

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 9, 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: *O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen*

***THE FIRST LESSON**

1 Kings 19:9-18

At Horeb, the mount of God, Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

***THE SECOND LESSON**

Romans 10:5-15

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

“The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

Well, folks, as I'm writing and recording this, I've got suitcases to pack, so let's get right to it and I'll try to keep it short today. Fun fact about me: I can't swim. I took lessons for a few years when I was a kid, but I kept having to repeat each level of swim class. It took me four years to do two levels. Why is that? Because I sink. I would kick and do the strokes with my arms and cup my hands and everything they told me. And I'd still sink. I'd try to float, put my arms out, head back, relax my body, all of that - still sink. So, between finding myself a head taller and a year or two older than everyone else in my class, and the fact that I had the buoyancy of a lead weight, I stopped taking swimming lessons. I still want to try again - maybe I'll stay afloat more as an adult? - but for now, in the meantime - I'm a sinker.

As you swim through the waters of the world right now, I wonder if you feel like me - try as you might, swimming and kicking, do you feel like you're sinking, just barely treading water, thrashing about even, cramping up? As you swim through the waters of the world right now, the waters of your lives, the waters of the headlines, the waters of your own and your neighbors' worries, do you feel like you're inevitably sinking?

The pandemic is still going. It's an election year, and the politics are pretty ugly, more and more polarized. A hurricane just passed through and it seems like there might still be a bumper crop this year. Don't forget the racial tension and protests in response to decades of brutality and injustice and systemic prejudice. The economy is in shambles and millions are out of work. School is rapidly approaching - how's that going to work? Will everyone be safe? And there's just a general riptide current of discord and uncertainty threatening to pull everyone under.

Let's put it in terms of our scripture lessons today. Today, more than any other time I can remember, the folks in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our communities, in our families and homes, in our church, are battered by the waves. They are rowing against the wind and getting nowhere. They are frightened and terrified, at times by the ghosts of anxiety and old sins never uprooted. Folks are doubting whether Jesus can pull us up out of this one. Many are feeling short on faith. Whether it's the virus or something else, many might even be echoing Elijah's words: "they are seeking my life, to take it away."

Maybe you feel like you're sinking.

And yet: today's scriptures also say that Jesus walks on the very water itself - unsinkable. God calms the wind. The forces of chaos do not reign. Jesus catches us before we sink. The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart. God is passing by, just wait for the sheer silence.

Silence should be easy to find these days, right, with the social distancing and everything? Well, even though we're isolated in quarantine, I've got to ask: are you hearing a lot of silence? Are you quiet of mind? Are you light of heart? If you do feel zealous for the Lord, ready to jump out of the boat to join Jesus on top of the water, how long is it before you notice the strong wind, the buffeting

waves, and lose your nerve? Do the waters of the world make you start to sink? Are you crying out, for yourself or for this stormy world, "Save me!"?

Where is this silence we hear about with Elijah? Is there any silence right now? Is there calm? Can you make out the quiet slapping of feet upon the surface of the water, on their way to join you, the beautiful feet of the messenger who brings good news of salvation and peace? I'm having a hard time hearing anything over the noise. All I'm getting is earthquake and fire and mountain-splitting, rock-breaking wind. I'm getting noise and trouble. Turmoil and waves.

Lord, I'm sinking and there's too much noise!

Lord, I'm sinking and there's too much noise!

Lord, I'm sinking and there's too much noise!

Jesus is walking.

God shows no distinction between sinkers and swimmers - Jesus is Lord of all, Lord of even the forces of chaos.

God will calm the winds. Do not be afraid.

The sheer silence that is promised, resplendent with God's presence, will calm our fears, ease our terror, put to rest our worried minds and heavy hearts.

God is passing by, and the hand is darting out, and that hand will catch us, have faith, even as we begin to dip beneath the surface, below the waves.

Lord, I'm sinking and there's too much noise! That hand is there. That hand is there. That hand is there. That hand will catch you. Do not be afraid.

You might say, where is this hand? I'm sinking, Lord! Save me! Those are nice words, Pastor Ryan, but the waves are still high. Those are nice words, but the earthquakes are rumbling, the fires are burning, the winds is splitting mountains and breaking rocks. Where is this hand? How will I know it?

It might come to you in a dream. Maybe you'll feel a presence, a peace, come down around you. But more than likely that hand, brothers and sisters, will be at the end of another arm. A flesh and blood arm, created by God, redeemed by the Lord, guided by the Spirit, will be reaching out to you in peace and love and solidarity. Because when Jesus catches you, catches me, catches another, he sends us all out to reach our hands out to more, to anyone sinking.

We are sent out to proclaim the good news of the God who reaches down and catches us, saves us. We are sent out to proclaim so that others who are sinking may hear it, and call out "Save me!" and believe that the sure hand of our Lord will catch them, too.

