

*Messiah Lutheran Church  
Mechanicsville, Virginia*



*December 6, 2020  
Second Sunday of Advent*

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

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

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(December 6, 2020)

For video go to: <https://messiahmech.com/messiah-digital/>

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome visitors! May the Spirit of Christ fill your heart as we worship today.  
You are invited to make Messiah your church home.

### \*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**C: Amen**

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

P: Loving and forgiving God,

**C: we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

P: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free— free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, ☩ comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### GATHERING HYMN      The King Shall Come



## THE GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: *And also with you.***

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray:

**C: *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen***

## FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-11

Lector

A reading from Isaiah.

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;

but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND LESSON: 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

**Lector**

A reading from 2 Peter.

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **\*THE GOSPEL READING**

Mark 1:1-8

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’ ”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

## **SERMON: PASTOR RYAN RADTKE**

This past week there was a construction crew from Comcast working out on Atlee Road, burying some cable on their way to the church so we can have some better internet capabilities (so, stay tuned for new online stuff from Messiah in the new year!). They had the right-turn lane closed off with cones as they were doing their work. Nothing too serious, but always kind of fun to watch a crew at work with all of their equipment and trucks and tools.

Have you ever seen an entire road being built? Not just repairs or resurfacing, but making a street from scratch? There's a lot of planning that goes into it, a lot of specialized equipment, a big work crew, and lots of steps before it's done. I'm no expert, but I learned a lot about it from this book we read to our kids when they were really young, called *Easy Street*, by Rita Gray and illustrated by Mary Bono. For those of you reading this sermon, the book's art is sort of 3-D, with little clay people and lots of little trucks and other rigs.

The book walks you through every step of building a road, from the survey crew at the beginning to painting lines and hanging signs at the end. And in the middle are all the various steps of smoothing and asphalt and paving and flattening. In fact, that's the refrain, with a whole series of steamrollers: “Roll, it, roll it, wheels so fat. Roll it down to make it flat.”

Now take that basic street and put it in a mountain. Have you ever driven through a pass where the rock was sheered off with dynamite to make a flat lane for a road to go in? Have you ever driven on a bridge, or through a tunnel? There's a lot of work that goes into making just an "Easy Street"; multiply that by increasing degrees of difficulty as you go up into mountains or down into valleys or any other obstacle and try to make a usable road.

In today's Advent lessons, we're asked to be road-builders. Prepare the way. Make the paths straight. Cry out in the middle of the wilderness that there's a new highway, a new thoroughfare from God, to God, for God. "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain." And when the building project, the construction, is done, "Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together."

That's what John the Baptist was all about. He was the messenger, the supervisor of the road crew, the foreman for the construction of the smooth and open highway. But instead of steamrollers and survey crews, John's equipment consists of symbols and a river and the promise of God. He wasn't lowering literal mountains or raising actual valleys; but through a baptism of repentance he was leveling the uneven ground of sin and smoothing the rough places in people's hearts. How do you prepare the way for the Lord? Through repentance and baptism. That was the road John was constructing, the straight path of God, there in the wilderness.

As a group of twenty-first century American Christians sitting in your homes or in your cars for this time of worship, you might not realize: everything about John the Baptist is chock full of symbolism. His wardrobe and diet call to mind the prophet Elijah, whom the Jews expected to return in advance of the Messiah's arrival. He's operating out in the wilderness, the realm of wandering, the zone of chaos, the anteroom to the Promised Land when God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom. And he doesn't baptize with just any water; he baptizes in the river Jordan, the last threshold to the Promised Land, where the water was parted to make a straight and smooth path, where rocks were removed not just to make the ground level but to build memorials to God's salvation and goodness.

John was the supervisor of the road crew; and with symbols and a river and the promise of God he called people out onto this new road, to a baptism of repentance to make the path to and from God straight and smooth. John was the baptizer, at the threshold of the Promised Land, in the middle of the wilderness, to cry out to the people like a herald of good tidings: "Here is your God!"

