The MESSENGER

November

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

November 2026

CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Council Highlights

At the October Council meeting, we discussed:

- We will be organizing a day in December to clean out the garage so if any of the congregation has anything in there they need to remove it by that day.
- We have constructed a solid plan for the proposed new playground and will continue to research it with a hopeful assembly date being in the spring.
- We would like to thank everyone who put any suggestions in the suggestion box and we are implementing that feedback.

Church Council Positions Open!

Are you passionate about Messiah Lutheran Church's mission, community, and spiritual growth? Do you possess leadership skills, financial insight, or a calling to be a servant of our ministry at Messiah Lutheran Church? We invite you to prayerfully consider a position on the Church Council.

Our Council works collaboratively to guide the vision, and spiritual growth of our congregation.

MCEF News

MCEF saw 157 visits to the pantry in September, which assisted 454 clients with 218 well-filled bags of food. 60 clients were assisted with clothing and 13 households qualified for financial assistance.

Thanksgiving bags will start October 26. They are an additional bag of food and toiletry items of the client's choice.

The celebration of 50 years of continuous service with a fundraiser toward the next 50 has been steadily growing. Thank you for your participation.

In addition to items for the Thanksgiing bags, MCEF needs include pasta sauce and pancake mix. Linen closet needs gently used, clean sheets, especially king size.

Thank you for your donations for those who are in need.

Glady Hubert

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The Messenger

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

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Send Us Your Photos!

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

The DEADLINE for the **December 2026** edition of ***The Messenger*** is **November 20.**

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

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

Your 2026 Church Council And Associate Members

Cheryl Griffis	Council President
Cathyrn O'Brien	Vice-President
Cory Gooch	Secretary
James Anderson	**John Shea**
Rosalee Duke	**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
James Anderson	Worship
Cory Gooch	Youth

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

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

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.



Pastor's Letter

One of the most central, foundational passages in the Bible for me is Matthew 25:31-46. It has become more and more so the longer I've been alive. It's the assigned Gospel reading for Christ the King Sunday, which this year falls on November 22nd. Since I'll be at the Lost and Found Synod middle school youth event, in support of the youth of our Synod and Pastor Tina Toburen's first event as our new Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Virginia Synod, I won't get to preach on it. So I'd like to share a few thoughts in this month's newsletter instead.

Matthew 25:31-46 is sometime known as the parable of sheep and goats. It's a scene where the Son of Man sits in judgment on all the nations of the earth. The king will separate the peoples into sheep at his right hand and goats at his left. "Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'" The people say, "When did we do any of those things to you?" And the king says, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me."

The same is repeated for those at the left hand, only this time in the negative. They did *not* do any of those helpful things. They also ask, "When did we fail to do these things?" And the king parallels the first answer, saying, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And then the sorting into eternal punishment or eternal life proceeds.

This passage sums up and ties together so many things for me. All the talk in Matthew's Gospel about bearing good fruit: this is what bearing good fruit looks like. Jesus telling his disciples in John's Gospel to love one another in the same way they experienced love from Jesus? Here is a list of concrete examples, all of which they saw Jesus do in his ministry. The passage from Luke 4, when Jesus reads the scroll from Isaiah and says that it is being fulfilled in their presence (by him)? Here's what that looks like. At the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan, when Jesus says, "Go and do likewise" – here you go. Do likewise. All the abstract stuff that is necessary for faith is balanced by a straightforward list like this for how to live it out.

Thinking on Martin Luther's "Freedom of a Christian" (A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant to all, subject to all.), we don't feed the hungry and welcome the stranger in order to get ourselves named to the sheep list. Rather, God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, makes us righteous through baptism, and our *response* to that grace and goodness is to do those sheep-y things. Whatever we do in service to the least of these, whatever good fruit we produce, is only possible because God has made it possible in and through us.

Where things can get difficult is when we disagree on who exactly counts as "the least of these." Sometimes we like to determine, on our own, who is worthy of, deserving of, such love. We might decide that some people have made too many bad choices, messed up their lives until they put themselves on the least lists. But then I think of the prodigal son, welcomed home and feasted, even over his brother's grumbling complaints. We don't decide the legitimacy of someone else's least-ness. We are called to serve, not to judge.

Luther says in the Small Catechism, in his explanation of the eighth commandment, that we are to interpret other people's actions in the best possible light. According to Matthew 25, I think that means that the best possible light sometimes shines on the least-ness that

Continued, page 4

Video Projector for the Adult Classroom

On Sunday, November 1st there will be a fundraiser for a new church video projector. It can be used in the improved adult classroom as well as being available for other congregational needs (for instance, when we have guests from local organizations give presentations). Thrivent is helping kick off our fundraiser by covering the cost of some of the food for today's First Sunday Fellowship+ Potluck.

This new video projector will help tremendously in many ways. We have an excellent prospective projector that costs around $1,000. Please make any checks or electronic donations out to Messiah Lutheran Church, and put "video projector" in the memo.

