

The MESSENGER



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

February 2026

Y.O.U.T.H. in Action (Youth Outreach to Uplift and Thrive in Holiness)

February's Youth Group theme is "service". At the Chili Cookoff, the youth will be serving ice cream to all the chili judges to help cool down their palates after they cast their final votes.

Don't forget, the 3rd annual Craft Fair and Yard Sale will be held on March 7th from 8am-2pm. Got stuff? The youth group will be collecting donations for their yard sale spot on March 1st. This is a great time for spring cleaning and decluttering! If you need help getting any items to the church, please contact a youth leader or email mlcyardsale@gmail.com.

Banner Team

The Banner Team will be meeting on Tuesdays February 3rd and 17th at 1:00 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. We are very close to finishing the first part of the banner set we are currently working on. Hopefully we will be dedicating it this month. The other two parts should follow shortly after. If you are interested in helping out you are welcome to join us. Questions? Talk to **Nancy Berg**

(805)550-5763

heartgaze495@gmail.com



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MCEF News

December and 2025 at a glance at MCEF

The books for 2025 have been closed and here is a look at what has transpired at MCEF. The One Stop Shop saw 1962 visits for food (2,741 well-filled bags plus 268 holiday bags) and clothing (1,003 of those visits provided clothing for 1 or more family members). Financial assistance was provided to 180 qualifying households to maintain them in their own home. Senior Rides provided 1,591 rides for seniors to go to doctor appointments and essential services.

Looking ahead, this year is the 50th anniversary celebration of MCEF which will be held Saturday, April 18, 2026 at Fairmount Christian Church at 11:00 with a luncheon and program. Watch for details, reservations required to assist with planning. Anyone who has volunteered or helped MCEF in any way is invited.

Current needs include jellies, canned tuna, white and brown rice.

Thank you for your donations and prayers for those in need in Mechanicsville.

Glady Hubert



The Messenger

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Wed/Fri 10:00 am-3:00 pm

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

**Your 2026 Church Council
 And Associate Members**

TBD	Council President
TBD	Vice-President
Cory Gooch	Secretary
Rosalee Duke	John Shea
Cheryl Griffis	Brad Trimble
Cathyrn O'Brien	Daren Williams
Anita Philp	

Council Liaisons

Anita Philp	Christian Formation
Cheryl Griffis	Evangelism/Digital Team
Cathyrn O'Brien	Fellowship
Daren Williams	Property
Rosalee Duke	Social Ministry
John Shea	Stewardship
Brad Trimble	Worship

Emily Reagan	Treasurer
Dona Polesky	Financial Secretary
Sue Gilnett, RN	Parish Nurse

Team Leaders

Anita Philp	Christian Formation
Cheryl Griffis	Evangelism
Becky Collie	Fellowship
Stephanie Shea	Social Ministry
Debbie Walker	Worship

Church Council Highlights

- On February 8th we will be having the chili cook off (new date).
- On February 8th we will also do the formal installation of the new council members Cathyrn O'Brien, Anita Philp and Brad Trimble.
- The youth will have a yard sale/craft sale on March 8.



Join Messiah on Facebook!



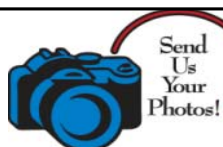
Follow us on

Instagram

Check out Messiah's videos on



YouTube



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



Pastor Ryan's office hours are posted for the upcoming week in each Sunday's bulletin. Schedule an appointment via messiahmechpr@gmail.com and 507-360-7276.

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

The DEADLINE for the **March 2026** 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

I kid you not – as I sat down to write this newsletter article, not sure where to start, the music that was playing in the background switched to Kermit the Frog's famous song, "The Rainbow Connection." Notwithstanding the spectacle of a frog playing a banjo, I've always enjoyed the song. It has a yearning, aspirational message, about rainbows and what's on the other side, about wishing on the morning star, about the half-heard voices that call us out and onward toward adventure and risk. Plus, the song just makes me smile, while I sway back and forth and attempt my best Kermit impression.

But I thought – you know, rainbows aren't just a Muppet thing; they're a biblical thing. A covenant thing. The rainbow was the sign God gave, not just to Noah and family, but to every single creature in creation, to signify the promise that God would never again flood the earth. A rainbow is the result of sunshine refracting through the composite prism of raindrops, water droplets in the air, after and during the rain. The rainbow in the sky, as beautiful and inspiring as it is, can only be seen if there are also clouds and rain.

We begin the season of Lent this month. A season that is somber and introspective, kicked off by remembering our own mortality on Ash Wednesday. We spend these six weeks, these forty days, under the cloud of that truth – we will die. But at the end of the season, after the final press of Holy Week, ending with our Messiah crucified and laid in an empty tomb, there comes the promise of resurrection. And resurrection, as beautiful and inspiring as it is, can only be seen, and experienced, after death. There is a reason why we recognize *Palm-*

Passion Sunday; we mustn't skip from the Hosanna of Palm Sunday to the Alleluia of Easter Sunday, without all that comes in between. As Christians, we do not shy away from the truth.

At the same time, we are, like the song says, dreamers. And, since we are created in the image of God, I truly believe that means that we inherit our ability to dream from our God, who can look at our sin and brokenness, all the darkness and death of this world of ours, and see something better for us. Promise something better for us. Work through us to make the world more full of life, more full of love, until that final storm has passed, the final rainbow faded, the Son the ultimate and lasting light.

