

*Messiah Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



November 8, 2020

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To share the Good News of Jesus Christ
and to invite all to join us in faith, worship, and service.*

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(November 8, 2020)

For video go to:

<https://messiahmech.com/messiah-digital/>

GATHERING SONG, "Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness"

(ELW 488)

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness



1 Soul, a - dorn your - self with glad - ness, leave the gloom - y
2 Has - ten as a bride to meet him, ea - ger - ly and
3 Now in faith I hum - bly pon - der o - ver this sur -
4 Je - sus, source of last - ing plea - sure, tru - est friend, and



haunts of sad - ness, come in - to the day - light's splen - dor,
glad - ly greet him. There he stands al - read - y knock - ing;
pass - ing won - der that the bread of life is bound - less
dear - est trea - sure, peace be - yond all un - der - stand - ing,



there with joy your prais - es ren - der. Bless the one whose grace un -
quick - ly, now, your gate un - lock - ing, o - pen wide the fast - closed
though the souls it feeds are count - less; with the choic - est wine of
joy in - to all life ex - pand - ing: hum - bly now, I bow be -



bound - ed this a - maz - ing ban - quet found - ed; Christ, though heav' n - ly,
por - tal, say - ing to the Lord im - mor - tal: "Come, and leave your
heav - en Christ's own blood to us is giv - en. Oh, most glo - rious
fore you, love in - car - nate, I a - dore you; wor - thi - ly let



high, and ho - ly, deigns to dwell with you most low - ly.
loved one nev - er; dwell with - in my heart for - ev - er."
con - so - la - tion, pledge and seal of my sal - va - tion.
me re - ceive you, and, so fa - vored, nev - er leave you.

Text: Johann Franck, 1618–1677; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Music: SCHMÜCKE DICH, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

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***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray:

C: *O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen*

FIRST LESSON: Amos 5:18-24

Lector

A reading from Amos.

In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.

¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light;

¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

²³Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream

L: The word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

SECOND LESSON: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Lector

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

I'm wondering if y'all can help me. I know that, sometimes, rules and laws vary from state to state. For instance, in California, it's legal for motorcycles to drive down the middle of two lanes of traffic. No one gave us a heads up about that, so it was kind of surprising the first time we had to drive in L.A. and someone zipped past our side mirrors while we were chilling in the gridlock. I know that different states have different max speed limits – some are 65, some 70 or 75, and some are Montana. Related to that, I was wondering if you could help me with something here in Virginia: you see, there are these little white rectangular signs on the sides of the highways, and I'm not sure what they're

for. I mean, they look like speed limit signs, they even say "speed limit" on them, but I was wondering if "speed limit" was Virginian for "if you feel like it."

In all honesty though, I'm not complaining. I have a little bit of a lead foot. I subscribe to the "flow of traffic" school of thought when it comes to freeway driving. And I'm usually running late. And of course, if the conditions are bad, I slow down a lot. But if everyone else is going over, even the state troopers, then I'm fine to just smile and nod at the signs while I bump up my cruise control.

Speed limits are a weird law. Almost everyone drives over the speed limit on freeways, even if it's just a little bit. And everyone is just kind of cool with that. Technically, if I'm going 71 in a 70 zone, I should get pulled over. I don't. No one does. It's a rule that everyone knows, and understands, and mostly ignores to some degree. And we rationalize the heck out of it, like I just did: everyone else is doing it; I just go flow of traffic; I'm a good driver, I know when to slow down; it's not like they enforce it.

And, just for fun, courtesy of the internet, here are some excuses people actually tried when they did get pulled over for speeding, because, apparently, it was worth a shot: "I wasn't speeding. I just got a haircut and it makes me look fast." "Oh, I thought the sign I-95 meant the speed limit." "My car has a recall on it for unexplained acceleration and I'm on my way to get it fixed." "I have a cold and when I cough it mashes the pedal." "Duh, I know I was going fast – I was trying to get the snow off my windshield so I could see where I was going."

You know the rules; but you ignore the rules; and then you justify why it's ok to ignore the rules, or explain how you really weren't breaking the rules anyway. But to circle back to the beginning: you know the rules.