I'm going to keep sinking in the waters of the world. Maybe not every time, but God knows I'm prone to sink. I'll step out in faith, but when the noise of the wind and waves makes me falter, that hand, that sure hand, that loving hand, that wounded hand, will be there. Thanks be to God. 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;
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. (*A brief silence.*)

A: For your whole church throughout the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid." May we follow Christ wherever he leads. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day (especially). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: For our congregation. You have gathered us here today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

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 loved 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Mahovtas, Major and Martin 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; 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

PASTOR RYAN'S 'OFFICE' HOURS

While Pastor Ryan is now physically here, he will still be self-quarantining for the first two weeks. He is available by email at messiahmechpr@gmail.com; and by phone at (507)-360-7276 . His "office hours" will be 8 am – 5 pm, and he looks forward to being in the office soon. We wish Pastor Ryan and family a safe transition to Virginia! See his weekly update below.

PASTOR RYAN'S WEEKLY UPDATE

By the time you read this the Radtkes will either be in the air or even on the ground in Virginia. We will be self-quarantining after planes and airports when we first arrive. Please keep praying for our house in California to sell so we can secure a house in Mechanicsville and move the rest of our stuff. It will be nice to all be in the same time zone! Thank you for all your prayers, patience, love, and support.

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 \$2864 through August 2nd (down from \$2937 on July 26th.)
- We are \$13,383.11 behind the year-to-date budget needs (down from \$13,669.11 behind the budget the week prior).

MESSIAH RECEIVES FEDERAL COVID-19 LOAN

Council is pleased to announce that Messiah has received a loan of \$17,314 from the federal Paycheck Protection Program. The "PPP" provides very low interest (1%) loans to help small businesses keep their workforce during the Coronavirus crisis. Loan recipients must spend at least 60% of loan proceeds on payroll costs; the remainder must be used for mortgage and lease interests as well as certain utilities. Funds must be used by the end of 2020. If the Church meets the loan criteria for use of the funds, the federal government will forgive the full amount of the loan. We thank John Cline for his hard work and time spent to take care of the application process.

REOPENING SURVEY

Thank you to all who returned the Council Reopening Survey! We had a tremendous response, 76 as of this bulletin! As soon as the results are compiled, church council will begin looking at the data and determining next steps. Stay safe and well until we are together again.

SMALL GROUPS

Hopefully everyone has received the guidelines for Small Group Meetings and Cleaning Protocols either through email or hard copy. Please contact Davina when wanting to schedule a time you would like your group to meet at church. The only areas open at this time include the Fellowship Hall, the hallway to the restrooms, and the restrooms. All other parts of the building remain 'closed' for now. There will be copies of the forms at church on the kitchen counter for you to use at your meeting along with necessary cleaning supplies. Davina will maintain the completed forms in her office. Our hope is to allow small groups to begin meeting again safely. Although apart, we are still Messiah! Stay well everyone!

LIVING LUTHERAN WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

What seasonal recipes have been important to you in your faith life? By or before August 30, send your complete recipe, and 300-word story to livinglutheran@elca.org for consideration in their November theme issue on food and faith. Please include Messiah's name and location in your entry. Have fun and good luck!

REBUILD RVA GRANT PROGRAM

The Rebuild VA Grant Fund is a program to help small businesses and non-profits whose normal operations were disrupted by COVID-19, including restaurants, brick and mortar retail, exercise and fitness facilities, personal care and personal grooming services, entertainment and public amusement establishments, and campgrounds. Businesses and non-profits that are approved for a Rebuild VA grant may receive up to 3 times their average monthly eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$10,000.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT – IT'S SUMMERTIME!

Summer is upon us. We hope you continue your faithful giving! Please 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.

VIRGINIA RENT AND MORTGAGE RELIEF PROGRAM (RMRP)

The Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic. Depending on availability of funds and household need, the RMRP may provide financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments for eligible households. This includes financial assistance for rent or mortgage payments past due beginning April 1, 2020 and onward. Financial assistance is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funding and the household's need for additional assistance and continued eligibility. For more information please visit: Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp.

CAROLINE FURNACE UPDATE

- NEW weekends added! We are open for Family Retreats through mid-September! We are grateful that Virginia continues to view outdoor activity as essential, and that we are able to provide outdoor faith, education, and renewal in a safe way. The Farmhouse, Cabin Village, and Sukkah Village are open each weekend (Thursday to Monday). Both the Farmhouse and Sukkah Village are optional no-contact retreat spaces. We can host a maximum of 5 family groups (of 10 or less) on property at once, so spaces are limited and first come, first served. Book at least two weeks in advance; 14 days of pre-screening are required for all Family Retreat participants.
- Adventure Weekends are scheduled for this fall/winter, September 18-20, October 30-November 1, and February 5-7. Until further notice, lodging is limited to one group per cabin. Tent camping is also available.

Contact Julie at (540) 449-0012 or julie@carolinefurnace.org to book a Family Retreat or reserve your Adventure Weekend cabin.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'bulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at dmslaw70@gmail.com by Wednesday for inclusion.