

The

# MESSENGER



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

DECEMBER 2022 / JANUARY 2023

## CHRISTMAS *celebration*

Once every six years or so, Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. This year is one of those years. The tradition at Messiah has been to not have a worship service on Christmas Day, instead celebrating only on Christmas Eve. Pastor Ryan and the Church Council wrestled with whether to have a service on Christmas Day this year, since it would also be the Sunday worship. After checking in with a cross-section of members on whether or not they would come if we had a service, and after checking in with some colleagues as to whether they would be having a service on Christmas Day, we decided that we will not have a service on Christmas Day this year.

However, we still want folks to worship. Just as that first Christmas was just Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, before the shepherds and long before the magi, we invite you all to worship in your own households, with family or friends or on your own. To help with that, we will be creating a take-home worship gift box for every household of Messiah. There will be one version for families with younger children and one version for everyone else. Each box will contain a Christmas Day devotion for your personal worship, along with an activity to help focus your worship on the birth of our Savior.

The take-home worship boxes will be available to be picked up on Sunday, December 18th and at the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm on the 24th – and if you're in town on Christmas Eve, we hope to see you there!

May the blessings of Christmas be the best and most enduring gift you find this year!

## Annual Congregational Business Meeting

The Annual Congregational Business meeting will take place following worship on Sunday, December 4th. All congregation members are encouraged to attend as we discuss and vote on a proposed 2023

**Continued on page 2**

### A look inside....

- Church Council highlights ..... P. 2
- Pastor's letter ..... P. 3
- German Christmas event ..... P. 4
- Calendar ..... P. 4 & 5
- Prayers, Christmas carols ..... P. 6
- Celebrations, MCEF ..... P. 7
- PAL, CFFY ..... P. 8
- Foster children wish lists ..... P. 9

*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



Messiah’s Church Council met on November 16th. Here are the highlights:

- Council discussed the 2023 budget in preparation for the December business meeting.
- It is time for some council members to step down. If you are interested in participating on Council, please reach out to a current council member.
- Council discussed Advent events in December, including intergenerational activities, special services, and a take-home family activity for Christmas Day.

- **Heather Williams**  
Church Council Secretary

**Annual meeting  
Continued from page 1**

budget, hold an election for open church council positions, and ratify some changes to the church constitution (portions updated at the last Church-wide Assembly that all ELCA congregations must adhere to).

If you have any questions please contact a current council member or **Pastor Ryan**.

**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

'Tis the seasons! Between now and the end of January we'll make our way through Advent, then Christmas, then Epiphany. But the first of these is Advent. It is an awkward little season sometimes. On the one hand, we have the beautiful blue paraments, the treasured stories of angels visiting Mary and Joseph, of John the Baptist preparing the way out in the wilderness. And we have the unsettling stories of what it will be like for Jesus to come again one day, for The End. We have the recitation of the promises already fulfilled of the Savior, the Messiah, the Christ, the King who would be born in Bethlehem. And the exhortations to keep alert and keep awake and be ready until the sequel.

We so want to get through Advent, rush through Advent, to make it to Christmas Eve, to the carols and the creches, the trees and nativities, the good stuff. To Epiphany and the wise men's arrival. We want to rush right through the 24 windows on the Advent calendar and plunge into the twelve days of Christmas.

But we can't do that. Just as much as we can't skip over Lent to get to Easter, skip over death to celebrate resurrection, we also can't jump ahead Jesus arriving without fully embracing the anticipation of the promises that he would come.

Advent to me represents the gift of waiting in a culture of immediacy. For decades our society has championed convenience. We want things fast and now. We tend to value instant gratification. Technology has helped that, exponentially so, as time passes. Information and access and delivery come quickly at the touch of a button, the tap of a finger. I read something recently about how social media (and I would expand that to just say "smartphones") are colonizing every minute of our waking hours. How long does

five minutes feel anymore? Who wants to wait? Why would we?

Advent to me represents the gift of waiting in a culture of immediacy. There is a passage in Isaiah that promises what the mountain of the Lord will be like when the long wait of exile is over for the Israelites: "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear." Well-aged wines. They speak of the fact that even in the waiting, in the hard times, in the painful times (like when the holidays are more mournful than joyful), God is active, actively at work, preparing for the feast, the mountain, the heavenly city, the fulfillment of all goodness and promise, forgiveness and mercy, grace and peace.

