

The

# MESSENGER



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

DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021



## Council Highlights

Messiah Church Council met for a regular monthly council meeting on 11/17/20. The following are highlights of the meetings.

- **Pastor Ryan** reported on the Congregational Life of the Church stating that he has held two memorial services (**JoAn Firebaugh** and **John Cline**). We have started our in-person worship services. Pastor has one more 1<sup>st</sup> communion class and he will have one all-catechism class before the two young people who are in high school will be ready for their confirmation. The rest of the young people in confirmation class will have a two-year study program before their confirmation. Pastor is looking at our Advent and Christmas Eve services and how to participate in them with the up tick in COVID-19 cases. Pastor would also like to move to Facebook Live in the future when our internet can support it.
- The Treasurer’s Report revealed that we are still behind our annual budget needs but are not as far behind in our income vs. actual expenses. The Financial Secretary reported that our giving to date is about \$7,000 behind our last year’s and we are about \$25,000 behind our annual budget needs. There was discussion about not using

VANCO for automatic giving since it costs the church quite a bit. Members could set up automatic payment with their personal banks that would not cost the church anything.

- Council appreciated **Daren Williams’** volunteering to take over changing the church sign facing the road. We will all miss the dedication **John Cline** had as our “sign guy.”
- Social Ministry Team needs to have all gift cards turned in by the end of the month for the foster children’s Christmas.
- The nominating committee was appointed: **Donna Combs, Marilyn Gunn, Valerie Williams and James Anderson**. They will be working to fill the two-year council

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### *The Messenger*

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## Your 2020 Church Council And Associate Members

**James Anderson** ..... Council President  
**Donna Shaw** ..... Vice-President  
**Karen Morris** ..... Secretary

**Becky Collie** **Anita Philp**  
**Roger Schroeder** **Diana Sondor**

### Council Liaisons

Christian Formation ..... **Donna Shaw**  
 Finance ..... **James Anderson**  
 Property ..... **Roger Schroeder**  
 Social Ministry ..... **Anita Philp**  
 Stewardship ..... **Diana Sondor**  
 Worship ..... **Karen Morris**

**Shawn Warmbrod** ..... Treasurer  
**Bill Weaver** ..... Financial Secretary  
**Sue Gilnett, RN**... Parish Nurse

## Highlights

### Continued from page 1

- member positions that will be on the ballot for our Annual Congregational meeting in December.
- There is no date yet for the internet service change although the order has been put in to Comcast to install our new service.
- Council would like to show our appreciation to **Scott Shaw** (Donna Shaw's son) who has been helping us with our having digital services during this COVID time.
- Council approved the 2021 budget that will be presented to the congregation at our annual congregational meeting in December
- Since there will be no Thanksgiving community service this year, **Pastor Ryan** will make his Wednesday video a Thanksgiving service.
- With COVID cases spiking, the decision was made to return to drive-in services only for now, including our Annual Congregational meeting.
- We will be completing our Sunday School Global Barnyard project that was begun in the Fall of 2019. (See related article on Page 5)

- **Karen Morris**  
 Church Council Secretary



Pastor's message

## Faith ponderings

Some folks say that you should never ask questions about your faith. That questions are a sign of doubt, or weakness, or a lack of faith. To that I say: bah, humbug.

Questions mean that your faith is growing and living and seeking and deepening. Doubts mean that you haven't given up on your faith, but have good wonderings that you want to learn from. Curiosity means you're open to learning and more and being shaped by what you learn. Questions are a good thing.

The season of Advent is about waiting and watching and being prepared for Christ to return. We trust in the promised return because the promise for Jesus to come in the first place was trustworthy. But while we wait and watch and prepare, it's easy to have questions: when? How long, O Lord? Why are all these bad things happening? Why let people suffer – why not come back now?

Questions can lead to things getting heavy pretty fast.

