

# The MESSANGER



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

FEBRUARY 2025

## Banner Team

Our first banner is up and it looks great! We will be working on banner #2 this month. Meetings are on February 4th & 18th at 1:00 p.m. for anyone who would like to help out.



Blessings,  
**Nancy Berg**  
(805)550-5763  
heartgaze495@gmail.com

## Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study started a new book last month and we will continue to read Rob Bell's *Love Wins* and discuss it. WBS will meet on February 12th and 26th at 10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Please feel free to join us!

For information, talk to **Marilyn Gunn**, **Donna Combs**, or **Nancy Berg**.

## Youth Choir

We would like to get any youth who would like to sing in church to join Nancy Berg and friends after worship on Sunday in the large classroom. We will sing on Sunday, February 23rd. It will be like a musical Valentine's gift to our congregation so please join us!

Blessings, **Nancy Berg**

## Y.O.U.T.H. in Action

(Youth Outreach to Uplift and Thrive in Holiness)

The MLC youth group rolled in the New Year at Ashland Skateland last month. Everyone had a great time and most importantly, no one got hurt! A couple of weeks later, Pastor Ryan and Theresa had a fabulous weekend with Michael, Max, Dean, Will, Anna and Ella in Lynchburg, VA for the Winter Celebration youth retreat at the Eagle Eyrie Conference Center.

February's theme is SERVICE. On February 9, the youth group will be preparing Valentine treat bags and suncatchers to gift to those in assisted living facilities, Hanover Adult Services and MCEF.

\*\*\*Don't miss out! The youth group is an active ministry at Messiah that holds events regularly throughout the year. Some events are open to all grade levels. If you have a child in your family (grades K-12) and would like to be added to our email list, please let a youth coordinator know or email **Tracey Anderson** at tander1021@yahoo.com.

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***The Messenger***

Published monthly by  
**Messiah Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
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**Email: messiahmechpr@gmail.com**  
**Ph: 507-360-7276**  
**Office hours: Vary**

**Administrative Assistant,**  
**Heather Heckel**  
**Office email: messiahmech@gmail.com**  
**Office hours starting Jan. 8**  
**Mon-Fri 12:00 pm-5:00pm**

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

**Church Council Highlights**

Council welcomed incoming Council Members.

Council meetings will now be held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Council member liaisons were identified:

- Christian Formation - Heather
- Evangelism / Digital Team - Cory
- Fellowship - Teresa
- Property - John
- Social Ministry - Sharron
- Stewardship - Daren
- Worship - Cheryl

Council member installation will be February 2, 2025

**Your 2025 Church Council And Associate Members**

**Rosalee Duke**  
**Sharon Addair**  
**Cory Gooch**

**Dianne Absher**  
**Teresa Gigante**

**Heather Williams**

**Council Liaisons**

**Heather Williams**  
**Cory Gooch**  
**Teresa Gigante**  
**John Shea**  
**Sharon Addair**  
**Daren Williams**  
**Cheryl Griffis**

**Emily Reagan**  
**Dona Polesky**  
**Sue Gilnett, RN**

Council President  
Vice-President  
Secretary

**Cheryl Griffis**  
**John Shea**

**Heather Williams**

Christian Formation  
Evangelism/Digital Team  
Fellowship  
Property  
Social Ministry  
Stewardship  
Worship  
Treasurer  
Financial Secretary  
Parish Nurse

**Team Leaders**

**Donna Shaw**  
**Becky Collie**  
**Sharon Addair**  
**Debbie Walker**

Evangelism  
Fellowship  
Social Ministry  
Worship



**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.

The DEADLINE for the **March 2025** edition of ***The Messenger*** is **February 24**.

Please contact me if you need a "grace period."

Please send your submission by email to **Heather Heckel (messiahmech@gmail.com)**



## Pastor's Letter

As February is Black History Month, I thought I'd share the story of the first

African American to be ordained as a Lutheran pastor in the United States: Jehu Jones, Jr. The majority of the story quoted below comes from an article in the New Jersey Synod by Michael Linderman, with some supplements from a passage in the book *Stories from Global Lutheranism*, both drawing on a biography written by Karl E Johnson, Jr. and Joseph A. Romeo.

