

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Messiah

Schenectady, New York

Annual Report of the Congregation
for 2020



presented at
the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
on February 7th, 2021

Officers of the Congregation

Pete Jones, President
Suzanne Collins, Vice President
Karen Keenan, Secretary
Penny Incitti, Financial Secretary
René Dunda-Martin, Treasurer (with Phil Bazicki & Dave Barnett assisting)

Members of the Congregation Council

2018-2021

Suzanne Collins
Pete Jones
Ann Marie Gray

2019-2022

VACANT
Rene Dunda-Martin
Phil Bazicki

2020-2023

VACANT
Karen Keenan
Joyce Gresham

Parish Staff

Rev. Dustin G. Wright, Senior Pastor
Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck, Minister of Music/ Interim Associate Pastor
Douglas J. Chilton, Musician and Cantor (retired September 2020)
Rianne Johnson, Parish Administrator
Sarah Bachorik, Administrative Assistant
Nicole Hamilton, Sexton
Dave Carkner, Parish Caretaker

**in memory of Susan, Allen, Lois, Bob, Diane, Denise, Joe, Nancy,
Bill and all our Saints who will ALWAYS be with us.**

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President's Report

2020 was a challenging year to say the least. We started out with great plans, a new Strategic Plan, a potential consolidation of Trinity Reformed Church and Messiah Lutheran Church. In March came the COVID 19 Pandemic and everything as we knew it changed.

Some of the projects during 2020 include:

- Adopting and implementing a new Strategic Plan for 2020- 2025 at our Annual Meeting in February. One of the highlights was the five ministry teams (Fellowship, Faith Formation, Social Action, Worship & Music and Stewardship). Each ministry team would meet quarterly except Worship & Music which would meet once per month.
- Planning the consolidation of Trinity Reformed Church and Messiah Lutheran Church into one church. Deciding that the worship services, once in-person worship is re-instated, would be held at the current Messiah church building on Guilderland Avenue and the existing Trinity Property would be used to serve our neighbors and our community.
- Through the "Who is My Neighbor Program" we worked out the details of the consolidation and entertained possible plans for the use of the Trinity Property including Affordable Housing, a Community Garden and sufficient parking for both.
- Due to the Pandemic, we developed a COVID-19 Plan which included suspending in-person worship, cancelling most community service projects, and basically closing our buildings to all but necessary persons. We maintained our food pantries at both sites insuring that our clients would still be able to get the food they needed. The Zoom Platform was used to be able to meet without being in person.
- The Bread of Life Food Pantry was expanded and moved to the front of the basement. New shelving was purchased, and a ramp built at the back door allowing easier access to the pantry from the church parking lot.
- Held our largest new member class in a while during the fall of 2020, welcoming 18 new members.
- Hired the staff of Trinity and welcomed all Trinity members in the final days of 2020.



Pete Jones, President of the Congregation

Plans and Goals for 2021 include:

- To pursue the use of the Trinity Property for the purpose of vaccinating our neighbors with the Coronavirus Vaccine and encourage all congregation members to get vaccinated.
- Work on getting back to a safe in-person worship and Sunday School utilizing the sanctuary at the Messiah property.
- Continue to develop the handicapped accessibility of the Messiah Property and put together a Capital Campaign in the fall to finance it.
- Broadening our outreach to include additional opportunities to better serve our community.
- To get our kids back to Camp Calumet this summer.
- To continue to develop ideas and plans for the Trinity Property to insure it is utilized to best serve our community.
- To recruit and hire a Minister of Music.
- To continue to welcome new members into our community.

A special thank you to all those who brought our church services into our homes on Sundays using Zoom, Facebook, and the webpage. To pastors Dustin and Jonathan, for the leading the services and supporting of each other. To Doug Chilton, Jill Becker, and Pastor Jonathan for providing the musical part of our services and to Rich Becker for pulling it all together electronically and making sure that the services could get to the congregation.

Respectively submitted,
Pete Jones, President of the Congregation

Senior Pastor's Report

Dear siblings in Christ,

So I'm writing this at noon at the end of an incredibly long week on one hour of sleep to get our Annual Report out in time (don't worry I'm taking the rest of the day off!), but my gosh, I'm crying tears of joy. In the midst of crisis after crisis this year, it is SO easy to get discouraged and think you're not making a difference. As I worked with so many of our ministers to chronicle the story of our Spirit filled congregation in this document however, it suddenly came upon me that my God, WE HAVE DONE SO MUCH IN SERVICE TO CHRIST IN THE FACE OF OUR NEIGHBORS THIS YEAR, despite it likely being the worst year of most of our lives!