I wonder if you have questions? Questions about faith, about church, about the Bible, about God... Questions about why things are the way they are right now, and when things will get better, and what God is up to in the midst of all of this. I know I do.

I would like to hear your questions. Your questions will be the basis for our Midweek Messages through the season of Advent. Let's call them "Faith Ponderings." Each week I'll try to address one or more of the Faith Ponderings that you share. I invite you to email me any question you have about faith, or how faith intersects with some aspect of life. No question or pondering is off limits! My favorite example of a fun question is, "Did Adam and Even have

belly buttons?" (Think about it.) Your pondering can be academic or spiritual (not that those things are opposites), light and breezy or more on the weighty side. Whatever it is you are carrying, we'll talk about it.

Thank you in advance for your ponderings, and for your faith to share them. I look forward to the conversations to come.

Peace,

**Pastor Ryan**

messiahmechpr@gmail.com

## Pastor Ryan's office hours

**Pastor Ryan is in the office:**

**Tuesdays 1-5**

**Thursdays 1-5**

**Fridays 9-3**

Dedicated **drop-in hours** (Pastor Ryan is there, if you want to drop in) will be:

**Tuesdays from 2-4 pm**

Otherwise, during posted hours, he will 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:

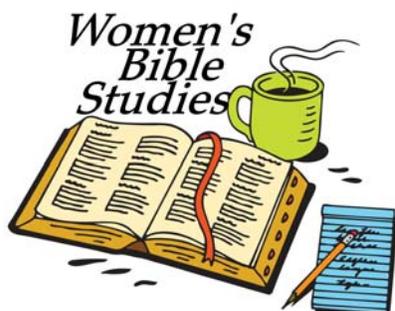
messiahmechpr@gmail.com

And

507-360-7276

Pastor Ryan's day off is Monday.





Women's Bible Study will meet on December 9th, at 6:30pm only during the month of December. We will be starting a new study (to be determined) in 2021!

In January we will be meeting on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month (the 13th and 27th) at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall.

Please be sure to bring your own chair and mask. For any questions please contact **Valerie Williams** at [vswilliams2005@gmail.com](mailto:vswilliams2005@gmail.com)



**The Collie family** would like to thank Pastor Ryan and our dear church family for all of your support, prayers, love, cards and virtual hugs during my mother's illness and passing. We literally have been "held up" by all of you. We are so very blessed. Thank you!

**Becky, Johnnie, Taylor and Patrick**

### December 2020

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	31		

- 6 10:45 am Messiah worship \*  
12 noon Business meeting  
Following worship  
6:30 pm Women's Bible study
- 13 10:45 am Messiah worship \*  
12 noon Alternate date for Business Meeting
- 15 6:15 pm Church Council meeting
- 20 10:45 am Messiah worship \*  
MCEF food collection
- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE  
Church office closed
- 25 Secretary on vacation  
through 12/31/20
- 26 10:45 am Messiah worship \*

### January 2021

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
31						

- 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
- 3 10:45 am Messiah worship \*
- 10 10:45 am Messiah worship \*
- 13 6:30 pm Women's Bible study
- 17 10:45 am Messiah worship \*
- 19 Church Council meeting
- 24 10:45 am Messiah worship \*  
Annual Reporting Meeting  
following worship
- 27 6:30 pm Women's Bible study
- 31 10:45 am Messiah worship \*  
Annual Reporting Meeting (SNOW DATE)

## DECEMBER

Birthdays

- 10 **Gordon Gunn**  
 14 **Curtis Pfohl**  
 16 **Marilyn Gunn**  
 16 **John Terry**  
 26 **Gary Krupa**  
 30 **Kyle Schroeder**

