

The

# MESSENGER



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

MARCH 2023



## Layers of Lent: Inspiring stories of faith

You are invited to joint Wednesday soup suppers and evening worship with our friends from All Souls Episcopal Church beginning March 1st at 6:15 pm.

Our theme for worship is called  
Setting the Table:  
Prayer and Preparation in Lent.

We will be using a worship setting called Holden Evening Prayer, used by many, many Lutheran congregations for evening worship.

We will also be teaching you how to make a prayer table in your home, and each week you'll get to take home a piece representing part of the Passion story to focus on in your prayers.

Jesus says in John 15:13, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Many Christians throughout history have laid down their lives in service to God. The stories of their steadfast witness have inspired generations. In fact, the root of the word "martyr" means "witness."

For our Adult Christian Formation time during the season of Lent, we'll hear and discuss these stories, and we'll also practice telling our own. See you there!

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*The Messenger*

Published monthly by  
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<http://www.messiahmech.com>

**Your 2023 Church Council  
And Associate Members**

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

**Dianne Absher**            **Cheryl Griffis**  
**Marilyn Gunn**            **Pat Reagan**  
**Diana Sondor**

**Council Liaisons**

Christian Formation ..... **Anita Philp**  
Evangelism ..... **Heather Williams**  
Fellowship ..... **Marilyn Gunn**  
Finance ..... **Teresa Gigante**  
Property ..... **Pat Reagan**  
Social Ministry ..... **Dianne Absher**  
Stewardship ..... **Diana Sondor**  
Worship ..... **Cheryl Griffis**

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

**Team Leaders**

Evangelism.....**Donna Shaw**  
Fellowship.....**Becky Collie**  
Social Ministry.....**Sharon Addair**  
Worship.....**Karen Morris**



**WORSHIP TEAM MEETING**

Come one, Come all...for both current  
Worship Team members AND anyone in-  
terested in joining the worship team - a  
Worship Team Meeting will be held on

Sunday, March 19th  
after the 10:45 service.

We will be discussing how we can con-  
tinue to move forward post-COVID in our  
worship practices for our congregation.

If you are interested in talking about our  
worship practices at Messiah, please join  
us. For more information, please contact  
**Karen Morris** or **Cheryl Griffis**.

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

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.



**Join Messiah on Facebook!**

## Pastor's message



Lent is a season of turning and returning. Every year. Every one of the forty days. A return to God. A return to a righteous, or more righteous paths, ways of living. Lent is a conscious turning away from all that gets in our way, all that distracts from, or impedes, or constricts, our relationship with God and the love and service we give our neighbors in response to God's own love and grace for us. Lent is a conscious turning towards that same loving God. Luther teaches us that each and every day we remember our baptisms, dying to sin and being raised to eternal life. But in the event that you forget that daily routine, or become desensitized to the new life it offers, here comes Lent to help start again.

This year we are also returning to observing this season of Lent with our friends from All Souls Episcopal Church. We have worshiped together on Ash Wednesday, the entryway to Lent. And we will share in fellowship during soup suppers. (Don't forget to sign up!) And we will journey through Lent together on Wednesday nights throughout March, lifting our voices in song. We will be teaching you how to make a prayer table in your home, and each week **Rev. Katherine** and I will present different images and items from the Passion story to give your prayers a focus, a touchstone. I look forward to working and worshiping together, and I'm praying to be open to new insights, new perspectives, new ways of living out my faith and giving out my heart.

This year our adult class will steep in the stories of martyrs from various periods of Christian history. We'll look for inspira-

tion in their stories, and practice telling our own. All of us are part of God's ongoing Story; may we find our places in it through the various vocations of our lives.

This year we also invite you to a friendly competition. The youth of Messiah Lutheran (and their families) are challenging the rest of the congregation to a generosity competition. We'll be collecting items throughout the season of Lent to assemble "personal care kits" for Lutheran World Relief. These kits are sent to people during times of great need (such as after a natural disaster or to a refugee camp), and provide something simple for their hygiene, dignity, and well-being. You'll find two boxes in the narthex, one for each side of the competition. You'll also find some handouts with what goes in a kit. You can also visit this website: <https://lwr.org/kits/personal-care-kits/instructions>. We'll find out which side donates the most complete kits when we assemble them together during the Easter Breakfast! Please check with **Pastor Ryan**, if you have any questions.

