

The

# MESSENGER



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

MAY 2023

## Pastor's message

Let me just say it: evangelism is weird.

First of all, it's in the name of our denomination: the *Evangelical* Lutheran Church in America. It's there because the original Lutheran churches were known as "evangelical churches" because of the emphasis on the good news of God's grace when it comes to humanity's salvation. If you look at other Lutheran Church bodies around the world, you're as likely, if not more likely, to see "evangelical" in their name than "Lutheran."

But it's weird because in our society today, the term "evangelical" is associated with a particular branch of Christianity, it's not the Lutherans. And with that term comes a certain set of connotations and assumptions about how they operate, what they believe, and how they communicate their message. "Grace" probably isn't as prominent in their messaging as some other things, and politics gets all caught up in it, too. (Please know I'm painting with a very broad brush right now.)

One of the things that gets lumped in with "evangelical" is a sort of "convert or else" tone. And that's not very Lutheran at all – we're all about God being the subject of all verbs relating to conversion or salvation. But Lutherans in our society have overcorrected over the centuries, to the point

where we hardly share our faith at all. We have relied on church growth through procreation, and that hasn't been very successful in quite some time. How many folks have just stopped attending church once they get out of their teens?

Another weird thing is evangelism committees. There isn't a lot of consistency about what their purpose is. Are they supposed to knock on doors or invest in some street-corner sandwich boards? Are they supposed to do bake sales and parades, hand out stuff with our logo on it? Are they supposed to just make sure that we have greeters at every service (which was pretty much it at one place I've served)? Are they supposed to spearhead expensive and slick outreach and marketing programs? None of these? All of these?

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*The Messenger*

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Messiah Lutheran Church, ELCA  
8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111  
Church Office: (804) 746-7134  
FAX: (804) 746-5579

Rev. Ryan Radtke, Pastor  
Email: [messiahmechpr@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmechpr@gmail.com)  
Ph: 507-360-7276  
Office hours: TBA

Davina Winn, Administrative Assistant  
Office email: [messiahmech@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com)  
Office hours: Mon. & Wed. 7:30 am—3 pm  
Tues., Thurs., Fri. 7:30 am—12 pm

Susie Weaver, Newsletter Editor  
Ph: 804-559-3503  
Email: [susiew51@comcast.net](mailto:susiew51@comcast.net)

VISIT OUR MLC WEBSITE:  
<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**

**Evangelism**

"Our responsibility is to get God's word to their ears. Only God can get the word from their ears to their heart."

- Albert Mohler



**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.

**Follow us on**



## Pastor's message

Continued from page 1

Here's my take on evangelism, and living up to our Lutheran, good-news-first, identity. We listen first – listen to our neighbors, our communities, our family members. What is going on in their lives, and what is God already up to in their lives? Listening first will help us know what to say, to tune in to them instead of insisting that they conform to us. Second, we don't approach sharing the good news as a membership drive. It's not about "butts in the pews." We share the good news in words and actions (and you know how loud each of those speaks), and in so doing we do our best to be the body of Christ and let folks experience God's goodness through us; and they get to know the good folks of Messiah along the way. The Holy Spirit will do what She's going to do in terms of if they ever come to worship with us or not; that's not the point. The point is to, simply, share and show God's love, and invite folks to experience more.

Other things are also important – speaking and acting on behalf of the well-being of people, being concerned with God-style justice in the world (see the Bible for more information on that, especially Jesus and the prophets). Being relevant and true to who we are. Being biblical. Being unapologetic about our faith without being pushy. But really it just comes down to what I said a moment ago: doing our best to be the body of Christ and letting folks experience God's goodness – and good news – through us. If the risen Christ stills bears the wounds that were the consequence of living out the kingdom of God, then we, the body of Christ, could stand to risk bearing some similar wounds for sharing the good news in Christ-like ways. It's ok to make mistakes, to fail, to be challenged...for the sake of the gospel.