## DECEMBER

Anniversaries

- 9 **Curt & Charlene Glatfelter**

## JANUARY

Birthdays

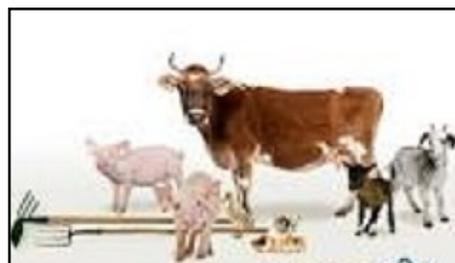
- 4 **Karen Umberger**  
 11 **Erna Jung**  
 14 **Max Williams**  
 15 **Grayson Starret**  
 22 **Bill Hatfield**  
 31 **Mary Grace Delph**

If you would like **YOUR** birthdays & anniversary included in the newsletter, please send an email to [messiahmech@gmail.com](mailto:messiahmech@gmail.com) or call **Davina** (746-7134).



**The Advent wreath** is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus' birth. The wreath's circular shape sym-

bolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.



## Global Barnyard project continues!

As you might remember, during last year's Sunday School, we were collecting money for Global Barnyard through the ELCA. Since the project was halted in March due to the virus, we'd like to finish what we started!

Your role is to find those Piggy Banks' you were filling up, continue to add to them, and then bring them to church by Dec. 20. There are still some banks left if you want to get one some Sunday when you're at church (we can have an usher bring one to you).

Also, between now and Dec. 20, be on the lookout for a short survey from Survey Monkey that will be used to help decide what will be bought with our collection. You should expect to see the survey in the next week or so.

Right now, there is \$175.79 in our Global Barnyard Fund. Let's see how merry we can make someone's Christmas in another part of the world! Thank you for your participation in completing what we started!

If you have any questions, please contact **Donna Shaw**, [dmslaw70@gmail.com](mailto:dmslaw70@gmail.com).





## We pray for each other:

**Debbie Anton; Johnnie Collier; Kenneth Deere; Wendy DeGraff; Adam Dworak, Sr.; Bonnie Dworak; Ted Ford; Bill Fulop; Steve Gilnett; "Doc" Kondaki; Mac McAllister; Ruth Schroeder; Judy Schwerdtfeger.**

## We pray for our extended family and neighbors:

**The Allen Family**, relatives of the Whirleys; **Andrea, Keith, and Cam** (ill with COVID 19); **Bonnie Altobelli**, sister of Brenda Laveck; **Kathy Fleming**, cousin of Judy Schwerdtfeger; **Michael Morin**, son of Sally & Charlie Bennett; **Christina Nibali**, sister of Anita Philp; **Pat Ruffner**, friend of the Whirleys; **Dee Schroeder**, sister-in-law of Roger; **Tim Schroeder**, Roger's nephew; **Hunter Townsend**, friend of the Whirleys; **Billy Vaughan**, uncle of Charlie Schwerdtfeger.

**Pastor Ryan**, as he begins his journey with us;  
**Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families, All law enforcement, firefighters and 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; Those affected**

**by fires and hurricanes; For all who travel;  
 All those persecuted in any way for their faith in Christ, especially in Colombia, Oman, Kuwait, Kenya, Bhutan, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, Cameroon, Indonesia, and Niger.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Open Doors World WatchList 2020  
<http://www.opendoorsusa.org>

*To add or remove a name from the prayer list, please call the church office, 746-7134. If leaving a message, include your contact information for follow-up. Unless we hear otherwise, individuals will be removed quarterly.*



Our brother in Christ, **John Cline**, aka "The Sign Man," went to his heavenly home on October 27th.

John's inspiring and often amusing sign sayings were a clue to his quiet humor. He was also a valued member of the church council, as well as an enthusiastic member of the church cleaning team.

Please remember his wife **Rosalee** and their family and friends in your prayers, as we all mourn his passing.



## News and updates

MCEF is open and functioning as normally as possible taking all necessary precautions for clients and volunteers that are required. Clients are now receiving a Thanksgiving/Holiday bag of food on their visit for regular items. During the month of October 129 families were provided with 230 bags of food, 89 bags of clothing and 14 bags of linens (towels and sheets). Senior rides provided 79 rides to seniors for medical appointments and necessary services.