"In 1832, Jehu Jones Jr. was the first African American to be ordained as a Lutheran pastor in the United States. His story is one filled with inspiration and frustration. Although he found vocal support among white Lutherans for his ministry among African Americans on behalf of the Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church, he never received the material support that he needed to establish his congregation in a proper building. Over the years of his pastoral ministry, he lost the mortgage on the church building that he fought so hard for, and the Synod docked his salary to help repay the church's debts.

"Jones was born a free Black in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1786, and became a successful tailor. Originally an Episcopalian, he and his family joined St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston in 1818, where all of his children were baptized. Jones later became part of a local effort to send free Blacks to Liberia, on the West Coast of Africa. Jones' pastor supported his efforts to become a missionary to the group, and in 1832, sent Jones to New York to be considered for ordination [due to a state law that forbade black men to be ordained for ministry]. The New York Synod ordained him right away at their meeting in New York, but he missed joining the group to Liberia because of a racist law that banned free Blacks from entering South Carolina. [The law stated that free blacks who left South Carolina and returned could be enslaved.] Barred from returning to South Carolina and leaving with the

group for Liberia, he [fled for the north and] had his family join him in Philadelphia, and started working on behalf of the German Evangelical Synod of Pennsylvania as a mission developer among the African American community there. In 1834, he reported to the Synod that he had visited 2781 families, of whom 163 were sick.

"That same year, Jones took out a mortgage to purchase two lots in Philadelphia, at \$375 each, and build St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Construction was completed, but the debt was significant. He undertook several fundraising trips to white churches in neighboring states, and he appealed repeatedly over the course of seven years to the Synod for financial support. Unmoved by his situation, and unwilling to support the vision of a permanent established black Lutheran church in Philadelphia, the synod sold the church building and cut his \$100 annual salary in half to pay off the debt. Despite these setbacks and the financial ruin he endured, Jones faithfully continued in his calling as a Lutheran pastor until his death in 1852."

"Rev. Jones's experience of obstacles about who is Lutheran and what Lutheran leadership looks like was not unique...Lutherans in previous centuries had also fought over questions of leadership, inclusion, and social justice. In the setting of American slavery, however, these already-challenging issues bore the additional weight of racist ideas and dehumanizing social structures, which Pastor Jones personally worked under and fought against. His life and work show both a legacy of hardship due to intolerance and the possibilities that can arise through people of courageous faith."

Martin Luther was once famously ordered to recant his reforming ideas. The story goes that Luther responded, "Here I stand; I can do no other." When once asked about why he didn't just switch to some other denomination, Rev. Jones replied that he "could be nothing but Lutheran."

*Continued, p. 4*

♥< ♥< ♥< **PAL** ♥< ♥< ♥<

PAL is meeting February 5 and 19 at 9:00 in the Fellowship Hall to continue construction of quilts for LWR.

**Next Meetings:**

**February 5**

**February 19**

For more information, contact **Glady Hubert** (814) 449-1392.

**Evangelism Quote**

*Evangelism is not so much about reminding people how lost they are, but how loved they are.*

*Randall Worley*



Send  
Us  
Your  
Photos!

Please contact **Donna Shaw**, if you have any questions.

**Check out Messiah's videos on**



**Join Messiah on Facebook!**



**Pastor's Letter**  
**Continued from page 3**

I pray that each of us may live in the strength of our convictions, and our Lutheran traditions and teachings of grace and gospel and service, to even a fraction of that which Rev. Jones exhibited. Thanks be to God for his witness, and for his example.

In Christ,  
Pastor Ryan



**MCEF News**

The month of December saw a lot of activity in the OSS with 147 visits for food, clothing and linens. 212 bags of food were received by clients with an additional 109 bags of an extra bag of items for a holiday meal of the clients choosing. 76 clients received clothing and 63 received linens. Financial assistance was received by 11 households and 120 rides were provided for seniors to keep doctor appointments and other necessary services.

Current pantry needs include condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo, pancake syrup), canned greens (collards, spinach, mixed) and toothpaste and brushes (February is Dental Health Month).

The new brochure highlighting the activities of 2024 will be soon available. Thank you for your continued support of your neighbors in need.