And so we wait in Advent. We tap into promises, and we likewise participate in the preparing and the work, the kingdom-coming in this world, in and through us. We look for unexpected miracles like a Messiah in a manger, like wise outsiders from the East, like lowly shepherds-turned-exalted-heralds of good news. And we look for expected miracles too, the things that God has brewing and aging and steeping and maturing. For us and for this world.

O come, O come, Emmanuel! O come, God-With-Us! We will celebrate the cycle of these holidays once more, and again, and again, until you come anew! We will give thanks for the gift of waiting, the gift of perspective, the gift of slowing down and looking up. We give thanks for your Word made flesh, for you becoming like us, for you coming down. And we will wait with others through their long nights as you have waited, and still wait, and always will wait, with us.

A blessed Advent, a merry Christmas, and a wondrous Epiphany to you all!

**Pastor Ryan**

## German Christmas Event

Messiah will be hosting the local German club's annual Christmas event: German Christmas Service with Kaffeeklatsch at 5 PM and service 6 PM on December 11th.

As in the past readings and hymns will be German and sermon English for all to understand.

**Pastor Dennis Anderson**, who did the sermon last time, offered to do the whole service this year, and we are very grateful. Pastor Anderson speaks German, he had studied in Vienne for 2 years.

You are invited!

Whether you know German or not, you'll find this event welcoming for all ages and down-right "wunderbar!"



## Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study will meet, this month **ONLY**, on TUESDAY December 13 at 6:30 pm.

Council is meeting on our regular night and we want our members on Council to be able to come to WBS.

In January we will meet:

January 11 - 6:30 pm

January 25 - 6:30 pm

Please bring a feminine care product for MCEF. If you have any questions, call me.

- **Rosalee Cline**  
(see directory)

December 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

- 1
- 4 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
11:45 am Annual Business Meeting  
(backup date 12/11)
- 7 9:00 am PAL Group
- 9 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)
- 11 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
11:45 am All-Ages Decorating Party  
5:00 pm German Christmas Service
- 13 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study
- 14 6:15 pm Council Meeting
- 18 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service
- 21 9:00 am PAL Group
- 23 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)
- 24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service
- 25 CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN!  
Our family of faith at Messiah wishes you  
a blessed Christmas!  
9:15 am All Souls Worship Service -  
(Cancelled)

25 9:15 am Christian Formation  
(Cancelled)  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service (Cancelled)  
26 Christmas Day (Observed -  
Office Closed)  
Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)  
27 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)  
28 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)  
6:30 pm Women's Bible Study  
(cancelled)  
29 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)  
30 Secretary on Vacation (Office Closed)  
31 Have a safe & happy New Year's Eve!

January 2023						
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				

1 The members of Messiah Lutheran wish you a year full of blessings!  
9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
2 Office Closed (New Year's Day Observed)  
6 6:30 pm Epiphany Party  
  
8 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
11 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study  
  
15 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)

15 9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
16 Religious Freedom Day  
18 6:15 pm Council Meeting  
  
22 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
11:45 am Annual Reporting Meeting  
(Backup/alternate date 1/29)  
25 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study  
  
29 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service  
31



**[ Watch the messiahmech.com website and Facebook pages for any updates and changes ]**

\* The service will be live-streamed at 10:45 AM on Messiah's FB page, and that video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>



**Join Messiah on Facebook!**



## We pray for each other:

**LeRoy Albertson; Debbie Anton; Jim Berg; Bruce Carr; Johnnie Collie; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Ted Ford; Jackie Garbett; Steve & Sue Gilnett; Emily Gunn; Karen Jones; Abby Schroeder; Ruth Schroeder.**

