



# Messiah Lutheran Church

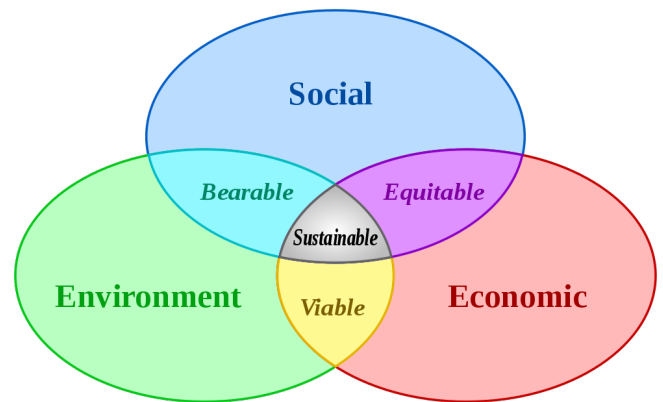
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025

### + VISION STATEMENT +

We believe God's vision for Rotterdam, Schenectady County and the greater Capital Region is a community grounded in human connection and sustainability\*, where everyone can live abundantly, where everyone can learn from our diversity and where everyone can live free from fear.

*\* In this document we define sustainability as "addressing present economic, social and environmental realities without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same." For a visual representation, please see the Venn diagram to the right.*



### + CORE VALUES +

**We are a welcoming and inviting congregation.** Grounded in Hebrews 13: 1-2, *"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it,"* we believe everyone is created in the image of God and therefore we welcome and actively invite all people into full participation in the body of Christ without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, ability, marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

**We are a proactive congregation.** Grounded in Acts 1:8, *"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,"* we believe the Holy Spirit empowers and leads us as we prayerfully take risks, develop innovative ministries and get to work witnessing to Christ through word and deed.

**We are a learning congregation.** Grounded in Psalm 25: 4-5, *"Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long,"* we believe that justified by grace we can freely question, discover and grow in our understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ through worship, faith formation, social action and fellowship.

**We are a socially engaged congregation.** Grounded in Micah 6:8, *“What does the Lord require of you but do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God,”* we believe acts of individual service and striving for peace and justice, grounded in prayer and worship, all go hand in hand. Guided by the canonical Old and New Testaments, the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and the confessional documents and social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we serve our neighborhood as a safe place for difficult conversations about the social issues of our time. In collaboration with interfaith and ecumenical partners, nonprofits, businesses and local government, we serve Christ in the face of our neighbors.

**We are a congregation together.** Grounded in Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12, *“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help... A threefold cord is not quickly broken,”* we believe no one is created to live alone. A diverse family of imperfect people, we celebrate together and worship together, eat together and sing together, serve together and discern together, journeying through life together in community with Christ and one another.

### + PURPOSE STATEMENT +

**We are a Spirit filled congregation grounded in Jesus Christ, nourishing our local community in body, mind and soul.** Saved by grace, renewed by worship and set free by the love of God, we collaborate with like-minded individuals and organizations to feed the hungry, bridge divides and build a sustainable neighborhood in Rotterdam, Schenectady and the wider Capital Region of New York.

### + MINISTRY TEAMS, FIVE YEAR GOALS & LONG TERM OBJECTIVES +

#### FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY TEAM

The **purpose** of the Faith Formation Ministry Team is to cultivate lifelong curiosity about faith (including doubts) through educational programming and practices that promote justice and liberation for all of God’s people at each step of life’s journey.

The **overall five year goal** of the Faith Formation Ministry Team is to ensure that people at all stages of faith will have opportunities to listen, share, be heard, and experience the Way of Christ.

#### Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:

- Cultivate an environment of mutual learning and teaching.
- Partner with other ministry teams for quarterly activities and programs that highlight the connection between service, togetherness, and worship.
- Provide consistent and age appropriate faith formation opportunities, especially by strengthening programming for high school youth and young adults.
- Program an annual one week Vacation Bible School in summer for kids and in winter for adults.
- Proactively invite and engage neighbors and friends to increase in the number of new families and children joining our congregation.

- Identify, encourage, and support more intentional, mentored ministry opportunities for people of all ages to discern their call.

**Ministries within the Faith Formation Ministry Team include:**

- Cradle Roll / Nursery (Birth – Pre-k) Ministry\*
- Sunday School for Children (Pre-k – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Sunday School for Youth (7<sup>th</sup> Grade – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Adult Education
- Life Passages Ministry (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, High School Graduation)\*

**FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Fellowship Ministry Team is to cultivate a sense of trust, acceptance, connection and support amongst members and friends of the congregation while supporting newcomers as they begin to engage with our faith community.

The **overall five year goal** of the Fellowship Ministry Team is make sure members, friends and the wider community know and feel that Messiah is a local center of community where everyone can feel welcomed, connected, supported and loved.

**Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Organize a regular weekly coffee hour following worship supported by a diverse group of volunteers.
- Increase support of seniors in the congregation and wider community by providing speakers addressing issues including grief, depression and loneliness.
- Partner with organizations to assist those who are struggling with mental health issues and addiction, both within our congregation and in the wider community.
- Develop strong, lay-lead fellowship groups for women, men, young adults and seniors with special emphasis on connecting with new members and strengthening connections between existing members.
- Strengthen our new member welcome process to not only welcome newcomers but support them in connecting with the wider congregation once they become members.
- Create quarterly opportunities for members, friends and the wider community to connect through music, arts and cultural events.
- Serve as an ongoing space of local community art and expression.