Advisory Board meetings will begin monthly on December 14 at Walnut Grove Baptist Church, 7:00 p.m., masks required.

- Current food needs include condiments-ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, pancake mix and syrup and canned soups.
- Clothing needs include women's underwear, larger size tops, mens jeans in smaller sizes, double, queen and king sheet sets, towels and washcloths.
- FunRaiser: Chicken Salad Chick on Mechanicsville Turnpike near Publix, 3rd Monday of every month, mention that you support MCEF and 10% of the sale goes to MCEF.

Follow MCEF on Facebook or 4mcef.com for more information. Both updated monthly.

Volunteer positions are available, applications on website.

- Gladys Hubert



## SMILE!

### Messiah receives .5% donation when you shop on Amazon!

This holiday season, online holiday shopping is expected to increase over 33% more than last year. More people will be browsing Amazon this year more than ever. With the shopping season among us, the Stewardship team would like to remind everyone to sign up for Amazon Smile! Signing up is easy and does not interfere with Prime Membership benefits. Amazon donates .5% of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

Step 1: Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

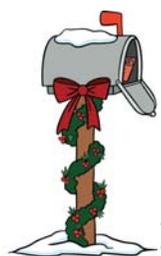
Step 2: Sign in with your amazon account credentials

Step 3: Search for "Messiah Lutheran Church Mechanicsville"

Step 4: Start SHOPPING! \*please remember to bookmark [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) for easy access every time you shop. (You MUST add the "smile" for this program to benefit Messiah.)

Thank you all and happy shopping!





## CFFY : Advent activities for the entire family

**As you begin to plan for Advent which begins on November 29, please look at the following movies, books, and activities. It is hoped that you find them a helpful resource as we begin the season of wonder! -Donna Shaw**

### Movies:

- *The Nativity Story* (2006) is a beautifully made, highly authentic film about the birth of Jesus Christ. The film has received the highest rating (5) for ages 12+ from The Dove Foundation and is sure to remain a family Christmas classic for years to come.
- *The Ultimate Gift* (2007) is about an extremely wise and wealthy grandfather (Red) who gives his shallow, spoiled grandson the ultimate inheritance. Twelve tasks, "gifts," each challenge the grandson in an improbable way, the accumulation of which would change him forever. This movie is the "Ultimate Gift" for family members ages twelve and above.
- *Chasing the Star* (2017) is based on a historical fiction account of three Wise Men, or Magi, who are on a mission to find and worship the Messiah. Through their personal struggles, challenging journey, and life-altering spiritual transformation, the three Magi encounter their true purpose in life. The film has received a 5 rating by The Dove Foundation for faith and integrity.

### Books:

- *Hallelujah: A Journey through Advent with Handel's Messiah*, by Cindy Rollins, celebrates Advent like never before, using weekly and daily tools, all built around Handel's famous "Messiah" - one of the most lovely and

important pieces of music ever composed. Included in this handbook: Daily Guide to Listening to Handel's Messiah, Daily Scripture Readings, Poems & Passages to Memorize Each Week, Christmas Recipes, and Advent Hymns to Sing Together. Received a 4.5 from Goodreads.

- *Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study* by Walter Brueggemann offers four succinct reflections on the mighty and beautiful royal names of the awaited Messiah found in Isaiah 9:6. After the four messages there is a study guide, with thoughtful reflection questions for each of the four chapters.
- *The Advent Jesse Tree: Devotions for Children and Adults to Prepare for the Coming of the Christ Child at Christmas* offers 25 devotions for each day from December 1st to December 25th, Christmas Day. These daily Advent devotions are written in two versions (one for children and one for adults) including a scripture, a story and commentary, questions to ask, a prayer, and a song.

