

# “Messiah Messenger”

Issue #29

September 2025

## PATIENCE: MORE THAN JUST A TEST DRIVE

God's blessings be with you and your families as we finally begin to inch towards Fall and cooler weather here in Valdosta! As many of you have noticed, I finally got a new truck! No more orange strap holding the hood down in my Jeep Wrangler, and I have to say, I'm loving having a new car. But it didn't happen overnight; in fact, I've had seven different used cars before this one, and this is the first one to have under 75,000 miles on it! That's not to say that I haven't wanted a new car, but it's only now that everything has worked out to make it possible.

And over 19 years of having well-used cars and all the associated maintenance, breakdowns, and straight frustration that can come with them, I've learned one thing: Patience is more than a virtue; it's a gift from God.

If you've ever tried to be patient, then you know it's not easy. Patience only asks us to do one thing, but that one thing is something humans are just plain not good at: wait and wait in peace.

No one likes to wait, not for anything! Good or bad, we prefer to have it now. Being forced to wait, to be patient, doesn't normally come with peace. Instead, it usually comes with worry and anxiousness, even frustration, while we seemingly sit in limbo waiting for a change. But Jesus tells us clearly in Luke 12:25-26, 31 that worry and anxiousness do nothing for us:

*“And who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very thing, why do you worry about the rest?”*

*...Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”*

Jesus is telling us that true patience comes with peace, and that patience and peace come with trusting and relying upon our Father completely. We must look past our sinful selves and desires

and depend on another, something that also doesn't come naturally to us. But God's faithfulness far exceeds our needs.

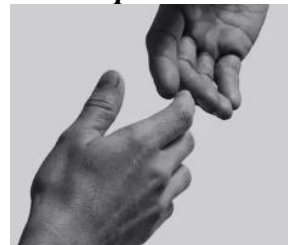
Even when we fail, when we worry and get anxious, when we struggle to be patient, God never stops being patient with us. He provides for all our needs and gives His gifts in abundance, because we are His children and He loves us. God has work for us to do in His kingdom, and when we do His work and seek His kingdom, everything else falls into place.

Take all the cars I've had over the years, for example. Between all the maintenance and repairs, time and money I had to spend keeping them going, I was worried, anxious, and frustrated far more often than I was patient. But I always had a car that ran when I needed it to, even if it meant asking someone else, like my parents, for help. And that is the key to patience: reaching outside ourselves to ask for help when the worry, anxiousness, and frustration threaten to overwhelm us.

God never leaves us to wait alone; He gives us each other and our family and our friends to lean on and rely upon, and most of all, He gives Himself and His son, Jesus Christ, through whom we receive all that we need and more in abundance, that we might spread God's gifts of patience and peace, of forgiveness and salvation, of life itself, to anyone and everyone we meet.

***God's peace and mercy, and love be upon you  
all this September,***

***Pastor Stephen Wareham***



**COUNTING BLESSINGS AND VOTES!**  
**BUDGET PASSED: MISSION ON TRACK!**

*President*

Greetings Messiah Family,

Sunday, August 24, 2025, Messiah Lutheran voted on a new budget for the 2025-2026 budget year. This new budget will be in effect September 1, 2025! Yea! It passed!

A big thank you to Wendy Aichele and James Edmonson for collecting the ballots and counting the votes.

Ken did a fantastic job crunching the numbers and developed a budget that reflects the real costs the church is facing. His ability to forecast the church's financial needs, plus oversee the investment and savings accounts, has ensured the church makes the most of our interest earnings and dividends. Ken likes to refer to his decisions as "cautious", but I see them as prudent and pragmatic decisions, designed to maintain our church so she can continue her work to the glory of God. Thank you, Ken, for your faithful stewardship!

To all the church members who remained to participate in the congregational meeting, you are appreciated. Each member has a voice at Messiah Lutheran Church; these meetings allow your voice to be heard. Moreover, your participation in the meetings contributes to Messiah Lutheran Church's mission of bringing God's Word to our community and beyond!

*In Christ,*  
*Connie DiMarco*



**NOTES FROM THE TREASURER**

*Treasurer*

A congregational meeting was held on August 24<sup>th</sup> to vote on the budget, which was approved. If you would like an electronic or paper copy, let me know at

[MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com), and I will make sure you get one. After the first of September, I will begin working on the end-of-year reports and publish them as quickly as possible. As a reminder, I am a Georgia Notary Public. I do not charge for this service.

If you are a fan of Zelle giving, our Zelle account can be found under [MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com).

For an easy giving method, I encourage you to take a look at the Thrivent Messiah Lutheran page at <https://service.thrivent.com/apps/ThriventChoiceMemberWeb/public/orgDetails/100244343209>



Give Online to Messiah!  
Scan code with your  
phone & follow  
directions.

Every Saturday morning, I send out a snapshot financial report to anyone who has an interest in seeing it. If you would like to receive it, just drop me an email at [MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:MessiahVLDtreasurer@gmail.com).