**Ministries within the Fellowship Ministry Team will include:**

- Arts & Culture Ministry\*
- Care & Concern Ministry
- Kitchen Ministry
- Mighty Men of Messiah Group
- Over 55 Gang
- Women of the ELCA
- Welcome Ministry\*
- Young Adult Group

## **SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Social Action Ministry Team is to support members and friends of the congregation in serving their neighbors and striving for peace and justice.

The **overall five year goal** of the Social Action Ministry Team is to broaden opportunities for adults and younger members to serve in their local community and to care for creation while also directly serving the needs of our neighborhood through the Bread of Life Community Center.

### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Develop a weekly food pantry program providing meals within HPNAP guidelines alongside additional wraparound services and classes.
- Offer at least two opportunities annually for further education on themes of creation care via book studies, adult forums, and other formats, either at Messiah or through sponsorship or partnerships with another community organization.
- Revise and/or establish purchasing and facility-use policies for church and individuals and community groups using church facilities to maximize energy efficiency and sustainability and minimize waste, including, but not limited to, the areas of purchasing of goods for church use and composting and recycling.
- Incorporate creation care into worship and our members' lives through the annual celebration of the beginning of the planting season in the spring with Rogation Sunday and the fall Season of Creation, as well as monthly dissemination of useful environmental information via church communications (e.g., newsletter, bulletins).
- Complete an energy audit for the church building and take steps to implement its recommendations, within available resources, working toward renewable energy usage.
- Diversify our community service opportunities beyond current partnerships with the Concerned for the Hungry Thanksgiving Food Drive, sorting food at the Regional Food Bank four times a year, volunteering with SiCM Summer Lunch and organizing our annual Help Portrait event.
- Maintain collections throughout the year with partners such as the recycled empty pill bottle collection with First Reformed Church of Schenectady, hygiene products with Patty's Place, clothing with Mohonasen CSD, and mitten the Christmas tree for the City Mission of Schenectady while also partnering with organizations to address lack of affordable housing/ furnishings, employment, adult literacy and more.
- Create a regularly maintained resource of service opportunities that parishioners can participate in as a group or individually.
- Strengthen connections with local nonprofits in order to discover new giving/ service/ advocacy opportunities.
- Involve more young people in community service and awaken their concern for local neighbors in need.
- Provide opportunities for the congregation to advocate on social justice concerns in a manner supported by ELCA social teaching.

### **Ministries within the Social Action Ministry Team will include:**

- Bread of Life Community Center
- Creation Care Ministry

- Community Service Ministry
- Social Justice Ministry\*

### **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Stewardship Ministry Team is to engage members in fulfilling God's purpose for the congregation through gifts of time, talent and treasure and to ensure the best use of all congregation resources.

The **overall five year goal** of the Stewardship Ministry Team is to, inspired by the Holy Spirit, help the congregation better steward its time, talent, treasure, and indeed all resources, in service to the renewed purpose of Messiah Lutheran Church as outlined in this document.

#### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Encourage 85% of member household to make an annual financial pledge.
- Encourage 85% of active members to connect with a regular ministry of the congregation.
- Organize an annual conversation about growing the endowment and ongoing endowment health.
- Move forward with the Messiah in Your Lifetime Capital Campaign.
- Make our church building more useful for both the congregation and the wider community.
- Develop a comprehensive staff handbook in accordance with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New York State and federal guidelines and general church/nonprofit best practices.
- Focusing on the day-to-day financial operations of the congregation while addressing the long-term desires of a growing congregation.
- Build and maintain liquidity in our checking account to cover three months of regular expenses.
- Clearly communicate limitations if desires of the congregation do not meet current financial realities.
- Create a long-term Communications Coordinator internship opportunity.
- Develop a sinking emergency fund available for unanticipated repairs to the church building or parsonage.
- Evaluate the need for replacement of carpets and roofs of our church building.
- Fully staff our Personnel Ministry and conduct performance reviews of all staff on an annual basis.
- Create an organized and easy to access historical record of the ministries of our congregation.

#### **Ministries within the Stewardship Ministry Team will include:**

- Budget & Finance Ministry
- Communications Ministry
- Historical Archives Ministry
- Mission Support Ministry
- Property Ministry
- Personnel Ministry

- SafeChurch Ministry

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Worship & Music Ministry Team is to plan, review, and improve all aspects of worship services at Messiah Lutheran Church while also supporting all worship assistants and speaking to the sacred nature of various life passages.

The **overall five year goal** of the Worship & Music Ministry Team is to make worship more welcoming, relevant and more reflective of the seasons and liturgical year; make sacraments a core value of worship; have a solid group of diverse and dedicated worship assistants; and strengthen ministries related to prayer and meditation.

#### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Provide high quality streaming of weekly worship services.
- Install the necessary infrastructure and landscaping for an outdoor prayer/ worship space.
- Strengthen the sense of welcome, hospitality and relevance in our weekly worship services.
- Develop a weekly community meditation/ prayer gathering.

#### **Ministries within the Worship & Music Ministry Team will include:**

- Altar Guild
- Choir
- Prayer Ministry\*
- Meditation Ministry\*
- Sanctuary Preparation Ministry\*

*\* Indicates a ministry not yet currently operational by February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.*

***Adopted at a February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Annual Meeting of the Congregation.***