

# The MESSENGER



The monthly newsletter of Messiah Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111 804-746-7134

MARCH 2022

## Highlights from the Messiah Church Council meeting

Messiah Church Council conducted their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 16, 2022. The following are highlights of the meeting:

- The church calendar was updated to include Ash Wednesday and the next council meeting on March 16th at 6:15, with future council meeting dates to be determined.
- Pastor Ryan reported on Congregational Life of the Church, stating that we were virtual for the last month with Sunday the first day back in the Sanctuary. Confirmation classes continue virtually, with the first youth group meeting in the early stages of being planned. Along with a discussion on the Lenten season that is quickly approaching.
- The council discussed Covid-19 numbers, and it was decided that council will continue monitoring positivity rates. When rates get below 10% we will have a conversation to review protocols and the incorporation of more aspects of our congregational activity.
- The council discussed a more efficient way to conduct council e-votes and distribution of documents.

- Pastor Ryan provided an update on the current status of All Souls.

- **Heather Williams**  
Church Council Secretary



We will begin the season of Lent with a service on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd at 7:00 pm. During the service you will be invited to partake in Lenten disciplines, and an imposition of ashes will be offered.

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***The Messenger***

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**VISIT OUR MLC WEBSITE:**  
**<http://www.messiahmech.com>**

**Your 2022 Church Council  
 And Associate Members**

**Teresa Gigante** ..... Council President  
**Anita Philp** ..... Vice-President  
**Heather Williams** ..... Secretary

**Dianne Absher**      **Marilyn Gunn**  
**Roger Schroeder**    **Diana Sondor**  
**Debbie Walker**

**Council Liaisons**

Christian Formation ..... **Anita Philp**  
 Evangelism ..... **Heather Williams**  
 Fellowship ..... **Marilyn Gunn**  
 Finance ..... **Teresa Gigante**  
 Property ..... **Roger Schroeder**  
 Social Ministry ..... **Dianne Absher**  
 Stewardship ..... **Diana Sondor**  
 Worship ..... **Debbie Walker**

**Shawn Warmbrod** .....Treasurer  
**Bill Weaver**..... Financial Secretary  
**Sue Gilnett, RN**...Parish Nurse

**Lenten Devotional**

A new Lenten Devotion called *Grace Un-  
 bounded* will be available to take home for  
 a daily reading from the Gospel of Luke, as  
 well as evocative images and brief reflec-  
 tions.

**No Wednesday  
 Suppers or Services**

Although we are moving back in the direc-  
 tion of full congregational activities again,  
 we aren't quite back to indoor meals.  
 Therefore we won't be having our Wednes-  
 day night soup suppers and services again  
 this year. Stay tuned, though – we are  
 hopeful for something on Easter. And, in  
 the meantime...



**Pastor Ryan's office hours** are posted  
 for the upcoming week in each Sunday's  
 bulletin. Schedule an appointment  
 via [messiahmechpr@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmechpr@gmail.com)  
 And 507-360-7276

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

## Pastor's message

People like to give things up for Lent. It's a form of fasting, of self-denial, to give up something like meat or chocolate or TV for the season. It's in the long tradition of Lenten disciplines that are aimed at assisting a Christian to set something aside in order to better focus in on God, on your neighbors, on your confessions, or something along those lines. Other Lenten disciplines include study, an extra emphasis on prayer, an extra emphasis on giving of oneself (time, talents, treasures), in service to others. Whatever the practice, it is meant to be taken seriously, not just as a publicity stunt or a pat on one's own back, but as an outward sign of rededication and repentance. Turning and re-turning to God and God's ways, away from the tempting ways of the world.

Lutherans do not require anyone to give things up for Lent. We don't discourage it, but we try to make sure it's for the reasons stated above. An intentional effort to refocus on God? Yes, please! And – fringe benefit – who doesn't appreciate the fish-sandwich season at all the fast-food restaurants? (Not trying to be catty to our Catholic neighbors – I genuinely like a good fish sandwich.)