I'm very excited to ask you all to save a date:

Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>,  
from 10:00am – 3:00pm.

On that day Messiah will be hosting an event called "Community Fest." We're inviting organizations and agencies that serve our communities to come. Just like our Community Service Connections on Sunday mornings, we want folks to know what services there are in the community, and what ways you can serve in the community. We want to connect people and build community. We want to get back and give back. We want to be the small church with a big heart that shines a spotlight on how God's love is active in our communities, and how everyone can be a part of it. We want to live the good news.

Community Fest grew from a collaboration of Messiah's Stewardship, Evangelism, and Social Ministry Teams, with Church Council support. It's coming together very nicely so far! Maybe we're figuring out a piece of this whole evangelism thing for today's world. You'll receive a letter in the near future with more details, but I wanted to get some buzz going, and to get it on your calendars.

Until then, keep sharing God's love in all the ways you already are, and be open to the Spirit's call to share God's love in ways you aren't yet.

In Christ,  
**Pastor Ryan**



**Join Messiah on Facebook!**

## MCEF news

The OSS (One Stop Shop) has shown a significant increase in activity. The first quarter of the year has had a 100% increase in the number of new clients (21 new family units) compared to the same time period in 2022. March had 158 pantry visits representing 503 people. 242 very full bags of food were given out.

Manna Sunday: 3rd Sunday each month.

The Senior Rides program provided 139 rides to seniors for transportation to medical appointments and essential services.

For an opportunity to participate in the Easter Basket Donation, pick up a basket in the narthex with instructions inside for items to be collected for MCEF. Other items such as canned pasta, pork & beans and rice may be placed in the shopping cart in the narthex.

A complete list of clothing items is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Spring and summer items are being accepted but keep winter clothing and coats for donation in the fall due to a lack of storage space for these items. Sheets for all bed sizes are being accepted.

The Tools 4 Teachers project has been very well received by the Hanover County Middle School teachers and plans are being made to expand the service to the High Schools in the next school year. This program initially started at Messiah and is now in Hanover County.

To continue to serve seniors in Mechanicsville, a few more drivers and coordinators are necessary. For more information, please contact **Pat or Gladly Hubert**.

Many thanks for your support of the missions of MCEF.



- 10 **Leroy Deere**
- 12 **Jessica McKenna**
- 23 **Dale Umberger**



- 18 **Adam Sr. & Bonnie Dworak**

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).



## Women's Bible Study

We will meet Wednesday May 10 at 6:30\*  
And Wednesday May 24 at 6:30.

\*We will continue studying  
"Finding Jesus in the Psalms" - Chapter 6

Then will need to find a new study. Bring your ideas!

Also bring a personal item for MCEF (soap, shaving cream, razors, hairspray, shampoo, etc). Only one item is needed.

See you then!  
**Rosalee**

May 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
- 2 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 3 9:00am PAL Group Meeting
- 4 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
  
- 7 9:15am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15am Christian Formation  
 10:45am Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service  
 12:00pm Confirmation Youth Group
- 8
- 9 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 10 6:30pm Women's Bible Study
  
- 14 MOTHER'S DAY  
 9:15am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15am Christian Formation  
 10:45am Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service
- 15
- 16 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 17 9:00am PAL Group Meeting  
 6:15pm Council Meeting
- 20 2:00pm Wedding - Duke/Cline
  
- 21 MANNA SUNDAY  
 9:15am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15am Christian Formation  
 10:45am Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service
- 23 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 24 6:30pm Women's Bible Study

- 28 PENTECOST  
 9:15am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15am Christian Formation  
 10:45am Messiah Lutheran: Worship Service
- 29 Memorial Day - Office Closed
- 30 7:00pm Choir Practice
- 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. That video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>



The Easter breakfast, prepared and served by our **Men Of Messiah**, is an anticipated part of our celebration of Resurrection Sunday. The lead organizer of this event, **Bill Weaver**, would like to thank the congregation and guests (estimated at 68 of you) who enjoyed the pancakes, eggs, sausage, and assorted drinks.