### Activities:

- Bake a Loaf of Stollen: This traditional Christmas bread, with a line down the middle or side, symbolizes the infant Jesus wrapped up snug in swaddling clothes. Go to <https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/christmas-stollen-recipe> for the recipe.
- Create a Birth of Jesus Story Picture Book: Invite your children to create a picture book of their own that tells the birth story of Jesus. Use a children's Bible or a Gospel account to help them remember all the parts to include.
- Make a Kindness Advent Calendar: Cut 6 pieces of construction paper into 22 strips, each strip measuring 2.25" x 12". (This is a piece of construction paper cut in fourths along the long edge.)

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**CFFY****Continued from page 8**

- On each strip write a kind act after brainstorming ideas with the kids. Once all 22 strips have an act of kindness written upon it, staple the first one into a circle. From there, loop the next piece of paper around the last loop and staple it to create a chain. Each day of Advent tear off one ring and read it together. Later, if there's been an opportunity to do the act of kindness, discuss with the kids what it was like.



## History of the Song “The Twelve Days of Christmas”

There are widely circulated claims that the “true love” of the song refers to God and that each verse represents a point of Christian doctrine. Look below to find the verse, doctrine, and an activity that can be done on any day during the Christmas Season and beyond!

**Day 1 (Dec. 25) Partridge in a Pear Tree (Jesus)** – save some presents to open on the other days of the Christmas Season

**Day 2 (Dec. 26) 2 Turtle Doves (The Old and New Testaments)** – leave your stockings up throughout the season to leave notes or small gifts for others

**Day 3 (Dec. 27) 3 French Hens (Faith, Hope and Love)** – Move the Wise Men...if you have movable pieces to your nativity set, begin moving the Wise Men closer to the crèche

**Day 4 (Dec. 28) 4 Calling Birds (The Four**

**Gospels or the Four Evangelists)** – read aloud a special family book, maybe “A Christmas Carol” or “Gift of the Magi”

**Day 5 (Dec. 29) 5 Golden Rings (The First Five Books of the Old Testament, the “Pentateuch”)** – have a Christmas for animals by making birdfeeders, stringing popcorn outdoors

**Day 6 (Dec. 30) 6 Geese A-Laying (The Six Days of Creation)** – make easy scarves and hats for the homeless by using these directions: <https://www.maryhaseltine.com/2012/12/intentional-advent-sheltering-homeless.html>

**Day 7 (Dec. 31) 7 Swans A-Swimming (The Seventh Day is the Sabbath Day)** – Dec. 31 – save a Christmas movie to watch tonight

**Day 8 (Jan. 1) 8 Maids A-Milking (The Eight Beatitudes)** – put together blessing bags to keep in the car for the needy

**Day 9 (Jan. 2) 9 Ladies Dancing (The Nine Fruits of the Spirit)** – Keep saying Merry Christmas!

**Day 10 (Jan. 3) 10 Lords A-Leaping (The Ten Commandments)** – Keep candles lit during meals and throughout the day (use up the rest of those Advent candles!)

**Day 11 (Jan. 4) 11 Pipers Piping (The Eleven Faithful Apostles)** – Leave up your tree and keep the music playing until the end of Epiphany which is the day before Lent begins

**Day 12 (Jan. 5) 12 Drummers Drumming (The Twelve Points of Doctrine in the Apostles Creed)** – Keep praying like its Christmas. Spend time each day before our Lord in the manger, remembering, thinking, praying, meditating on the amazing reality that is Christmas

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## 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. The 13th annual No Room at the Inn will be a virtual event with a live online Preview Gala on Friday, Dec. 4th. 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](http://churchredeemer.org/no-room) or call 730-7980 for details. Search for us on Facebook at No Room at the Inn Mechanicsville VA.

The DEADLINE for the  
**February 2021**  
edition of *The Messenger* is  
**Sunday, January 17, 2021**

Please call **Susie Weaver** with your submission, hand me a written submission OR email [susiew51@comcast.net](mailto:susiew51@comcast.net)



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