All of these things are not just busywork. They are means by which we answer the invitation during the Ash Wednesday service: "I invite you to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." In invite you to [re]turn to God.

In Christ,  
**Pastor Ryan**

Follow us on



**Church Council**



Church Council met on Zoom on Wednesday, February 15. Here are the highlights:

- Council participated in a council retreat to build relationships, grow in faith, and better understand the role and expectations of being on Church Council.
- Council discussed and updated the established procedure for evaluating voting membership.
- Discussed team vacancies that need to be filled: Treasurer, Altar Guild Lead, Church Sign coordinator, Shepherds team lead, and lawn mowers.

- **Heather Williams**  
Church Council Secretary



- 11 **Bonnie Dworak**
- 15 **Linda Mahovtas**
- 16 **Chrisann Hatfield**
- 20 **Susie Weaver**
- 22 **Charlene Glatfelter**
- 22 **John Mahovtas**
- 26 **Donna Shaw**
- 26 **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).

**Evangelism 101:**

**L**ove  
**E**verlasting  
**N**ot  
**T**emporary

By Ellen Grace Olinger

-Submitted by **Donna Shaw**



**Women's Bible Study**

Since Lent starts in February, we will hold our Bible Study on two Mondays in March.

March 6 and March 20 - 6:30 pm

Don't forget your personal item for MCEF.

Hope to see you then!

- **Rosalee Cline**

March 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 9:00 am PAL Group Meeting
- 3 World Day of Prayer
  
- 5 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service\*
- 6 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study
- 7 7:00 pm Choir Practice
- 8 6:15 pm Lenten Soup & Worship
  
- 12 DAYLIGHT-SAVING TIME BEGINS  
9:15am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15 am Christian Formation  
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service\*  
12:00 pm Confirmation Youth Group
- 14 7:00 pm Choir Practice
- 15 9:00 am PAL Group Meeting  
6:15 pm Council Meeting  
6:15 pm Lenten Soup & Worship
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
  
- 19 9:15am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15am Christian Formation  
10:45am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service\*
- 20 First Day of Spring  
6:30 pm Women's Bible Studay
- 21 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 22 6:15 pm Lenten Soup & Worship

- 26 9:15am All Souls Worship Service  
(Sanctuary)  
9:15am Christian Formation  
10:45am Messiah Lutheran:  
Worship Service\*
- 28 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 29 6:30 pm Lenten Soup & Worship

**[ Watch the [messiahmech.com](http://www.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. That video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>



## Soup Supper Support Needed

We are so thankful to return to Lenten soup suppers! Soup Suppers precede our mid-week Lenten services.

Messiah will be responsible for March 8th, March 22nd and a combined effort with All Souls on March 29th.

There are sign-up sheets on the Narthex bulletin board for the menu of Soups, Salads, Bread& Butter, Cookies and Beverages. We appreciate any and all the help we can get for these suppers. Please sign up for what you can bring to make these events work.

Supper will be available from 6:15 - 6:55 p.m., with the worship service following at 7 p.m.

Items for the supper need to be ready to go at the church by 6:10 p.m. Thank you.



## We pray for each other:

**LeRoy Albertson; Debbie Anton; 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:

**Bubba**, friend of the Whirleys; **Sheryl Colgin**, friend of Sheila Whirley; **Dwayne Collie**, Johnnie's brother; **Family and Friends of the Crone family; Ashley Damron**, step-granddaughter of Doris Ewing; **Griffen Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **DiGrazia family; Amy Griffis**, daughter-in-law of Cheryl Griffis; **Linda Houseman**, a close family friend of the Weavers; **Lars Honan**, Geoffrey's brother; **Joan Laudig**, Susie Weaver's mom; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Mary Streetsman**, wife of Lynn's mother; **Keith Tish**, brother-in-law of Donna Combs; **Troell family**, friends of the Andersons; **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 Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Iran.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World WatchList 2022

<http://www.opendoorsusa.org>

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



## MCEF news

- The One Stop Shop of MCEF has had a busy month. Food and clothing were provided to families in 147 visits to the OSS. Senior Rides provided 102 rides to seniors for doctor visits and essential services.
- Current needs for food include peas, canned mixed greens, boxed potatoes and Ramen noodles. Clothing needs include men's t-shirts, all sizes, short and long sleeves and men's and boy's hooded sweat shirts. Spring and summer clothing is now being accepted. A detailed list is on the bulletin board in the narthex.
- Linen closet is in dire need of queen sized sheets, clean and gently used.