Thank you.  
**Gladys Hubert**



**February 2025**

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	

**February**

2 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation  
 10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship\* & Council Installation  
 First Sunday Fellowship & Chili Cook-off

4 1:00 pm Banner Team

5 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group

6 7:00 pm Choir Practice

9 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation  
 10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship\* Youth Planning & Service Project

12 10:00 am Women's Bible Study  
 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study

13 7:00 pm Choir Practice

16 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation  
 10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship\* Manna Sunday

17 All Day Office Closed - Presidents' Day

18 1:00 pm Banner Team

19 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group  
 6:15 pm Messiah Church Council Meeting

20 7:00 pm Choir Practice

22 10:00 am Council Retreat

23 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
 9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation  
 10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship\*

26 10:00 am Women's Bible Study  
 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study

27 7:00 pm Choir Practice

28 TBD Confirmation Banquet (Tentative)

2 **Taylor Starret**  
 7 **Jean Martin**  
 19 **John Rightnour**  
 21 **Victoria Gustafson**  
 23 **Grace Anderson**

If you would like YOUR birthdays & anniversaries included in the newsletter, please send an email to **messiahmech@gmail.com** or call **the church office** (804-746-7134).

\*That video will be available later on the church website and YouTube. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahMech/>

**Watch [messiahmech.com](http://messiahmech.com) and our Facebook page for any updates and changes to the calendar.**





## We pray for each other:

Debbie Anton; Bruce Carr; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Angel Fernandez; Ted Ford; Jackie Garbett; Steve & Sue Gilnett; Geoffrey Honan; Karen Jones; Jean Martin; Patrick Reagan; Ruth Schroeder; Susie Weaver

## We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

**JC Absher**, brother-in-law of Dianne Absher; **Emily and Justin Aheimer**, granddaughter and grandson-in-law of Marilyn Gunn; **Jessica Cassidy**, friend of the Andersons; **Dwayne Collie**, brother of Johnnie; **Marilyn Coleman**, sister of Geoffrey Honan; **Debbie**, sister of Rosalee; **Griffin Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **Jameson Gilnett**, grandson of Steve and Sue; **James Griffis**, grandson of Lee & Cheryl; **Ethan Hamilton and family**, former members; **Michelle & Tevin Harris**; **Jim Jump**, friend of the Collies; **Becky Kuhn**, aunt of Liz Radtke; **Iris Locke**, mother of Davina Winn; **Janet Monge**, nephew's wife of Angel & Carmen Fernandez; **Sandy Nelson**, sister of Cheryl Griffis; **Diane Nicholson**, friend of Becky Collie; **Tim Schroeder**, nephew of Roger Schroeder; **Addison Sinters**, friend of the Andersons; **Marina Szabo**, mother of Stephanie Bergreen, Brad **Shinault**, friend of the Whirleys; **Barbara Townsend**, friend of the Whirleys; **Benjamin Waters**, grandnephew of Marilyn Gunn.

Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families; All law enforcement, firefighters & first responders; The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine, of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry; All those impacted by acts of violence, at home and abroad; All who travel

### \*\*Prayer List Has Been Reset\*\*

Please contact the **church office** with names that need to be ADDED or REMOVED from the list. Send emails to **MessiahMech@gmail.com** or phone 804-746-7134 with your requests.

## Meet Messiah's Mutual Ministry Team

The Mutual Ministry Team's primary function, according to the constitution and by-laws, "is to aid the pastor in effective congregational ministry." This takes a couple of shapes:

First, the mutual ministry team is there to receive all types of feedback from congregation members. They can also answer questions about the ministries of the pastor to the congregation. Second, they are a group that is available for the pastor to go to for counsel, or to consult as a sounding board. In short, they "assist the pastor in developing and maintaining a healthy working relationship" with the congregation.

Of course, you can always check in with **Pastor Ryan** directly. However, if you'd rather check in with someone first, your mutual ministry team is there for you: **Sharon Addair, Doug Duke, Anita Philp, John Shea, and Susie Weaver**.

Please let any of us know if you have any questions, or if you'd ever like to have a conversation. Thanks!