Rev. Dustin G. Wright, Senior Pastor

We significantly grew our congregation despite not being physically together for almost a year. We made sure hundreds of our needy neighbors were fed. We supported our young people and our seniors and didn't miss a single week of faith formation despite the global pandemic. We comforted one another through worship and prayer and Mr. Doug and Jill and Pastor Jonathan's BEAUTIFUL music. We have at long last unified our Spirit filled congregation with Trinity Reformed and soon will provide a cutting edge model for how faith communities can work together across the country in service to their neighbors. By the end of this year, I deeply believe we will have made all the necessary final decisions to begin redeveloping the Trinity Reformed site into an innovative Community Center representing a MAJOR investment in the Town of Rotterdam and FINALLY move forward with our dreams of having a fully accessible Worship Center in our current building.

You did this. All of this. We have lost so much this year. But we have gained so much. We have suffered a great deal. But we have NEVER been a stronger **Spirit filled congregation grounded in Jesus Christ nourishing our local community in body, mind and soul!**

In faith,
Pastor Dustin

Faith Formation Ministry Team

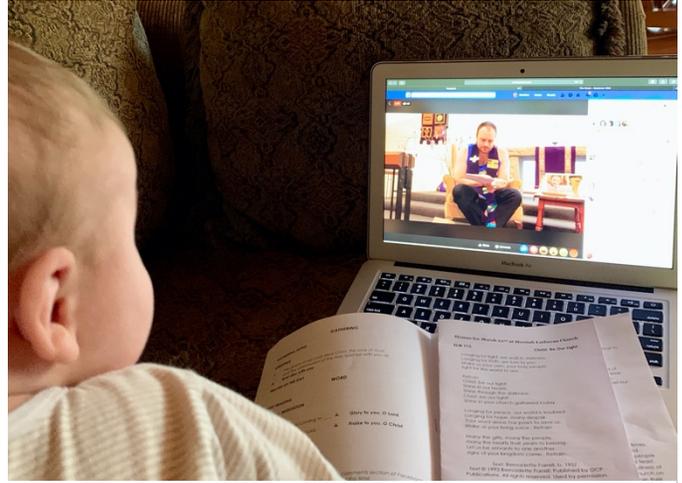
Cradle Roll / Nursery Ministry

PURPOSE

To support young families in supporting faith formation in the home and to provide a nurturing learning environment in our nursery for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

REVIEW OF 2020

Our future is bright indeed at Messiah Lutheran Church! Even amidst the pandemic, our cradle roll has grown to eight members under three years old even while a number of other young ones have moved up to Sunday School age! Every month Allison Bode mails each family on our cradle a great faith formation at home resource called Frolic provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that helps parents and guardians teach their young people the language of faith at such an important developmental time.



Pryor Zimmer watches Pastor Dustin conducting virtual church this past spring.

In addition, under the leadership of Cheryl Borski, a number of volunteers engaged in a MASSIVE clean-up of our nursery in anticipation of the launch of new and improved programming as the coronavirus abates.

Finally, Pastor Dustin conducted a wildly successful virtual course for families of newborns on infant faith formation and the meaning of baptism using the ELCA's "Come to the Water" curriculum. A number of the families who participated had their young ones baptized this year and a number are waiting until we can return to in-person worship.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

A TOP priority of Pastor Dustin's for 2021 is to reconstitute Messiah's nursery program as not just a baby-sitting service during worship but a full-fledged faith formation program for our youngest members using brief five-minute lessons that link with the same Frolic curriculum young families receive at home.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Allison Bode (Cradle Roll Ministry Chair) and golly, we could use some more help with this CRITICAL ministry!

Sunday School for Children

PURPOSE

To provide faith formation opportunities for pre-school and elementary school aged children and their families.