## We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

**Allen Family**, friends of the Whirleys; **Anton Family; Anne Boraas**, friend of Erna Jung; **Bubba**, friend of the Whirleys; **Janice Cayouette (wife of Marcel)**, friend of the Bennetts; **Sheryl Colgin**, friend of Sheila Whirley; **Dwayne Collie**, Johnnie's brother; **Nancy Townsend Creasy**, friend of Betty & Bill Fulop; **Ashley Damron**, granddaughter of Doris Ewing; **Griffen Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **DiGrazia family; Anne Gresco**, friend of Linda Mahovtas; **Brenda Holcomb**, Sally & Charlie Bennett's cousin; **Lars Honan**, Geoffrey's brother; **Joan Laudig**, Susie Weaver's mom; **Junie Loving**, friend of John Mahovtas; **Lee Nester**, friend of Karen Morris; **Buster Ruffner**, friend of Sheila Whirley; **Debbie Schroeder**, relative of Roger Schroeder; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Mary Streesman; Family & Friends of Ron Szabo**, father of Bethany Bergreen; **Keith Tish**, brother-in-law of Donna Combs; **Troell Family**, friends of the Anderson family; **Melissa Villegas**, niece of the Shaws; **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; All those impacted by acts of violence, at home and abroad; All who travel; All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in Afghanistan, North Korea, Somalia, and Libya.**<sup>1</sup>

Please contact Davina with names that need to remain on the list. Email her at [MessiahMech@gmail.com](mailto: MessiahMech@gmail.com) or phone 746-7134 with your requests.

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World Watch List

<http://www.opendoorsusa.org/WWL>



## What are we waiting for?! Exploring Christmas carols in the season of Advent

Isn't it annoying how pastors always wait to do Christmas carols in worship until after Advent is over? If the stores and radio can play Christmas songs, why can't we? **Pastor Ryan** will talk about why that is, and also sneak some Christmas carols under the Advent radar, hearing the stories behind the songs as we prepare for the birth of Christ.

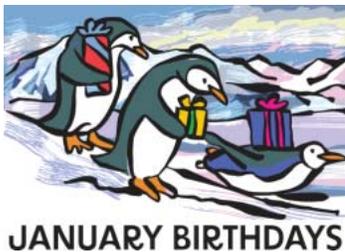
Join us for the conversation during adult Christian Formation time!



- 10 **Gordon Gunn**
- 14 **Curtis Pfohl**
- 16 **Marilyn Gunn**
- 16 **John Terry**



### 9 **Curt & Charlene Glatfelter**



- 1 **Pastor Ryan Radtke**
- 11 **Erna Jung**
- 14 **Max Williams**
- 15 **Grayson Starrett**
- 22 **Bill Hatfield**
- 31 **Mary Grace Delph**

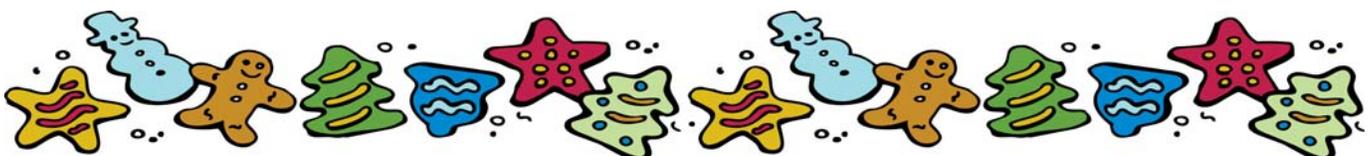
If you would like YOUR birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please call **Davina** (746-7134) or send an email to [messiahmech@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com).

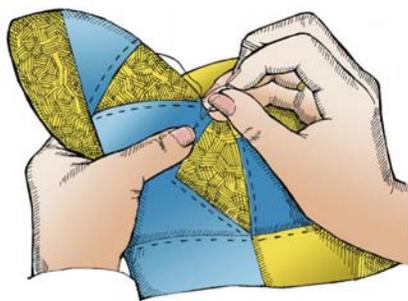


- October has been a busy month assisting 134 households (13 were new clients) with food and clothing and providing 149 rides for seniors to doctors appointments and other essential services.
- November has started out with each household receiving an extra bag of food (a total of 10 items of the clients choice) to assist them with their Thanksgiving meal.
- This same procedure will take place in December representing a holiday meal.
- Many thanks for all the donations that are being made. Your kindness is appreciated. Current needs include pasta sauce, soups, mayonnaise and canned tomatoes. All donations are welcomed.
- **No Room At The Inn** is December 9, 10 and 11. It is a very meaningful display of Nativity sets from all over the world. See the flyer in the narthex for times, It is a fund raiser for MCEF.
- Winter clothing donations may be made on the first and third Sunday of each month at the OSS, 2:00 to 3:30. Items must be clean and in good repair.