However: this is our third consecutive Lent of being made to give things up. Because of COVID. This hasn't been an intentional practice in terms of our combined relationships with God; it's been a necessary practice to show love and care for our neighbors and our community. To bring back an early pandemic slogan, we're still trying to stop the spread. Especially to the vulnerable.

It doesn't hurt to repeat that, but I know you've heard it all before. Giving up soup suppers and midweek worship services with our friends from All Souls doesn't feel like a Lenten practice that will help us

turn and re-turn to God. It just feels like something valuable has been taken away. Heck, I haven't even been able to participate in or lead one of those services yet since I've arrived. I would love to see what Messiah does for Lent, and I'd love to share some Lenten traditions that I treasure, too. But we're still giving up a lot this year. Some things are back; but not everything. And two years into "it should be back to normal in a couple of weeks" doesn't feel very holy.

I could say that we'll appreciate these things all the more when we can finally do them again. That's true. And I could speak at length about all the things that Jesus gave up, willingly, to save us from our sins and make things like Lenten disciplines possible, and how God never gives up on us. I could talk about how the season of Lent is supposed to be a six-week preparation to fully appreciate and experience the Passion, the cross, and the resurrection, and how that Lenten trajectory hasn't changed despite our hiatus from certain activities.

I could say all these things and more. But I think that this year, all I'd like to say, is that I know how you feel. I'm tired of giving up these things, too. I long for the return to how it used to be, too, and more. I'm frustrated and fatigued with all of this, too. I am hopeful that it will all be over soon, too, and that the impact that this virus has from here on out is as minimal as possible – first and foremost in terms of people getting sick or dying, and secondarily for all the rippling effects on people's livelihoods, mental health, day-to-day living, and everything else.

If you'd still like to give something up for Lent, or engage in any other Lenten discipline, you'll have my support. I'd love to hear about it, and how it impacts your faith and your relationship with God. And

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## Pastor's message

Continued from page 3

if you aren't giving anything more up Lent, or doing anything extra for Lent, that's ok, too. I'd love to hear about it, and how your faith and relationship with God are doing in that scenario.

I usually end up being the one up front or in writing telling you all what's happening with protocols and masks and all of that (just see some of the other announcements in this very newsletter!). But please know that I'm feeling most, if not all, of the things you have been feeling when it comes to all of this, too. I'm tired of giving up things, too. Until we are back to our fullest sense of congregational life, please know that we're all in this together. And God will get us through it all.

May God's presence be palpable and bless you to be a blessing in this season of Lent and beyond.

In Christ,  
**Pastor Ryan**



Join Messiah on Facebook!

## Lenten Study

Please join us during Sunday adult Christian Formation time in the Fellowship Hall for a new series: "Wrestle with the Bible: Meeting God in difficult stories from Genesis." We'll cover a number of stories that are tough to talk about, and use our scriptural stretching as a practice for deeper Lenten devotion. Each conversation will be recorded and shared for those who would like to follow along from home.

## CFFY: Christian Formation For You



The month of March in North America, particularly in the mid-Atlantic region where we live, is a month of change. Weather ranges from sunny and warm to significant snowstorms hence the "comes in like a lion, goes out like a lamb" characterization so often shared. We "spring forward" our clocks to extend daylight into the evening. For followers of Christ, the season of Lent also occurs in March, though the number of weeks will vary depending upon the moon and the vernal equinox. In 2022, Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, is March 2nd.

Lent offers followers of Christ a season to reflect on Christ's sacrifice for our sins and how we are using our lives to make this world a better place in honor of the precious gift that his death and resurrection represent. In my family of origin, we observed the "no meat on Friday" custom during Lent. We also kept special savings boxes to collect an offering above and beyond our normal level of giving.

As an adult, I have chosen other ways to reflect and sacrifice during the season of Lent, some more successful than others :), from giving up chocolate to practicing meditation. In preparing for this article, I looked for a resource to offer ideas. The following internet link comes from "Your Modern Family" and provides ideas for all ages:  
<https://www.yourmodernfamily.com/10-lent-ideas/>

Change is constant and occurs with or without our participation. In this season of Lent, may we all change for the better.

