great.*

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

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: *God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. 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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. 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 God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We praise you for the grace shown to your people in every age: the promise to Israel, the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the words of the prophets; and, at this end of all the ages, the gift of your Son, who proclaimed the good news in word and deed and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: *Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

C: *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C: *Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.*

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

C: *Amen.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.

***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.

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

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



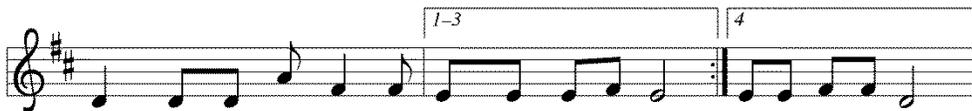
To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra, al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

- 2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:* 3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*
"De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel." *nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.*
será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será, El está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,
con él la esperanza al mundo volverá. y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.

- 4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*
pero en el mundo está presente hoy.
Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;
y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

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*DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Share the good news.

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)

 *Altar Flowers: given by Curt & Charlene Glatfelter.* 

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS – SUNDAY, December 12, 2021

Pianist: Debbie Walker
Lay Assistants: (1st Lay Asst.) Karen Morris (2nd Lay Asst.) Donna Combs
Lectors: Donna Combs
Acolyte: Grace Anderson
Greeters: Sally Bennett
Ushers Roger Schroeder & Bill Weaver
Altar Guild: Donna Combs & Marilyn Gunn
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.

FIRST COMMUNION TODAY

We celebrate today with Isaac Williams as he receives his First Communion. Please be sure to congratulate him on this milestone, and take a moment to share what Communion means to you with him.

GERMAN CHRISTMAS SERVICE (SUNDAY, 12/12, 5:00 PM)

Messiah will be hosting the local German club's annual Christmas event. You are invited! Coffee social starts at 4:00 pm, and the special service begins at 5:00 pm. Whether you know German or not, you'll find this event welcoming for all ages and down-right "wunderbar!"

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

Contributions to the general fund averaged \$2,995.27 (slightly up from \$2779.96 through December 5, 2021).

We are \$48,790.76 behind the year-to-date budget needs (decreasing from \$58,129.76 last time reported).

Weekly budget need is \$3,991.00.

HOLY DARKNESS: AN ADVENT STUDY

Adapted from an Advent worship series, the theme of this study embraces the darkness of the long Advent nights as a place where we encounter the beauty and mystery of God. While darkness has sometimes been used as a negative foil for light, contrasting evil with good or God's absence with God's presence, our scripture and assembly song is filled with imagery in which the darkness is filled with the glory of God. The quiet character of Advent with its themes of listening, waiting, and expectation lends itself to these reflections. Each session will include scripture study, music, and other activities. The fourth and final installment, on December 19th, is called "Darkness Holds God."

COUNTERS NEEDED

If you would be able to help count donations after services, please contact Bill Weaver at wweaver701@comcast.net or 804-908-3861.

WILD WOMEN RETREAT JAN. 14-16, 2022 AT CAROLINE FURNACE

We are hopeful that you will join us for a weekend of fellowship and renewal at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center. The weekend includes a trip off-property to a local winery, craft and outdoor activities, prayer conversations, and more. *Rates: Weekend \$115 | Day \$30. Retreat cost includes modern-rustic lodging, scratch-made meals, and Saturday transportation.* Link to register: <https://www.carolinefurnace.org/wild-women-series>

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!