**GOOD FOOD, GREAT COMPANY,**  
**& JOYFUL NOISE!**

*Kathy*

This month's Joyful Noise Luncheon is set for Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 AM, and we're gathering at Olive Garden (1315 N. St. Augustine Rd.) to celebrate our Messiah Family with Joyful Noise.

It's a great chance to laugh, catch up, and spend some time together.

Please let Kathy know if you'll be there.  
**Can't wait to see you!**

**SUNDAY SMILES NEEDED:**  
**LEND A HAND, LIGHT THE WAY**

***Worship Chair***

Hello Messiah family, **Are You Called to Serve... with a Smile (and Maybe a Bulletin)?** Do you enjoy friendly faces, helpful hands, and the occasional potluck? Have we got *just* the opportunity for you!

We are looking for joyful souls to help fill a few important roles on Sunday mornings. Whether you are an early riser or a “grin and coffee it” kind of person, there’s a place for you.

- **Greeters:** Be the first friendly face folks see when they enter the Narthex. Smiles are your superpower—no theological degree required.

- **Ushers:** Help guide our congregation to the altar during communion. You don’t need a GPS—just a heart for service and a willingness to walk and smile at the same time.

- **Live Stream Support:** Help us share the Good News with those joining us from home. No fancy AV booth here—just your phone, a tripod, and your steady hands (and maybe a few deep breaths if Wi-Fi acts up).

These roles are essential to our Sunday worship experience and a great way to meet more members of our church family. You don’t need to sign up for every week—just when you can. Training, encouragement, and high-fives will be provided.

Interested? Curious? Willing but mildly terrified? That’s okay, we’ve all been there. Talk to Carol Walters, and let’s find the right fit for you. Together, we can make Sunday mornings a little brighter—for everyone.

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.* *I Peter 4:10*

***With joy and gratitude,***  
***Worship Committee***

*Pleaching  
your story  
gives  
= God glory =*

**CHURCH COUNCIL CORNER:**  
**MINUTES & MORSELS**

The Messiah Lutheran Church Council met in August with Pastor Wareham and council members present.

**Worship**

- Updates were made to bulletin formatting.
- Volunteers are needed for ushers and greeters, with a focus on consistent scheduling.
- Carol Walters will be trained to operate the sound booth.

**Evangelism**

- Registration is underway for VSU Happening on August 28th.

**Property**

- A Volunteer Tidy Program has been established, and volunteers are being sought.

**Treasurer**

- The financial report was updated for use at the upcoming Church Meeting regarding next year’s budget.

**New Business**

- The proposed budget was reviewed line by line and approved by the council. It will be voted on by the congregation following the service on August 24th.

The next council meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

**LWML FELLOWSHIP:**  
**GLUE, FROSTING & GIVING BACK**

***LWML***

So hard to believe how fast these months go by! Where did August go? Anyway, the next LWML meeting is scheduled for October 7<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm. LWML is open to all women in our church. Come join us!

Our Christmas bazaar & Bake Sale is scheduled for Nov. 1 from 8 am - 1 pm. Anyone who enjoys crafting, please share any homemade items with us to sell! We also welcome any baked goods you would like to share.

The money that we raise is distributed to charities in our local area as well as in the FL/GA district to support many worthwhile projects and to continue our quilt ministry.

***With love and gratitude,***  
***Kay***

**VOLUNTEER CHURCH TIDY  
PROGRAM TO BE IMPLEMENTED**

***Property Chair***

In an effort to reduce operating costs for the upcoming fiscal year, a volunteer tidy program will be implemented in September 2025.

Currently, the church receives and pays for weekly cleaning. That will be reduced to 2 weeks per month, and the church will be tidied the other

two weeks by volunteers from the congregation. If successful, this will provide annual savings of approximately \$3000.

The cleaning service will come on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month. The Volunteer Tidy service will be performed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday each month. The tidy volunteers will also provide the service on the 5<sup>th</sup> week during the applicable month.

Members of the congregation are asked to volunteer on teams of 3 people to cover 28 weeks of tidying the church. Cleaning supplies will be furnished by the church.

A sign-up sheet is available on the table underneath the mailboxes. We plan to cover the tidy schedule 2 months at a time. Please sign up as soon as possible so that we can begin saving money together.

**Many Hands Make Light Work!**

We realize that not everyone is able to volunteer their time towards this important cost-saving measure. However, every member can contribute by cleaning up after themselves after worship and activities they attend at the church. On Sunday, please clear your pew of any trash and place it in the trash receptacle in the Narthex after service.

Please take care not to leave any spilled food or beverage and straighten up the pew pockets when you depart. When attending a function, please take care to empty your trash in the receptacles provided in the fellowship hall. If you spill something on the floor, please clean it up.

This will go a long way in assisting the Volunteer Tidy teams as they tidy up after the congregation. Clean As You Go!

***As always, thanks for your support in taking care of the church property. We are blessed!***

**STEPPING FORWARD TOGETHER:  
LONG-RANGE PLANNING NEWS**

***Long-Range Planning***

Dear Church Family,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! We are thankful for another month of fellowship, planning, and seeking God's guidance for the future of our beloved church.

