

Madison Heights Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
149 Main Street  
Madison Heights, VA 24572



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## MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 11

July 15, 2020

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### How Lucky We Are

In the middle of a pandemic that seems to be lasting an eternity it is easy to get down and out. It is depressing to be confined even if you have a nice home with plenty of comforts. However, the more I study the Bible, the more I realize just how lucky we are. We didn't have to escape slavery and we have not been exiled. While we are facing difficult times this ministry is doing very well. In regards to outreach, you have continued to support your outreach missions. When it comes to worship attendance, worship attendance has been increasing on Sunday morning, and there are still a good number of people watching live on Facebook, plus several people who miss the live broadcast catch the replay. And when it comes to finances, you have continued to support this ministry because this is a valuable ministry that you believe in. How lucky we are to be a part of a ministry with such a solid footing. The disciples went through about 3½ years of Jesus College. This would be the very best hands on seminary training possible. When Jesus left them, he left them with duty and a challenge. The duty was to build a church. So, they gathered together on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week for prayer, fellowship, studying the word, and breaking bread. I call these the pillars of worship in the church that Jesus built. While mainstream society looks for ways to appeal to people for the sake of the institution, we maintain our status of being the church that Jesus built.

The challenge that Jesus left the disciples with was not a challenge to go out and get more numbers for the institution; the challenge is to make disciples and teach them to obey everything. Being a disciple takes a deep level of spiritual discipline. We are a church that is focused on pleasing God. It is that commitment to our disciple identity that makes this such a special ministry. The Secret Place devotional on July 1 uses Revelation 22:12 as the scriptural reference to quote Jesus (or the angel speaking on behalf of Jesus) "See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work" (NRSV). I wonder how many people understand that while we are saved by grace the Scriptures repeatedly instructs us or reminds us that action is required with our faith.

When the nation of Israel escaped slavery and had an opportunity to thank God for their freedom through worship and giving, everyone participated. No one questioned the existence of God. They lived through the experience of God helping them escape. They owed their lives to God and everyone was thankful to God for it. Oh yeah, they complained against Moses because people do what people do, but after they further experienced God's provisional care, everyone worshiped God, absolutely everyone. It wasn't a question of if you felt like it, or if you were happy with the structure of the religion. And it most certainly wasn't about trying to keep people happy. It was a matter of worshiping out of appreciation and as God instructed. Leviticus shows us what giving to God was like in those days. The first 7 chapters are about the offerings and sacrifices that were made. Leviticus 7:37 lists the offerings that the Lord commanded of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. There was the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the offering of ordination, and the sacrifice of well being. My goodness, that's five different offerings! On top of that each offering was to be of their very best that they had to offer. They were happy to do this! They were happy to give it because they knew that they owed everything to God for their lives, livelihood, and safety. That is five times what is expected of us today. How lucky we are.

*George*