Until that day, we are the composite prism of raindrops, each of us baptized in promised waters, and God's light shines through us to give hope and give help to a world only too familiar with clouds and darkness, floods and death. As we embody the love of Christ and share the good news of his death and resurrection, we are God's visible signs – the rainbow signifying the covenant – that might give hope, that this ordeal too shall pass. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust – remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return; *and*, in the waters of baptism, we are born anew, our otherwise-ashes reanimated, gifted, called and sent.

"Someday we'll find it, the rainbow connection, the lovers, the dreamers, and me." It's a song sung by a Muppet in a movie. Maybe it's not your first thought in terms of inspiration for your pastor's newsletter article. But I'm good with looking for the rainbow connection, the covenant connection between the clouds of this world and the promise of God's future. I'm good with God commissioning us with vocations to love and dream, to help this world and to embody the kingdom of God that awaits, and that shimmers in our hearts, the refracted dream of what will be.

In Christ,
Pastor Ryan



ASH Wednesday

Services will again be held jointly with All Souls on Ash Wednesday, February 18, at 12:15 pm and 6:30 pm.

There will be midweek suppers and worship during Lent. Times are to be announced.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study groups will meet on February 11th and 25th. One group meets at 10:00 a.m. and one group meets at 6:30 p.m. Both groups meet in the church fellowship hall. We are currently reading *A Lineage of Grace* by Francine Rivers. We are going to be covering the 6th and 7th chapters about Rahab on Wednesday the 11th and the 25th we will be reading the opening and chapter 1 and 2 about Ruth. The women we are reading about are all brave women in the Bible who changed eternity by being in the lineage of Jesus. Please join us! If you need a ride to the meetings please call **Marilyn Gunn, Donna Combs, or Nancy Berg.**

Blessings, **Nancy Berg**



We have 3 months left of our LWR Quilt Year. One quilt was tied, 3 more are ready to tie and one quilt is under design. The total is still 21 complete.

Quilt Sunday will be April 19th.

The warehouse in Baltimore, Maryland has closed. The "ingathering" facility/church in Richmond is no longer coordinating the receiving of local quilts. We are currently getting information about our alternate route for these quilts.

We continue to accept monetary donations to help buy supplies and offset the packaging/shipping costs. We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9am-noon at church.

We try to plan a field trip on the 5th Wednesday of the month when it occurs.

Next Meetings:

February 4

February 18



February 2026						
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

- 1 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
10:45 am All Souls Annual Meeting
First Sunday Fellowship
- 3 1:00 pm Banner Team
5:30 pm AA
- 4 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group
- 5 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
- 8 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
Chili Cook-Off
- 10 5:30 pm AA
- 11 10:00 am Women’s Bible Study
12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
6:30 pm Women’s Bible Study
- 12 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
- 13-15 All Day Winter Celebration
- 15 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
Manna Sunday
- 17 1:00 pm Banner Team
5:30 pm AA
6:15 pm Messiah Church Council Meeting
7:00 pm AA Business Meeting
- 18 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group
12:15 pm Ash Wednesday Service (w/All Souls)
6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service (w/All Souls)
- 19 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
- 22 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
9:15 am Messiah Christian Formation
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 **Cheryl Griffis**
- 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).

Watch messiahmech.com and our Facebook page for any updates and changes to the calendar.

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

- 24 9:15 am Old Ivy Garden Club
5:30 pm AA
- 25 10:00 am Women’s Bible Study
12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
6:30 pm Women’s Bible Study
TBD Midweek Soup Supper
- 26 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center



We pray for each other:

Jake Addair; Debbie Anton; Annette Buckholtz; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Angel Fernandez; Ted Ford; Jackie Garbett; Friends and Family of Steve Gilnett; Sue Gilnett; Geoffrey Honan; Karen Jones; Jean Martin; Roberta McMillen; Mark Philp; Patrick Reagan; the Schroeder Family

We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

Emily and Justin Aheimer, granddaughter and grandson-in-law of Marilyn Gunn; **Jessica Cassidy**, friend of the Andersons; **Pastor Paul Christian**, colleague of Pastor Ryan; **Dwayne Collie**, brother of Johnnie; **Griffin Deere**, brother of Leroy Deere; **Tripp Dillard**, son-in-law of Karen Umberger; **The Fraser Family**, family of Mark & Anita Philp; **Jameson Gilnett**, grandson of Steve and Sue; **The Griffis Family; Michelle & Tevin Harris; Family and Friends of Lars Honan**, brother of Geoffrey Honan; **Becky Kuhn**, aunt of Liz Radtke; **Eric Lawrence**, friend of Linda Mahovtas; **Iris Locke**, mother of Davina Winn; **Lydia & Christian**, family of Mark & Anita Philp; **Sandy Nelson**, sister of Cheryl Griffis; **Ruth & Rod**, family of Mark & Anita Philp; **Tim Schroeder**, nephew of Roger Schroeder; **Addison Senters**, friend of the Andersons; **Brad Shinault**, friend of the Whirleys; **Stacie & Todd**, friends of Mark & Anita Philp; **Danny Street**, brother-in-law of Donna Shaw; **Family and Friends of Sandy Street**, sister of Donna Shaw; **Chuck and Barbara Townsend**, friends of the Whirleys.

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

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!