Peace & Joy,  
**Anita Philp**

March 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- 2 7:00 PM ASH WEDNESDAY service
- 4 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
- 6 9:15 AM All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
9:15 AM Christian Formation  
10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service \*
- 8 1:00 PM Evangelism Team Meeting
- 9 6:30 PM Women's Bible Study
- 13 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS  
9:15 AM All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
9:15 AM Christian Formation  
10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service \*
- 16 9:00 AM MLC Quilters  
6:15 PM Council Meeting
- 20 FIRST DAY OF SPRING  
9:15 AM All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
9:15 AM Christian Formation  
10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service \*
- 23 6:30 PM Women's Bible Study
- 27 9:15 AM All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
9:15 AM Christian Formation  
10:45 AM Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service \*

**[ Watch the [messiahmech.com](http://messiahmech.com) website and Facebook pages for any updates and changes ]**

\* Worship services will be broadcast LIVE on our Facebook page and recorded for later access via our YouTube channel.



- 11 **Bonnie Dworak**
- 15 **Linda Mahovtas**
- 16 **Chrisann Hatfield**
- 20 **Susie Weaver**
- 22 **Charlene Glatfelter**
- 22 **John Mahovtas**
- 27 **Donna Shaw**
- 29 **Victoria Major**



**5 Roger & Lois Schroeder**

If you would like YOUR birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please call **Davina** (746-7134) or send an email to [messiahmech@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com).



**MLC Quilters**

Save the date: Wednesday, March 16, 9:00 to 12:00 noon. Quilters (and non-quilters) who are interested in learning about quilting and using their hands and hearts to make a Mission Quilt for Lutheran World Relief will gather in the narthex. Bring any of your favorite sewing supplies, extra cotton fabric that you may have (clean and pressed) and your enthusiasm. No special skills needed, we will gather to learn. Call **Gladly Hubert** with any questions, 814-449-1392.

## We pray for each other:

**Debbie Anton; Annette Buckholtz; Bruce Carr; Johnnie Collie; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Jackie Garbett; Ted Ford; Steve & Sue Gilnett; Karen Jones; Ruth Schroeder, Ken Whirley.**

## We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

**Kyle Bishop**, friend of Donna Combs; **Dwayne Collie**, Johnnie's brother; **Griffin Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **Barbara Gaskill & Family at the passing of her father, Harry**, child of friend of the Andersons; **Joan Laudig**, Susie Weaver's mom; **Woody Mallory**, neighbor of Anita Philp; **Mason Mielke**, former student of Messiah School; **Family & Friends of Roger Sabanosh**, cousin of Karen Morris; **Family & Friends of Dee Schroeder**, Sister-in-law of Roger; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Family & Friends of Sandy Siler**, grandmother of Emily Gunn; **Tyson**, grandson of Erna Jung; **Susen Weaver**, daughter-in-law of the Weavers.

**Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families; All law enforcement, firefighters and first responders; The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry; All those affected by COVID, in all areas of life, and for a way forward; Hospitals, nursing homes, & other health care facilities; The CDC and other medical researchers and scientists; Schools, workplaces, government institutions and municipal agencies; All those impacted by acts of violence, at home and abroad; For all who travel; All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in Syria, Maldives, China, and Qatar.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World WatchList 2022  
<http://www.opendoorsusa.org>

## Words of Evangelism

*“Evangelism is not salesmanship. It is not urging people, pressing them, coercing them, overwhelming them, or subduing them. Evangelism is telling a message. Evangelism is reporting good news.”*

– Richard C. Halverson



## Ecumenical Lenten Videos

Once again our group of local pastors from congregations mostly on Atlee Road will produce weekly Lenten videos. The theme this year will center on joy and abundance in the season of Lent, where we usually talk about giving things up. Stay tuned for more information and weekly links to the videos.