Everyone: welcome to the book of Amos. Amos was a prophet in Judah, the southern kingdom of God's people. Jeroboam was the king in Israel, the northern kingdom, and Uzziah was king of Judah when Amos was doing his thing. It was a time of peace – long peaceful reigns in both kingdoms, no major conflicts or wars or anything. And the peace was accompanied by prosperity for God's people; well, prosperity for a few, at the expense of the many. Because a new social class was developing – a very wealthy social class. And underneath the peace there was rampant injustice for the poor and vulnerable, and an attitude of religious arrogance was setting in among the powers that were. And into this situation God sent Amos.

Amos's prophetic message was to hold people accountable for their transgressions. To call out the injustice and lay into the arrogance. To remind everyone that they had just one job: to follow God's law. That law included just treatment of everyone. That law included loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength and your neighbors as yourselves, even the poor ones. Especially the poor ones. Everyone knew these rules. Everyone knew what God expected of them, what God wanted for the people. Amos wasn't telling anybody anything new.

They knew the rules; but they ignored the rules; and then they justified why it was ok to ignore the rules, or explained why they weren't really breaking the rules anyway. And they just bumped up the cruise control on their arrogance and their greed and their injustice, all the while still going through the motions of righteousness and worship.

To which Amos replied: You think you're ready for the day of the Lord, for the judgment, for the end? You think that will be a bright happy day for you? "It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?"

"I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

They knew the rules. They knew what God was looking for, God's expectations for them: justice and righteousness. Righteousness in their relationship with God, justice in their relationships with one another, especially the vulnerable, the marginalized. And so God has no time for their behavior. God has no patience for their behavior. Within two generations the Assyrians would come and overthrow first Israel in the north and Judah in the south. God is eternally forgiving and merciful, but at the same time God does not extend cheap grace. There are consequences for our actions. God is not naïve. God is not a pushover. Our lame excuses for exceeding the limits God requires will not get us out of trouble.

Jesus's parable expresses much of the same thing: the bridesmaids had one job: to welcome the groom to the wedding banquet, to start the festivities on the right footing. The groom would arrive when he arrived – they were expected to be ready. The five foolish bridesmaids have no excuse; they knew their responsibilities. They should have brought oil. They didn't. And now they are locked out. Jesus tells his listeners: "Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." In other words: you all know what God expects. You know the kind of lives God wants you to live, lives of justice and righteousness, lives that love God with all you are and love your neighbors as yourselves. Nothing less. Nothing more.

This is an Advent preview: not passively waiting and doing whatever sounds fun to pass the time; but actively waiting, doing God's work in the world until Jesus returns. It's not party time. It's not like a song we did in jazz band in high school called "No Speed Limit Blues," where the tempo was marked "as fast or slow as you want to go." It's not "while the cat's away the mice will play" until Jesus comes again. We know what God expects.

How do we know what God expects? You read your Bibles, you attend church, you study, you pray, you serve. It is clearly posted and oft repeated. The Golden Rule, especially for those most exposed to the world's troubles. Sincere worship, not empty motions to cover, like fig leaves, our selfish hearts. Amos was a prophet, but we can take on the prophet's mantle, too: to always comfort the afflicted, and to afflict the comfortable when any become haughty or over-elevated at the expense of others.

We know what God expects of us. It's clearly posted. And yet we exceed the limits on a daily basis. But we're good at justifying it. I wasn't being selfish. I just got a haircut and it makes me look so good you assume I'm selfish. Everyone else is demonizing the other political party, so I figured I'd just go with the flow and not worry about them being human beings, too. I'm feeling sick of all of this, and so I just keep mashing the folks around me. I don't know if that article was true, but it felt right so I posted it anyway. I know race relations are bad right now, but if the conditions really get worse then I'll be more cautious and pay more attention. I'm running late trying to get back to normal life, so I'm just going to speed through these pandemic precautions.

I think you get the idea. But God has no time for our explanations and excuses, for running out of oil or for widespread injustice. We know the expectations and God knows that we know. So try out your excuses on God; it will be like fleeing from a lion and being met by a bear.

So no: unlike, apparently, speed limits in Virginia, there is no wiggle room with God. There is no consequence-free sin, and no cheap grace. But there is grace. Think about 1 Thessalonians for a moment. This is the oldest book in the New Testament, the first thing to be written down. And these early Christians were worried because followers of Christ had started to die, but Christ had not yet returned. They were worried about dying; so Paul tells them that when Christ descends, the dead in Christ will be raised first – they'll be ok – and then we'll be raised with them, with Jesus, all of us together with the Lord forever. Encourage one another with these words.