And most of all, Bill would like to thank the men, many of whom have supported this effort, but some “newbies” as well: **LeRoy Albertson & friend Gary, Jim Berg, Doug Duke, Gordon Gunn, Geoffrey Honan, Roger Schroeder, Chris & Michael Sondor, Brad Trimble**, and **Daren & Max Williams**.

Great job, guys! Looking forward to next year!



## 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; Karen Jones; 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; **Jaxson Griffin**, neighbor of the Gunns; **Amy Griffis**, daughter-in-law of Cheryl Griffis; **Linda Houseman**, a close family friend of the Weavers; **Lars Honan**, Geofrey's brother; **Bernard K**, friend of the Whirleys; **Trisha Kelly**, friend of Betty & Bill Fulop; **Joan Laudig**, Susie Weaver's mom; **Jenna Mears**, niece of Steve Gilnett; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Mary Streesman**, 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**

**Myanmar, Maldives, China, Mali, and Iraq.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World WatchList 2023

<http://www.opendoorsus.org>



## Council Highlights

Messiah's Church Council met on April 19th. Here are the highlights:

- Council was presented with information that a new lawn mower is needed and that an anonymous donor has graciously offered to donate 50% matching funds towards the purchase of a new lawn mower. Plans for a campaign to raise the matching funds will be discussed by the Stewardship Team and brought to Council before presentation to the congregation.
- Various ministry teams continue work on the Community Fest. Council discussed the importance of listening and receiving feedback throughout the preparation process.
- Council discussed ways to streamline Council Meetings including prepared ministry team reports for review prior to the meeting. Prepared reports then will become part of the meeting minutes.

- **Heather Williams**

Church Council Secretary

## PAL (Patches and Love)

Upcoming meeting dates:

Wednesday, May 3, May 17,  
and a possible field trip May 31

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. We currently have 10 quilts done. Two quilts have blocks cut and ready to assemble.

We had a donation of fabric and threads from Teresa G. Thank you!!! 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



## CCFY

### Christian Formation For You

Joyful June to All! As we say hello to summer, we will be taking a hiatus from our Sunday school classes. Traditionally, we have followed the public school calendar, starting a week after classes resume and ending the week before the summer break. This year, our final Sunday will be June 11th. A major change has been approved for Hanover County schools for the 2023-24 school year. This change brings Hanover County in line with Henrico and Chesterfield County schools. Students will return to school on August 21st.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated teachers for their loving commitment to students of all ages! Thanks to **Becky Collie, Wendy DeGraff, Lois Schroeder** and **Marilyn Gunn**; our children and youth have benefitted from their loving care. Thanks also to **Pastor Ryan** for wrangling the most difficult group, the adult learners!

WBS will also take a break over the summer. Thanks to **Rosalee Cline** for managing the group this year!

Respectfully submitted by **Anita Philp**





Messiah Lutheran Church  
8154 Atlee Rd  
Mechanicsville VA 23111



MAY 28TH

May 2023

**Messenger**

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**Contrary to common perception**, Jesus' disciples weren't frightened and hiding during the 10 days between Ascension and Pentecost. Instead, they were actively preparing for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. They "all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14, NIV) and took steps to replace Judas. After that inward focus, the disciples were ready to boldly burst forth on Pentecost, empowered and "enabled" (Acts 2:4) by the Spirit. They proclaimed Christ's death and resurrection, leading 3,000 people to faith that day, now known as the church's birthday. "A great wave of faith and love swept through this newborn community," writes Suzanne de Dietrich in *Free Men*. "These Christians could not keep silent. Their joyful liberty had broken down all the walls behind which people would like to keep them; no prison could silence them."

The DEADLINE for the  
**June 2023**  
edition of  
***The Messenger*** is  
**Sunday, May 21st**  
(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**