- DRIVERS for Senior Rides are needed, also consider being a phone rep which can be done at home. See **Pat or Gladys Hubert** for details.

Thank you for all your support to those in need in our community.

- **Gladys Hubert**

## PAL (Patches and Love)

Upcoming meeting dates:

Wednesday, March 1st and March 15

We continue to work on our 2023 goal, which is to have 15 large (60x80) quilts done by June. Mid-June is when the LWR (Lutheran World Relief) truck comes to a local Lutheran church to pick up quilts in our area. The quilts are driven to a national warehouse for global distribution. So far we have 5 quilts completely done and 3 quilt tops done.

We will continue to accept donations of clean cotton fabrics. 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**

## Looking for an opportunity...

... to help others know about Messiah?

The sign out in front of Messiah is what people see when traveling down Atlee Road. Let's make it a memorable impression.

**How to help? You can volunteer to change the sign.** The letters are in the tall cabinet in the fellowship hall: Two plastic containers with alphabetized letters, numbers, and symbols. Suggestions are on the top of the containers; or, if you want, you can post your own. Once you change the letters, you can take a picture and send the picture to Donna Shaw @ [dmslaw70@gmail.com](mailto:dmslaw70@gmail.com).

This is also a great way for youth to help out with this. It usually only takes 20 min or so to complete. Many hands make light work.

Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board. Any questions? Contact **Linda Mahovtas**

## The results are in!



Three Chili Champs were tied for First Place honors this year! **Dianne Absher**, **Michael Morris**, and **Bill Weaver** all received gifts for their winning dishes.

Thank you to the other contestants this year: **Becky Collie**, **Lori Albertson**, **Daren Williams**, **Karen Morris**, **Ethan Gunn**, **Wendy De Graff**, and **Lois Schroeder**.

Thank you, also, to all our members who contributed sides and desserts. It was a fun and delicious event!



## A little friendly competition... ... for a good cause

The youth of Messiah (and their families) are challenging the rest of the congregation to a generosity competition. We'll be collecting items throughout the season of Lent to assemble "personal care kits" for Lutheran World Relief. These kits are sent to people during times of great need (such as after a natural disaster or to a refugee camp), and provide something simple for their hygiene, dignity, and well-being.

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You can also visit this website:

<https://lwr.org/kits/personal-care-kits/instructions>.

We'll find out which side donates the most complete kits when we assemble them together during the Easter Breakfast!



## Church directory to be 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](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com)

## Lutheran Disaster Response – Turkey and Syria

Two large-scale earthquakes struck southeastern Turkey and Northern Syria, causing wide-spread damage and loss of life. Lutheran Disaster Response has already been working in the area due to the civil war in Syria and large numbers of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Lutheran Disaster Response and its partners are prepared to accompany our neighbors impacted by these earthquakes. One hundred percent of your gifts to "Middle East Crisis" go to supporting earthquake survivors and other people affected by disasters in the region. Please visit the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response website for more information and to make a donation:  
<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Middle-East-Crisis>



We give thanks for many Messiah members who have served in a variety of roles over the years who have now discerned it's time to "pass the baton." And we earnestly ask you all to prayerfully discern which of these ministry needs you and your gifts could respond to. We are past the point of "would you please think about it" – we need these positions filled.

Here are the current ministry openings: Treasurer. Church sign Coordinator. Altar Guild Chair. Shepherds Team Members. Lawn mowers. Please let **Pastor Ryan** or the current stewards of these ministries know if you have any questions or would like any information. Thank you!





Messiah Lutheran Church  
8154 Atlee Rd  
Mechanicsville VA 23111



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## Surrender

What a privilege and opportunity it is to utterly come to the end of one's hope — not only to run out of answers but to run out of questions. To be beyond fighting, to come to that suspended animation where we are so confused and so weak that we can neither fight [nor] run.

When you come to the end of yourself, you find the beginning of God. And there and nowhere else, you find the answers you seek. You find fulfillment for the longings of your soul.

—Max Anders

The DEADLINE for the  
**April 2023**  
edition of  
***The Messenger*** is  
**Sunday, March 19**  
(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**