Thrivent is a 120+ year old financial services company that puts generosity at the heart of saving and investing. As a nonprofit they can help build, grow, and protect financial well-being through purpose-based advice, investments, insurance, banking, and generosity programs.

They are a Fortune 500 company in Fortune Magazine (June 2025). They have been this for last thirty-one consecutive years. They are the only nonprofit in the Fortune 500, by specializing in working with Christians to help members.

Thank you very much for your support.

Your Thrivent Action Team

(For more information contact **Jim Berg** 805 550-5731)



Pastor's Letter, Continued

we might otherwise overlook, or dismiss. And that having broad definitions of hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and in prison, is a reflection of the grace we sinners have already freely received from God.

We will surely get this wrong; there will surely be times when we do not do right by the least of these, and therefore lean goat-wards. But this is a passage about Christian living, and ethics, and behavior; a few verses after this passage, Jesus is hosting the Last Supper, getting arrested, being nailed to the cross, and a little later emerging from the empty tomb. And that is grace that loves goats and sheep equally; the shepherd who calls us to follow regardless our successes or failures, the King who forgives. Thanks be to God. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Ryan



Since October, we have 3 completed LWR quilts and 3 ready to be tied. We are so excited about exceeding previous years of quilt production.

We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9am-noon at church. We continue to exceed our goal each year since 2021 when we began this program. It's always a blessing to us to meet, have fellowship and produce beautiful PAL (Patches and Love) quilts for LWR (Lutheran World Relief).

Sharing God's Love through fabric and thread is our mission.

We continue to accept monetary donations to help buy supplies and offset the packaging/shipping costs. We try to plan a field trip on the 5th Wednesday of the month when it occurs.

Next Meetings:

November 7

November 18

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

November 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
29	30					

November

1 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
Messiah Christian Education
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
First Sunday Fellowship+
Daylight Savings Time Ends

3 1:00 pm Banner Team
5:30 pm AA

4 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group

5 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center
CoolWell HOA Meeting

8 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
Messiah Christian Education
10:15 am All Souls Congregational Meeting
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*

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

15 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
Messiah Christian Education
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
Manna Sunday

17 9:15 am Old Ivy Garden Club
1:00 pm Banner Team
5:30 pm AA
6:30 pm Messiah Church Council Meeting
7:00 pm AA Business Meeting

18 9:00 am PAL Quilt Group

19 12:00 pm Hanover Adult Center

20-22 All Day Lost and Found

22 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
Messiah Christian Education
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
12:00 pm Thanksgiving Meal

24 5:30 pm AA

25 11:00 am Hanover Adult Center

25-27 All Day Office closed for Thanksgiving

29 9:15 am All Souls Worship Service
Messiah Christian Education
10:45 am Messiah Lutheran Worship*
First Sunday in Advent



2 **Anita Philp**
3 **Lynn Deere**
6 **Sharon Griffin**
6 **Emily Gunn**
17 **Roger Schroeder**
24 **Ella 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/

We pray for each other:

Jake Addair; Debbie Anton; Ray Ash; Annette Buckholtz; Bruce Carr; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Angel Fernandez; Ted Ford; Jackie Garbett; Max Gigante; Karen Jones; Roberta McMillen; Patrick Reagan; Roger Schroeder

We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

Roxie Adams, mother of Daren Williams; **Emily and Justin Aheimer**, grand-daughter and grandson-in-law of Marilyn Gunn; **Robin Baber**, friend of Linda Mahovtas; **Patrick Cassidy and family**, friends of the Andersons; **Pastor Paul Christian,** colleague of Pastor Ryan; **Marilyn Coleman**, sister of Geoffrey Honan; **Dwayne Collie,** brother of Johnnie; **Family and Friends of Justin Daniels**, former student of Donna Combs; **Family and Friends of Tripp Dillard,** son-in-law of Karen Umberger; **Judy Gage**, sister of Jean Martin; **Jameson Gilnett**, grandson of Sue; **Rosemary Greene**, friend of Sue Gilnett; **The Griffis Family**; **Tyler Hileman**, friend of Messiah; **Charlotte Hulvey**, aunt of Sheila Whirley; **Becky Kuhn**, aunt of Liz Radtke; **Lydia & Christian**, family of Mark & Anita Philp; **Rick Meyer**, father of Tracey Anderson; **Sandy Nelson**, sister of Cheryl Griffis; **Joanne & Jerry Philp**, parents of Mark Philp; **Elizabeth Powell and family**, friends of Daren and Valerie Williams; **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; **Christopher Smith**, son of Lois Schroeder's friend; **Stacie & Todd**, friends of Mark & Anita Philp; **Ronda Walker**, friend of the Addairs; **Scott Whirley**, son 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 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: **Anita Philp, Roger Schroeder, 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!