

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 21, 2020

For video viewing of music and service go to:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO_pAVddaeV1_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray together:

C: *Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen*

***THE FIRST LESSON**

Jeremiah 20:7-13

⁷O LORD, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. ⁸For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. ⁹If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. ¹⁰For I hear many whispering: "Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. "Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him." ¹¹But the LORD is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. ¹²O LORD of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. ¹³Sing to the LORD; praise the LORD! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers.

***THE SECOND LESSON**

Romans 6:1b-11

^{1b}Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be

united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 10:24-39

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ²⁴"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! ²⁶So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. ³⁴Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶and one's foes will be members of one's own household. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

I'm guessing that most of you are familiar with the story of Pinocchio: the wooden puppet who wants to be a real boy, the toymaker Geppetto who wishes he had a son. A wish on a star gets the attention of the Blue Fairy, who grants Pinocchio life, and Jiminy Cricket is drafted as Pinocchio's conscience to help him navigate the tough choices in life.

Let me talk about Jiminy Cricket for a minute. He's a good bug. Sure, he gets frustrated, even riled up, sometimes, but he always has Pinocchio's best interests at heart. Being an external conscience is not an easy job – especially

with Pinocchio as your charge. Trying to be the little voice that speaks to Pinocchio's heart, helping him know what's right and what's wrong – that's a tall order for a short insect. But he sticks with Pinocchio and does the best he can.

Jiminy is a fun cartoon version of that "little voice" in each of us – our conscience. Consciences are shaped over the years by your family, by your church, by your teachers, by all the rules and lessons and experiences and rewards and consequences and values that you are taught and that you absorb. Conscience is that internal sense of well-being when you do something "right," and that pang of hesitation or guilt when you do something "wrong." It's an internal moral compass.

Martin Luther said that the conscience is even more that: Luther said that the conscience is the "self before God." Conscience, he said, is always in relation to God. In other words, your conscience is part of the image of God you were created in, helping to guide your daily baptismal reset of dying to sin and being raised to new life. In one of his writings, Luther said, "Conscience is not the power to do works, but to judge them. The proper work of conscience (as Paul says in Romans 2[:15]), is to accuse or excuse, to make guilty or guiltless, uncertain or certain. Its purpose is not to do, but to pass judgment on what has been done and what should be done, and this judgment makes us stand accused or saved in God's sight."

So, there you go: Jiminy Cricket and Martin Luther. And now, let's add Jeremiah. The prophet is tired of being a prophet. He's tired of friends and foes mocking him. He's tired of always crying out "Violence and destruction!" He's tired of being God's messenger and God's agent, tired of trying to get stubborn and sinful people to change their ways and turn back to God. And yet, as tired as he is of all of this, we hear Jeremiah say in our reading today, "If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."

When I read this, I immediately thought of a really mean, really aggressive Jiminy Cricket. More of a Jiminy Yellowjacket. A Jiminy Chigger. A Jiminy Fire Ant. A conscience so strong and burning that it won't let you rest. You must do the right thing! You must do God's will, even if it means being miserable. Even if it means upsetting the status quo, and the status quo being upset with you in return.

Have you ever proclaimed the Word of God so persistently, so steadily, so annoyingly, that you take flak for it? Have you ever found yourself in a Jiminy Cricket (or Fire Ant) situation, serving as an eternal conscience for the world or the people around you, to the point that they mock you or revile you for it? Have you ever pulled a Martin Luther, like when he was ordered to back off, and said: "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, because it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience." Have you been in a situation like that before?

Or, take these hard-to-swallow words we heard in today's Gospel reading from Matthew, where Jesus says he came to divide, like a sword, and not to bring peace. Where he promises that families will be pitted against one another because of him. Where he says that if you love your parents or you kids more than him, you're not worthy. Where he says that if you don't acknowledge him before others, and pick up a cross to follow him, and make him the first and best priority in your life, he won't acknowledge you before the Father. Where he says that, for following him, people will call you names and malign you for being his disciples.

Have you ever loved so hard, that you were maligned for it? And I don't mean like teenage head-over-heels uncomfortable-to-watch love; I mean loving your enemies love. Loving the least of these love. Loving the Lord your God love. Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God love. Loving your neighbor as yourself love? Loving God's good creation love? Have you ever loved so strongly, so equally, that people think there's something wrong with you?