REVIEW OF 2020

Messiah's Sunday School for Children is without a doubt one of the most important ministries of our congregation in terms of reaching out to new families and teaching our young people lessons that will last a lifetime. With currently sixteen children pre-k to sixth grade at Messiah, we started the year with an innovative new format that had Pastor Dustin leading a large group activity with young children together with middle and high school youth before breaking into small groups. Children would then work with individual teachers (thank you Ms. Cheryl, Ms. Erica and Ms. Vanessa!) learning about the same Bible verses we'd discuss in worship later that day using the *Whirl! Lectionary* curriculum provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



Our young people praying and learning about baptism this past spring before our ministries went virtual.

Within one week after COVID-19 related shutdowns began, we switched to Zoom format that certainly wasn't the same but allowed our young people to briefly interact on a Sunday morning and stay connected to the congregation. We strengthened this virtual format beginning this fall (including the addition of some new students and leaders... thank you Ms. Amanda and Ms. April!) and are now experimenting with a brief broadcast show of sorts called "For Kids" with Pastor Dustin, Ms. Cheryl and Ms. Betsy. We even were able to hold a virtual Christmas pageant with a number of our kids "hacking" the worship livestream!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to our parents and guardians to further evaluate faith formation programming needs during the remainder of the pandemic. Once we know when we can reengage with in-person faith formation we'll be working overtime to find new Sunday School Leaders as there are a number of families who have expressed interest in joining our children's ministries once we're back in the real world!



Virtual Sunday School hasn't been the same but it's still been awesome!

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Betsy Sweet, Erica Wimmer, Vanessa Ford-Roether, April MacMurray, Amanda Sponable-Pantalone and Cheryl Borski (Chair)

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Borski, Sunday for Children Ministry Chair

Youth Ministry



Grace and Sarah Olochnowicz with Pastor Dustin on our first annual Winter Confirmation Retreat at Camp Fowler this past winter.

PURPOSE

To provide faith formation opportunities for pre-school and elementary school aged children and their families.

REVIEW OF 2020

Despite a year of global pandemic, and perhaps in response to it, we've had one of the most powerful years of youth ministry at Messiah yet. The year kicked off with two of our confirmation students joining their peers from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Our Redeemer Lutheran Church at Camp Fowler for what we hope will become an annual Confirmation and Youth Winter Retreat weekend.

As things moved online to Zoom, we didn't miss a single Sunday of confirmation class and during the first months of the pandemic added a weekly afternoon space for our high school youth to process everything they were experiencing with Tammi Crowther. Many of our youth

also made regular appearances on Pastor Dustin's Vespers program talking about their experiences of the pandemic. Moving into the fall, we've continued having INCREDIBLE conversations between seven of our middle school aged youth in Confirmation Class, had a number of our young people organize a virtual Christmas Day Compline Service and participated in an in-person Fall Service Day.

One other event we were able to organize "in real life" was participation in Camp Calumet's virtual Reach the Beach program this fall walking from the Ford-Roether's home to Thompson's Lake State Park. Pastor Dustin has also regularly met and kept connected with middle and high school youth through Zoom, texts, etc.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Without a doubt, 2021 will be year of rebuilding and reconnecting with our young people. This February we will organize a socially distanced afternoon of snow tubing and a number of our youth will be involved in our Shrove Tuesday Drive Thru Pancake Supper. As the weather warms up and hopefully COVID rates decrease, we hope to organize more fun outdoor opportunities for our young people to connect. With any luck, we'll still be able to in some way send our young people to Camp Calumet, including a number of whom have expressed wanting to serve as Counselors in Training. We also hope to send a number of high school youth to the national ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota, currently scheduled for June of 2022. We have also started to have conversations about rebuilding an Interfaith Youth Service Corps in the Schenectady area, perhaps through Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM).



A weekly virtual high school youth hangout led by Tammi Crowther and Pastor Dustin.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Tammi Crowther, Betsy Sweet, Melissa DiGiovanni, Vanessa Ford-Roether, Kristen Olochnowicz, Molly Karrel, Rachel DeTeso-Mathis

Adult Education Ministry



Coffee Club Bible study in the parsonage shortly before COVID-19 lockdowns began.

PURPOSE

To support the spiritual grow of adults in the congregation and the wider community.