We're dying, too. And not just mortally; our sin kills us from the inside out and the ramifications of our sins hurt and damage the people and the creation around us. But hear the good news: Christ will return, some day. Jesus will put an end to all suffering, including the suffering we cause because we ignore God's expectations. And while we wait, Jesus' teaching descends into our hearts. The Holy Spirit descends, meets us where we are, works on our hearts, opens our eyes to the posted expectations, teaches us to love God and one another, and shapes us to stop making excuses and to let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream – through us.

We know God's expectations for us and for our world. We know that we are to be actively waiting, flasks full, doing the Lord's work until he comes. We also know our limits, even if we don't always abide by them. But God's grace has no limits; it rolls down mightily and flows forever. "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those

who have died...and so we will be with the Lord for ever." May that day come with all possible speed, pedal to the metal; and may God steer our world and our work until it does. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY "Drawn to the Light"

Drawn to the Light



1 Peo - ple who walk in dark - ness have sought a light in the
2 How can we tell a heav - en from hell if ev - 'ry - one
3 Where is the sun? Oh, there will be none! The Lamb is the



heart of the dark - est night. Just when we thought all would be
dwells in the dark of night? Morn - ing dis - pels, gent - ly com -
one who is shin - ing bright, bids us to come! Life has be -



lost, we were drawn to the light of God.
pels, and we're drawn to the light of God.
gun when we're drawn to the light of God.

Refrain



Dawn is in sight! Gone is the night, drawn to the



light and the morn - ing. Glo - rious and bright, oh, what a



sight to be drawn to the light of God.

Text: John C. Ylvisaker, b. 1937
Music: LA CROSSE, John C. Ylvisaker
Text and music © 1990 John C. Ylvisaker.

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CREED

P: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need. *[Brief silence]*

A: Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer (especially). Hear us, O God.

A: Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation. Hear us, O God.

A: Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail (especially). Hear us, O God.

A: Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Hear us, O God.

A: Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Hear us, O God.

A: Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Hear us, O God.

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as we 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. Hear us, O God.

A: God of all families, you have given us families to be sanctuaries of blessing, comfort, and love for each other. Under your protection fill us with harmony, hope, and health. We pray this week for the Bradley-Combs, Buckholz, Carr families as well as our Messiah family. Guard all of our hearts that we may display love instead of hate, anger, or bitterness. Lead us all to be grateful for your abiding love and enable us to glorify you by sharing that love with others. Hear us, O God.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

C: *Amen*

SENDING SONG, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

O God, Our Help in Ages Past



1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,



our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
from ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all our years away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
still be our guard while troubles last
and our eternal home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS

Here are Pastor Ryan's office hours (posted below)! Dedicated drop-in hours (= Pastor Ryan is there if you want to drop in) will be: Tuesdays from 2-4:00 pm. Otherwise during posted hours he will either be in the office or making visits, but still in the area. Other times Pastor Ryan will be working from home (to help with his kids' distance learning), and will still be available via phone and email, which are: messiahmechpr@gmail.com and 507-360-7276. Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.

Pastor Ryan in the office - Tuesdays 1-5; Thursdays 1-5 and Fridays 9-3

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found, the annual Virginia Synod weekend retreat for youth in 7th and 8th grades and their adult advisors, will be DIGITAL this year! The event will take place via Zoom during four blocks of time on Nov. 20-21, 2020 (Friday 6 PM to Saturday 7:30 PM). For more information and to register for this year's event, visit <https://www.vasynod.org/event/lost-and-found/>.

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 \$2789 through November 1, 2020 (slightly down from \$2801 on October 25th).
- We are \$27,040.00 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$25,902.50 behind the budget the week prior).
- Weekly budget need is \$3404.00.

PASTOR WALTONEN MEMORIAL DONATION

Church Council would like to offer the opportunity for members to help Messiah honor Pastor Waltonen by making contributions to a designated fund in his name. Monies given to this fund will be sent by Messiah to the Lewy Body Dementia Association in honor of Pastor Tim. It is such a privilege for Messiah to honor this gentle giant of a man who was among us for 2 years (prior to Pastor Lou) as an interim pastor. When donating, please make any checks payable to Messiah and then designate your contribution to the "Pastor Waltonen Fund" and put it in the weekly offering plate by December 1, 2020.