John prepared the way for Jesus, the one more powerful than him. John prepared the way back from sin, back from exile, back from slavery, to tenderly comfort, O comfort, the people. John knew what the prophet Isaiah said, that the people were deficient in constancy, fading like flowers, withering like grass. He knew that they would need a straight path and a new highway in their hearts to find their way back to God and to remove all obstacles for God to reach them. John knew that as inconstant as the people were, that God, the Word of God, the promises of God, were forever. John knew that Jesus was coming, the Messiah was coming, the Savior was coming, the one who would baptize not just with water, but with the Holy Spirit.

John prepared the way for Jesus. John prepared the way back *from* sin and slavery and exile, and prepared the way *to* life. John prepared the way, and Jesus was the Way – the way, the truth and the life. For the wilderness wanderers, the pathless, the faithless, the sinners, the inconstant, all those in need of repentance, John prepared the way. Back *from* sin. Open *to* life. And as Isaiah promised, “The Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.”

The might of Jesus was his love and sacrifice; his ruling arm is lovingly marred with the wounds of the nails of the cross. His reward is grace and salvation. His recompense is not punishment, but new life and reconciliation. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. And John, in the wilderness, in the Jordan, in the garments of rich symbolism and in the baptism of repentance, prepared the way.

It's been a long time on the road, waiting for Jesus to come again. We've been walking and watching and waiting for a long time. But when God levels the paths, God also levels the time: with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 2 Peter says that the long wait is just God's patient way of giving more people time to come to that same repentance John the Baptist is talking about. And while we wait, while we walk the now-straightened path, we are encouraged to live lives of holiness and godliness and in so doing hasten the coming of the day of God. A watched Messiah never boils, or something like that. We are encouraged: “beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found at peace.”

This is all very well and good. I played human decoder ring with the symbolism surrounding John the Baptist. I told you all about how the road in the wilderness and the level and straight path are about repentance and forgiveness from Jesus, the Way. I told you that God wants us to live holy lives while we walk this new road, while we wait. Great. Awesome. So what? In

good Lutheran fashion, “What does this mean?” What does this have to do with your lives?

It means that you have to strive to be found at peace. Seems like a contradiction, I know. It means that you cry out to everyone...that you have found peace from God. It means that you heed the call of the John the Baptists in your life, and repent of your sins and the injuries you cause, every special season of Advent, every day, every hour if need be, all the time; while at the same time you also function as a John the Baptist, calling others to repent with gentle honesty and tender transparency, helping to prepare the way for them. You are open to God's way-making while you yourself are working on the road crew for others.

The church, like John the Baptist, is chock full of symbols. Some of them are in the stained-glass windows or in the wardrobe I wear or in the diet we eat every time we share Communion, like Max, and Dean, and Allen will for the first time today. Some of the symbols are you and me: forgiven sinners all over the place, members of the construction crew who are simultaneously under construction. All of us confessing and crying out and giving thanks that the way *from* sin has been opened for us, and the way *to* the shepherd is likewise level and clear.

We walk the path as best we can, and we strive to be found at peace. We strive to live lives of holiness and godliness so that the coming of the kingdom of God is hastened, and peace permeates from our gatherings and prevails in more and more hearts.

I'd like to leave you today with one “don't” and one “do.” Don't: be a roadblock. Be prepared *by* God, and prepare the way for others. Also: don't be afraid. Do: be visible. Be heard. Cry out and wear the wardrobe of forgiveness with the crumbs and stains of your diet of grace plain to see. Be as bold as John the Baptist, and as gentle as the shepherd cradling lambs. Be the herald of good tidings, proclaiming in word and deed and with every step along the way: “Here is your God!” Alleluia and amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY      All Earth Is Hopeful  
*Toda la tierra*