## Women's Bible Study

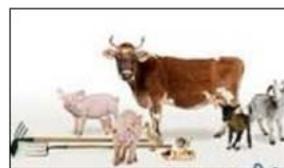
Join us for great fellowship and Women's Bible study. We will meet on March 9 & 23, at 6:30 pm, in the fellowship hall. We will continue our viewing and discussion of the Christian TV Series "The Chosen." No need to bring anything with you. We look forward to seeing you there! If you have any questions please contact Rosalee Cline, 804-347-2524 or [rosaleecline@gmail.com](mailto:rosaleecline@gmail.com).

## MCEF News

- In January, MCEF provided 140 bags of food to 97 households in Mechanicsville, 22 bags of clothing and 4 bags of linens. Eleven of those households were new to MCEF. The Senior Rides program provided 94 rides to seniors to doctor appointments and personal business errands (banking, grocery shopping).
- Spring is in the air and the clothing closets are no longer accepting winter clothes. Spring and summer items in usable condition, clean and folded are being accepted on donation Sundays, the first and third Sunday of each month, 2-3:30 p.m.
- The Tools 4 Teachers program is off to a good start, having provided over 2,500 items to local middle schools. The program is currently in phase 1 and will be expanded to more grades when a facility is available to house the inventory. Volunteers are needed to help with this program. Donations may be made to MCEF and earmarked for "T4T". Use the Donate button on [4mcef.com](http://4mcef.com) or drop off items at MCEF.
- Current needs of the food pantry include condiments (catsup, mustard, mayonnaise), pasta sauce and baked beans.

Thank you for your continued generosity to your neighbors.

- Gladys Hubert



## God's Global Barnyard drive

We will once again be collecting your coins and more to purchase animals and other items from the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog. Look for the piggy bank to come during Lent. The funds we raise will go towards a shopping spree for our Sunday school students to select small gifts with big impacts for people in many corners of our world.

Thanks in advance for your support and generosity!

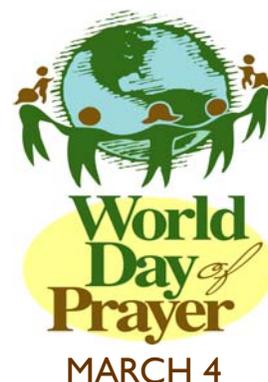
## COVID Protocols update

The Church Council met this past week and discussed our current COVID response plan. We had initially set the goal to return to the sanctuary when the Hanover positivity rates reached the 10-15% range, based on guidance from the VDH, CDC, Virginia Synod, and resources shared by other local ELCA pastors. We are thankful that worship and other groups are back in the building once more! For now we ask everyone to continue to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing in the building while the omicron wave continues to diminish. Once positivity rates get below 10% for Hanover, council will reconvene to discuss easing protocols from requiring face coverings to encouraging them, and moving back towards incorporating more aspects of our congregational life together, like the choir, more fellowship, Communion at the rail, fuller liturgy, more outreach activities, and more. Rates are heading in the right direction, and we are hopeful that it won't be much longer. Thank you for your continued prayers, support, and patience.

Follow us on



Messiah Lutheran Church  
8154 Atlee Rd  
Mechanicsville VA 23111



## Sarah Hart at St. Luke

April 1, 2022 7:00pm



With a Best Gospel Song Grammy nomination, she has also had several song placements in film and television, and her songs appear in hymnals all across the world.

Hart continues to hit the road steadily, too, guiding concerts, keynoting and speaking, leading faith-focused women's, musician's and parish events, and performing from coast to coast and abroad. In October of 2013, Sarah was invited to perform for Pope Francis and a crowd of 150,000 in St. Peter's Square.

To find out more about her, visit her website: <https://www.sarahhart.com>. Tickets are \$15 and available on the St. Luke Lutheran website, [www.stluckerichmond.org](http://www.stluckerichmond.org).

The DEADLINE for the  
**April 2022**  
edition of  
***The Messenger*** is  
**Sunday, March 20th**  
(Please contact me,  
if you need a "grace period")

Please call **Susie Weaver** with your  
submission, hand me a written  
submission OR email  
[susiew51@comcast.net](mailto:susiew51@comcast.net)

**Check out Messiah's videos on**