Thank you for your support of MCEF.

**-Gladys Hubert**





## PAL (Patches and Love)

\*\*\* One year Anniversary was  
November 10, 2021\*\*\*

Upcoming meeting dates: Wednesday, December 7th at 9:30 am, for brunch at Cold Harbor Restaurant. Wednesday, December 21st. We meet at the church from 9 to noon.

We finished 10 lap quilts for local distribution. We had a special blessing of the lap quilts on Reformation Sunday, October 30, 2022. During the service we gave completed quilts to **Valerie Williams** for local distribution to those in need. We are currently working on the large quilts 60x80 for LWR (Lutheran World Relief). Our goal is to have 15 done by June when the LWR truck comes locally to pick up quilts in our area to take to the national warehouse for global distribution.

We will continue to accept donations of clean cotton fabrics and large pieces for backing and items that can be used for batting (ex. Clean flannel sheets). Also, we would gladly accept monetary donations for those who would like to contribute to purchase needed materials.

If you would like to join us, please do. There is no quilting experience needed. Come. Gather. Share your time to put together the quilts with PATCHES AND LOVE.

- Cheryl Griffis



## CFFY (Christian Formation For You)

Greetings Messiah Family,

Each month of this year has passed quickly, likely attributable to the emergence from pandemic related restrictions and a return to "normal". Normal is different though and the return to former traditions has required some deep thought about how we used to do things. One thing that remains the same is the combination of our December and January newsletters into one publication. I must confess that I struggle to anticipate one month in advance so two is really a stretch for me.

At this writing, we are putting together an intergenerational event, targeting December 11th, after church, to include singing Christmas carols, crafts and decorating the Christmas tree. Look for communication through email as plans are finalized. In the same spirit, communication of other activities that are not yet fully formed, and may occur in January, will be communicated in the same manner!

My Christmas wishes for all of us are peace and joy, love and laughter in the company of family and friends.

Follow us on





## Foster Children wish lists

We continue our tradition of providing gifts for foster children in our community. You can select gifts, from the red wish list on the round table with the Christmas tree, in the Narthex.

Please return the wrapped gift, with a post it note indicating what the gift is, to church on December 11th.

If you have any questions, please call **Sharon Addair** (see directory)

Thank You,  
The Social Ministry Team



## Church of the Redeemer “No Room at the Inn”

Join the 15th Annual No Room at the Inn Gala and Nativities Exhibit & Benefit to End Homelessness, December 2-4, at Church of the Redeemer.

A portion of the proceeds for this event is designated for MCEF to help prevent homelessness in Mechanicsville by helping our neighbors with rent and utilities as well as our other community partners serving those in need.

More information at:  
<https://www.churchredeemer.org/no-room>

## Pursue Jesus — and your passions

If you struggle with making and keeping resolutions, you're not alone. It can be discouraging to focus on what you're doing “wrong” and all the difficult changes in store. Yet January offers great opportunities to listen to God's direction. After all, Jesus came to give us abundant life and wants us to pursue him.

As you review the previous year, ask: What brought me joy? How did I grow? How did I help others? What did I do that no one else could have done? Whether your list includes spending time outside, mentoring or coaching young people or making crafts to give away or sell, continue doing what brings you joy. God gives us each unique gifts and circumstances, so live passionately for him this year!

—Janna Firestone



Messiah Lutheran Church  
8154 Atlee Rd  
Mechanicsville VA 23111



## Another year for God

Another year is dawning  
    dear Father, let it be,  
in working or in waiting,  
    another year with thee....  
Another year of progress,  
    another year of praise,  
another year of proving  
    thy presence all the days.  
Another year of service,  
    of witness for thy love;  
another year of training  
    for holier work above.  
Another year is dawning!  
    Dear Father, let it be,  
on earth, or else in heaven,  
    another year for thee.

—Frances Ridley Havergal

The DEADLINE for the  
**February 2023**  
edition of  
***The Messenger*** is  
**Sunday, January ?**  
(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**