REVIEW OF 2020

The Adult Ed program continued through 2020 into 2021, primarily through a Sunday morning class. It began with a study of Jim Wallis's *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus*. Mr. Doug also began a midweek Lenten course on the role of music in other religions. When the pandemic began in March the class shifted to a virtual gathering, meeting, using Zoom, from 8:45 - 10:00 am each Sunday morning. The first topic that occupied several weeks was on "Christ and the Coronavirus," focusing on assigned readings and videos selected from the Internet. Following that, the class shifted to the topic "Our Anti-Racist Calling," again focusing on assigned readings

and videos available on the Internet. The most recent topic has been on "Peace Not Walls: Justice in Palestine and Israel," using Elias Chacour's *Blood Brothers: The Dramatic Story of a Palestinian Christian Working for Peace In Israel*, supplemented by readings and videos available on the Internet. This course continues and will include visits with distinguished guests in Palestine and others who have significant experience in that troubled part of the world. In addition, two mid-week evening events open to the larger community were held: "Lessons from the Holy Land" featuring the Rev. Khader Khalia and Karin Brown and "Prophetic Faith: Issues in Moral Reckoning" featuring the Rev. Leonard Comithier, senior minister at Macedonia Baptist Church in Albany. Finally, Pastor Dustin taught a midweek course focusing on the Prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

We very much believe the virtual component of our Adult Education Ministry will continue to grow and continue reach individuals outside of our congregation and even outside of New York State. More than half of our Sunday morning Adult Education class includes folks who are not members of Messiah. Thinking about this will continue when we do go back to in-person gatherings as well is an exciting possibility. This spring we will welcome Rev. Mitri Raheb, former pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Palestine as well as staff from ELCA Peace Not Walls to further talk about our Lutheran presence in the Holy Land. Pastor Dustin will also launch a weekday Bible Study in Lent called "The Upswing: The Story of the Christians Who Rebuilt America and the Scriptures that Inspired Them." Additional offerings from interfaith leaders are also in the works, as are forums on our evolving Christian understanding of human sexuality and diversity. Finally, it is extremely exciting that more and more of our members are using *Bread for the Day*, a daily prayer and devotional resource provided by the ELCA. We hope to continue growing the number of individuals grounded in this wonderful little book!



Our Sunday morning course on "Christ in Crisis" meeting last January.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Carly DiSanto, Jean Jones, Steve Converse, Dr. Merle Longwood (Chair)

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Merle Longwood, Adult Education Ministry Chair

Life Passages Ministry



We were so happy to bless Aaron Martin this past January before he headed off to basic training!

PURPOSE

To support and celebrate members of the congregation as they mark major life transitions.

REVIEW OF 2020

Without a doubt, the coronavirus did not stop us in supporting our young people and others at major turning points. We baptized a teenager right before COVID hit and even baptized a baby in a river live during Sunday worship! We supported three of our children through first communion classes. We celebrated our high school seniors who graduated during such an incredibly difficult year. We even provided a proper send off for one of our young adults before he began basic training in the armed forces. This ministry also includes our new member class. We conducted an INCREDIBLE six-part course for eighteen new members, some of whom found us online and have yet to physically step foot in our building!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

We have a BUNCH of infants and teenagers alike to baptize once we get back to in-person worship. Through great resources like *Come to the Water* we will continue to support our youngest parents and their families and help our young people learning the mean of communion through *A Place for You*. Both of these are WONDERFUL resources provided by the ELCA. There are many, many new folks who are looking to connect with our ministries as soon as we can gather again in person, so we can wait to celebrate with them as well!

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

This ministry is informally led by Pastor Dustin but we would LOVE leaders to help advise and support this ministry, particularly our New Member Class!



Atticus, Anthony and Jack (aka "Bro Team Jesus") get ready for their First Communion with Pastor Dustin!

Fellowship Ministry Team

Arts & Culture Ministry



The dedication of our COVID19 "HOPE" Mural honoring essential workers took place on Pentecost Sunday, May 31st, 2020.

PURPOSE

To foster understanding, self-expression and community through the arts.

REVIEW OF 2020

This is a brand new ministry of the congregation created through the restructuring plan adopted in *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025*. One highlight of our work so far was the dedication of our COVID19 "HOPE" Mural painted by Rachel Longmire. We also sponsored a picture/ memory sharing effort virtually on the "Prayer at Messiah" Facebook Group during the Season of Advent.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

As a new ministry of our congregation, we're just getting started! Plans for the upcoming year include another picture/ memory sharing on the "Prayer at Messiah" Facebook Group during the Season of Lent, a zentangle

virtual/ in-person instruction night led by Russell McDonald and perhaps a Paint & Snack event. Once we can gather again in-person, using our narthex and fellowship hall to display local artists work and hosting more concerts is also under discussion.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Russell McDonald, Rachel Longmire and Laurie Lumbra

Care & Concern Ministry

PURPOSE

To support members in need of special care while connecting them to the congregation and the wider body of Christ.