On August 21st, the Long-Range Planning Committee gathered in prayerful discussion to continue shaping the future of Messiah Lutheran Church. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

**Vision Statement Review**

The committee took time to thoughtfully reflect on our church's vision for the years to come. With care and unity, we worked to fine-tune our vision statement, keeping our hearts focused on Christ and the path He is laying before us.

**Looking Ahead**

Presentation Coming Soon! We are excited to share that the final version of the vision statement is nearly ready, and we look forward to presenting it to the entire congregation very soon. Please be in prayer as we prepare to share this important step in our church's journey.

**A New Face on the Committee**

We are pleased to welcome Gary Klement as the newest member of the Long-Range Planning Committee. His heart for the Lord and dedication to our church family are already a blessing.

Please keep him—and the entire committee in your prayers as we continue this important work together.

We thank each one of you for your continued support, encouragement, and most of all, your prayers. May the Lord continue to bless our efforts as we seek to glorify Him in all we do.

***In His Grace,  
Richard***

**SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS:**  
**A DAY OF OUTREACH AND JOY**

*Stewardship*

Each year “The Happening” has become a tradition during VSU’s fall semester for its new students. At this event, students are given the opportunity to learn about Valdosta, its local businesses, and the local community. For Messiah Lutheran, The Happening is an opportunity to introduce ourselves to thousands of students, and even a few faculty and staff members, face-to-face, at one time, in one location.

This year, The Happening 2025, was scheduled from 1 – 4 p.m. on Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, and Messiah Lutheran Church attended the event.

Thanks to Connie and Mike Di Marco, Sydney Rothas, Pastor Wareham, and Abbey Wolters, who helped with this one-day event.

I would also like to give a shout-out to Kathy Lane who provided water and three gas cards for prizes.

Last year, we had participated, and it was an unforgettable experience. The front lawn at VSU was flooded with students. What an awesome way to build relationships and to demonstrate God’s love to others.

Thanks again to Abbey, Connie, Mike, Pastor Wareham, and Sydney, who dedicated their time to make Messiah shine! YOU ROCK!!



*Amish sayings*

hooray!  
 IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

Gloria Cook	2
Christina Jenkins-Keeling	9
Betty Albritton	14
Dena Rockey	16
Barry Witherspoon	20
Candace Witherspoon	24
Jesse Sheeley	27
Daryl Sparks	28
Karin Boles	29



## **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY CORNER:** **JESUS' TRANSFORMING PRESENCE**

*Luke 19:8-10 NIV*

“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’”

Who knew, all those kids sitting in Sunday school were getting a lesson in stewardship! Generations of children have very often heard lessons based on the familiar account of Zacchaeus. The diminutive tax collector's curiosity surrounding the person and ministry of Jesus is what the Holy Spirit used to set him on a collision course for a total stewardship Transformation. This transformation, according to the text of Luke 19, is not just about this life. This stewardship transformation is about eternity as well!

Remember the story: Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Do not think of friendly neighborhood IRS agents. This was more like a toll booth operator, but the governing authorities did not set the toll. They would contract men to staff roadside booths and tax the commerce that was passing along the road. This was an enterprise full of greed and graft. The tax collectors would take as much as they could and only pass on a portion to the government. The rest did not go into the community chest either! It went into the pocket of the tax collector.

This is why the people had such disdain for Jewish tax collectors. They were seen as both crooks and traitors. They were crooks in that they extorted their compatriots and others in the toll process. But worse, they were seen as traitors because their efforts supported the occupying Roman authorities. That is the real reason that the people would not make way so that short Zacchaeus could see Jesus.

this reason, he runs ahead and climbs a tree. He had heard all the stories. He wanted to see this Jesus with his own eyes. Mercy is on display. This hated crook and traitor gets a direct audience with Jesus — at Jesus' own request!

Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house. This is where the transformation is about to take place! Notice how Jesus does it. He does not preach

a three-week sermon series, nor does He ask Zacchaeus to make a pledge. There is nothing programmatic about Jesus' approach. But Zacchaeus is completely transformed! The transforming force is the very presence of Jesus!

Direct time with Jesus takes a crooked, selfish, criminal and makes him the most faithful steward. This new life of stewardship is marked by the promises made. First, he gives half of his ill-gotten gains to the poor. These are people whom he would not have defrauded at all! Yet, after spending time with Jesus, they are His first concern. Only after this does he double the requirement of the Levitical law on fraud. And what does Jesus say is the result? Salvation!

Doing the acts of stewardship does not save. Rather, the faith in Jesus that is created by the Holy Spirit is what saves! This is critical for us to confess. Failed stewardship can and will cut you off from God. The only antidote for failed stewardship is the presence of Jesus.

We do not need to run ahead and climb a tree for this presence of Jesus. He makes Himself available to us every week in the Divine Service. He speaks His Word of invitation to us in the pages of Holy Scripture. This, and this alone, transforms us from sinner to saint, from owner to steward of all that belongs to the Lord.

Do you want to become a more faithful steward? Spend more time with Jesus. Make Divine Service a weekly priority. Feast on Christ's body and blood weekly! This is the great gift that brings salvation from God's House to yours!