That's how hard Jesus is asking his disciples – then and now – to love him. And, by loving and following him, that's also how hard Jesus is asking his disciples – then and now – to love others in his name. And it's not, "if you love this hard you will be saved"; no, it's "because I love you this hard, you are free to love others this hard, too."

You see, Jesus, in the midst of this difficult passage in Matthew, with all of this frightening and uncomfortable stuff coming out of his mouth, also says this: Have no fear. Take the love you learn from me in our quiet teachings and proclaim it from the housetops. Take the love you see from me when we talk in our dim upper rooms and tell it again in the light. Do not fear those who malign or harm; after all, God takes care of little sparrows; God will certainly take care of you. You are loved. You have value. So do not be afraid to love as hard as Jesus loves, no matter what anyone says.

Now: please hear me – I'm not saying that you should be jerks. I actually don't think that Christians should be identified with fire ants. I can't, in good conscience, recommend loving people in a way that makes them feel unsafe, or turns them off from God. Don't be self-righteous, either. But there is a saying: comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. That's why Jeremiah rubbed people the wrong way – he afflicted people who felt powerful and comfortable by telling them that they were not doing God's will, that they would have to change their ways and give up their idols, along with some of their power. It's ok if the truth of the kingdom of God makes people uncomfortable, like that, sometimes.

I've said a lot here today. So let's come back to this, Jesus' first words from our reading today: "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave about the master..." This is about expectations. None of us who follow Jesus are above Jesus, or better than Jesus, or more holy than Jesus. We are expected to follow him, his example, and do what he did, even and including loving so hard, so equally, that it rubs people the wrong way sometimes. Including when it pushes

people outside of their comfort zones to point out that some are being loved less than others. And these expectations – these expectations that you are not above your teacher and Lord – are what shape your conscience, before God, to guide what you say and do.

So: if Jesus eats with outcasts, find yourselves some outcasts and grab a menu. If Jesus touches the lepers to restore them to full inclusion in the community, take your metaphorical gloves off. If Jesus challenges the powers that be to make life better for the powerless, plug that conscience in and be ready to hold your ground. If Jesus gets called Beelzebul, a pagan demon – then be ready to be called some names, too, when you love as hard as Jesus loves. If Jesus is crucified for proclaiming the kingdom of God, well...be ready.

Nowhere in the Bible does it ever say that being a disciple of Jesus, or a follower of God, will make your life easier. Quite the opposite, in fact. Being a disciple does not come with a guaranteed promise of popularity. But, being a disciple does come with the promise we heard at the end of our reading from Jeremiah: “For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers.” You are delivered!

Being a disciple does come with the promise that we heard at the end of our reading from Romans: “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” You are alive in Christ!

Being a disciple does come with the promise that we heard at the end of our reading from Matthew: “Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” You will find your life when you give it away, for Christ, for others.

God gives you life through Jesus, and God will give you all the Jiminy Conscience you need along the way to share the life you’ve been given with the world and everyone in it. Brothers and sisters, love hard and have no fear. Walk in newness of life. Amen.

***NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten not made,
of one Being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

***PRAYERS**

A: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world. (*A brief silence.*)

A: Expansive God, you bring diverse voices together to form your church. Open our hearts and unstop our ears to learn from one another, that differences might not overshadow our baptismal unity. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Providing God, your creation shows us that life comes from death. Renew the places where our land, air, and waterways have been ill for too long (local environmental concerns may be prayed for). Direct the work of all who care for birds and their habitats. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Protecting God, sustain and keep safe all who work to defend others across the world (especially). Revive and strengthen organizations dedicated to caring for refugees and migrants while their homelands struggle for peace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Loving God, you promise to be with all who are persecuted for your sake. Guide all who speak your word of justice and console any who are tormented or targeted for being who they are. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Compassionate God, you are with us and we are never alone. Bless all fathers and father figures who strive to love and nurture as you do. Comfort all who long to be fathers and all for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as they face the challenges of coronavirus. We pray for those who grieve the loss of love ones, for the sick and their families, for those fearful of an unknown future. We pray for the millions of unemployed, for children and others at home - that they be safe from abuse. We pray for those who are alone and isolated during this time that they may feel your loving presence. We pray for all the hospital and health care workers, and all first responders, that they receive needed supplies and be kept protected in the work they do. We pray for those making decisions about how to live into the future and when that will happen. Keep us all in your care as we wait for a new day. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Fulop, Garbett and Gardner families. For the talents and good things You have given each of them. Keep them united and faithful to You and each other. Guide them, protect them and equip them to do Your will. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**C: *Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.***

***BENEDICTION**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

C: Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME PASTOR RYAN!