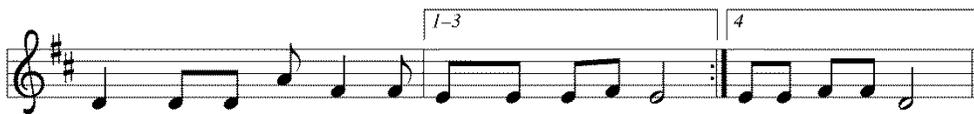
To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor  
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!  
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell;  
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;  
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el  
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the  
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -  
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most  
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -  
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how  
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -  
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All  
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.  
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.  
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.  
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!  
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:*      3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*  
*"De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel,"*      *nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.*  
*será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será,*      *Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,*  
*con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.*      *y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.*

4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*  
*pero en el mundo está presente hoy.*  
*Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;*  
*y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.*

## CREED

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

A: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need. [*Brief silence*]

A: Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God

**C: *Your mercy is great***

A: Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God

**C: *Your mercy is great***

A: Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. We pray especially for . . . (current local, national, or international issues of peace or justice may be named). Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God

**C: *Your mercy is great***

A: Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst.

Hear us, O God

**C: Your mercy is great**

A: Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God

**C: Your mercy is great**

A: Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work (especially Nicholas of Myra). Make their generous lives an example for all. 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: 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 Ewing and Ford 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

**C: Your mercy is great**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: 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**

**He Came Down**



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;  
 he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.  
 he came down that we may have peace;  
 he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional  
 Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

# *Announcements*

## **PASTOR RYAN'S OFFICE HOURS**

Here are Pastor Ryan's office hours for this week (posted below)! Pastor Ryan is also available via phone and email, which are: messiahmechpr@gmail.com and 507-360-7276.

### **Pastor Ryan hours:**

Tuesday: 1-5 pm (*drop-in 2-4 pm*) / Wednesday: 9-2 pm / Thursday: 1-5 pm

## **FIRST COMMUNION**

We celebrate today with Max Williams, Dean Anderson, and Allen Anderson, as they receive their First Communion. They have completed their preparations and have a good understanding of all the grace God provides in this meal. We look forward to a "second first" Communion once we can come back inside the building. No matter what, God blesses us!

## **ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING- TODAY**

The Annual Business Meeting for Messiah Lutheran Church will be held drive-in style in the parking lot following today's worship service. We will be voting on the 2021 budget and electing council members.

## **CORNUCOPIA OF PRAYERS**

If you would like your name to be a part of this year's (virtual) Cornucopia of Prayers, please let the church office know as soon as possible. We'll let you know who you get to pray for in the year to come, and someone will be praying for you, too.

## **ADVENT MIDWEEK MESSAGES**

Please email in your "Faith Ponderings" to Pastor Ryan. A Faith Pondering is any question or wonderment or curiosity you have about the Church, the Bible, Lutheranism, or faith in general. Your questions will be the basis of the Midweek Messages in Advent. Thanks in advance!

### **WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE**

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

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$2,750 through November 29, 2020 (slightly down from \$2,783 on November 22).
- We are \$\$31,381.00 behind the year-to-date budget needs (increasing from \$29,197.00 behind the budget the week prior).
- Weekly budget need is \$3404.00.

### **FUNRAISER FOR MCEF**

The third Monday of each month from 4 to 8 p.m. at Chicken Salad Chick, mention that you support MCEF and 10% of sale will be donated to MCEF. It is located at 6575 Mechanicsville Turnpike, Brandy Creek Commons. Available for drive-through, carry out, curbside pick-up or eat in. A large variety of chicken salads and more on the menu.

### **YOU CAN STILL CONTRIBUTE!**

For those wishing to contribute to the memorial fund for Pastor Waltonen...you still can! Please make your check out to Messiah with Pastor Waltonen written on the memo line. We will take donations up through Dec. 6. After that time, we will send the monies collected to the Lewey Body Dementia Association in his memory. Help us honor this gentle man who helped Messiah become the church it is today.

### **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](http://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.

## **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](http://messiahmech.com) for more details. Thanks!

## **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](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/rmrp).

## **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](http://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](http://smile.amazon.com) for easy access every time you shop. You must add the "smile" for this program.

Thank you all and happy shopping!

## **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), 804-205-2943.