FOSTER CHILDREN CHRISTMAS GIFTS

It is time to think of our Foster Children and Christmas gifts. This year is going to be different. After polling the families, they are asking for things they can do at home. The Social Ministry team decided that gift cards, which the families have suggested, are the best gifts. They will be able to purchase whatever they want or need. They are requesting cards from Walmart, Target, Amazon, Kroger or Food Lion. The cards need to be in the amount of \$25 each, in order for them to be distributed equally. If it is difficult for you to get to a store, you can give any amount of money to a Social Ministry member and we can add to or just purchase the card. Please drop them off during the month of November, the latest being Nov. 29th. There will be a decorated box, for the cards, at the door of the Fellowship Hall, where we will be worshipping. Also you can drop them off at the church office during the week. If you have any questions please call Sharon Addair, 543-9709. Other Social Ministry members are, Diane Absher, Marilyn Gunn, Sheila Whirley, and Debbie Walker. Thank you, for your generosity!

SMALL GROUPS

If you'd like to have a small group or committee meeting at the church, please check out the Small Group Meetings and Cleaning Protocols. You can contact Davina when wanting to schedule a time for your group to meet and get the latest protocols. 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 are also 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. Thanks for all you do! Stay well everyone!

NO ROOM AT THE INN

Experience A Thrill of Hope In this year of fear and struggle we need the hope and joy of Christmas. Our 13th annual No Room at the Inn will be a virtual event with a live online Preview Gala on Friday December 4th, 2020. The virtual Nativity Exhibit will be available online through Christmas. Funds raised will be shared with My Path Forward, MCEF's emergency housing assistance program, and AFAL in Haiti building modest homes for their neediest families. Visit churchredeemer.org/no-room or call 730-7980 for details. Like and Share us on Facebook by searching for us on Facebook at No Room at the Inn Mechanicsville VA.

WEBSITE CHANGE

A new tab has been added to our church website entitled "E-Messages". Under this tab you will find links to Bible Study Handouts, weekly Sunday Bulletins, and the monthly Messenger. Hope you find this change helpful when you're looking for these items.

VIRTUAL THANKOFFERING SERVICE

The **Virginia Synodical Women's Organization (VSWO)** is very excited to announce that they will be hosting a virtual Thankoffering Service on Saturday November 21st beginning at 10 AM. Thankofferings are a long-standing custom among Lutheran women, to show gratitude for God's blessings and give an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. This year's VSWO event will be using the *Light the Way for Justice, Light the Way for Love* Thankoffering service. Lisa Plorin, the Women of ELCA president will join to deliver the sermon. In addition, before the service the VSWO will host breakout room opportunity. This will allow for time to reconnect and share with each other, since the organization has not been able to meet in person and connect as a community this year. The event will be hosted on Zoom, with registration required to join. To register for the event, please check out the [VSWO Facebook page](#).

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE: HURRICANES AND CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Following the devastation caused by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, as well as the impact of wildfires across California and the Northwest, Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) is responding. You can help LDR as they assist the communities who have been impacted by these natural disasters, through prayer and giving through [Lutheran Disaster Relief](#). Your gifts designated for "[Hurricane Response](#)" or "[U.S. Wildfires](#)" will be used entirely (100%) for direct response until it is complete. Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes or wildfires.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT – COMING BACK

We're continuing the getting-back-together process. Small groups have already been meeting, and now we're making the first go and worshipping inside together again. As we come back together in person, we also encourage you, prayerfully and as you are able, to come back in your giving, too. Thank you for the generosity you have already shown through these difficult times! 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. Thank you!

UPDATED: REBUILD RVA GRANT PROGRAM

On October 28, the Governor's Office released information about an expansion of the Rebuild Virginia Grants. The grants are available to small businesses and non-profits. Unlike the last time round of Rebuild Virginia grants, the expansion specifically says that an organization can receive funding even if the organization received CARES Act Funding. Qualified recipients can receive a grant of up to three months' worth of expenses to help with salaries, mortgage, utilities, etc. The FAQs aren't as entirely clear, but when you combine the FAQs with the application guide (pg 4 in particular addresses what is excluded for those with CARES Act funding), it appears that most organizations in Virginia are eligible. This funding may prove particularly helpful for child care and preschool ministries that had issues with part-time employees and PPP Loan calculations. One potential hurdle for an application is the requirement for a DUNS number. The DUNS numbers appear to be standard practice in the for-profit world and almost unheard of in the non-profit world. It is possible for a church or non-profit to apply for a DUNS number, but the online process to get the number can be confusing.

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.