While Pastor Ryan is not physically here yet, he will be available by email at messiahmechpr@gmail.com; and by phone at (507)-360-7276 . His 'office' hours will be 11am – 8 pm our time since California is three hours behind Virginia. This is such an exciting but strange time for us as we continue to worship from afar. We wish Pastor Ryan and family a safe transition to Virginia when they are able to do so. Church council will continue to provide future updates to the congregation as necessary.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RYAN

Thank you, Messiah! I have already begun to receive warm messages of welcome. And seeing the pictures of the church sign brought huge smiles to our faces! I am frustrated by our housing situation and not being able to move quite yet, but we are almost done with construction and we'll be listing soon. Either way I'll be getting out there as soon as I can, and I'm excited to begin our ministry together. Please look forward to some phone calls in the next couple of weeks from me so I can start getting to know everyone. Until then, peace be with you and stay safe.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Beginning March 8th, we began providing a summary of the financial well-being of our congregation. Here is this week's information:

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$3087 through June 14th (down from \$3104 on June 7th).
- We are \$7588.21 behind the year-to-date budget needs (down from \$6884.21 behind the budget the week prior).

POWER IN THE SPIRIT IS GOING ON-LINE!

Power in the Spirit 2020 is online, for a whole week! And it's free! Join in on Monday, July 6, through Friday, July 10 for a week of study, prayer, fellowship, worship, and art. Learn about theology and advocacy, about evangelism and worship. Experience new ways of worshiping at home and online. This year's theme is The Holy Spirit. Go to <https://www.vasynod.org/event/power-in-the-spirit-2020/> for more information as well as to register.

PRAYER LIST TO BE RESET

The current prayer list will be reset on July 5 to begin the third quarter. Please contact Davina with names that need to remain on the list. Email her at MessiahMech@gmail.com or phone 746-7134 with your requests.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION BLAST

Although Sunday School is 'out' for the summer, the Christian Formation Blast will continue for a while with information on worship activities as well as Christian Formation activities such as Daily Devotionals. If there is something that you would like to see added to the blast, please let Donna Shaw, dmshaw70@gmail.com, know.

JOIN THE 75,000 MORE! FACEMASK CHALLENGE

When Lutheran World Relief launched the 75,000 Face Mask Challenge less than a month ago, they knew the compassionate response would be overwhelming – and that good people like you would meet the challenge. They just had no idea you'd pull it off so quickly. Thank you! To reach even more people in dire need, Lutheran World Relief is collecting 75,000 more masks! How many will you make to help stop the spread? Sign up for more info. www.lwr.org/masks.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To continue in your faithful giving, mail in your offering to the church office, 8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, or use on-line giving through Vanco which is available on the church website. See messiahmech.com for more details.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'ebulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at dmshaw70@gmail.com by Wednesday for inclusion.

Prayer List

WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Kenneth Deere	"Doc" Kondaki
Adam Dworak, Sr.	Linda Krupa
JoAn Firebaugh	Mac McAllister
Bill Fulop	Roberta McMillen
Elisabeth Gardner	Pat Motley
Werner Gardner	Nathan, Ruth Schroeder & family
Steve Gilnett	Judy Schwerdtfeger
Geoffrey Honan	

WE PRAY FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Danny Allen, friend of the Whirleys
Boyd Allison, friend of Jean Wightman.
Family and Friends of Dennis Anderson, father of James Anderson.
Joe Griffin, friend of Anne Mason.
Pete Gunn, friend of the Schwerdtfeger's
Christina Nibali, sister of Anita Philip.
Dee Schroeder, sister-in-law of Roger.
Tim Schroeder, nephew of Roger.
Family and friends of Wanda Umlauf, Vicar Ginny Banister's mother
Elizabeth Zimmerman, Karen Morris' daughter-in-law's aunt
T.J., grandson of the Whirleys.

Pastor Ryan, as he begins his journey with us
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

Hospitals, nursing homes, other health care facilities
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The World Health Organization Medical researchers and scientists
Schools, workplaces, government institutions and municipal agencies
For all who travel