REVIEW OF 2020

This has been a very busy year for this committee after the virus hit us in March. During January and February, we had been able to visit Lore Ellis at Glendale N.H., but have not visited since.

This committee was an important factor, in keeping communication with parishioners. We began by sending out notes and making phone calls, letting them know we were here for them and inquiring on health and needs. If we did find anyone in need, we helped as possible, such as getting groceries, wipes etc. Judy Becker sent notes to all members, telling them they were in our thoughts and prayers.



Art from our young people was included in each of our "Worship at Home" kits.

We continue to make phone calls to parishioners that may have extra concerns.

We also launched a new ministry of sending care packages to all our college students every semester!

Three "Worship & Home Kits" were distributed to every household in the congregation throughout the year, a HERCULAEN EFFORT.

A group of 7 families make meals weekly for a family, to assist with nutrition. This continues today. At Christmas the committee sent out cards to keep us all connected. And lastly, we made phone calls to all members 65 and over to verify emails and obtain birth dates to give to pastor so he could compile a list to start our appointments for vaccinations.

Betsy Ryan has sent out 109 cards in 2020 for various life passages of our members, active attenders, and visitors at Messiah. This number does not include cards sent out from the care and concern ministry to all members for Christmas.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

As I mentioned at the start, we have been busy with communications and monthly meetings. This committee can't wait to get back to some normalcy and visit Lore Ellis. We also look forward to providing additional mental health support services and education opportunities, especially as so many are struggling from depression, anxiety and loneliness related to COVID19. Finally, especially with the wonderful new resource of Trinity Reformed's building, we will begin hosting a wide variety of 12 Step programs and other means of supporting those battling addiction in the upcoming year.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Judy Becker, Carly DiSanto, Bill Ellis, Joyce Gresham, Gloria Maki, Russell McDonald, Betsy Ryan, Karen Kreisler and Barb Hallett (Chair)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Hallett, Care & Concern Chair

Kitchen Ministry



Cooking up some grub at last year's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, our last major event before COVID19 lockdowns began.

PURPOSE

To assist the congregation in the use of the its kitchen facilities.

REVIEW OF 2020

As there is really no way to use the kitchen through Zoom or Facebook Live, activity has been pretty light since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Housekeeping:

Despite several attempts to contract someone to do it, the exhaust fan still has not been cleaned. We will try again to make a connection with someone to do it in 2021.

Plans are underway to empty the kitchen as much as possible for a full scrubbing of the floor. Since we aren't using the space right now, we may as well take care of this project.

We will also finally be replacing the broken part of the dishwasher so it will be ready when the fellowship hall can again welcome guests.

Events:

The Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner was one of (if not THE) final event held pre-COVID. It was well attended as always with 53 dinners served, not including the sausages Paul Bode ate while Mrs. Bode was cooking them. The usual fare was served, once again, buffet style, which worked out well. Hoping we can do this again in 2022. All of the leftover food was donated – the unopened boxes of pancake mix, sausages and syrup to our food pantry, and the wonderful Karen Kreisler desserts, pancakes and cooked sausage to a very appreciative City Mission.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

The kitchen committee very much looks forward to things returning to normal so we can once again serve you some awesome food and even better fellowship.

Please be safe and take care of each other.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Carly DiSanto, Paul Bode, Allison Bode, Barb Sandmyer, Dick Stigberg, Cam Jacobs, Maryann Jacobs, Rocco DeMento, Cal Inero, Neal Fisher, Steve Friebel, Chip Crowther, Joyce Gresham, Betsy Ryan, Jackie DeTeso, Jean Jones, Pete Jones, Bill Fleming, Karen Kreisler and Rich Becker (Co-Chairs)

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Kreisler and Rich Becker, Kitchen Co-Chairs

Mighty Men of Messiah

PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

To foster a sense of fellowship, discipleship and service amongst the men of our congregation.

REVIEW OF 2020

Due to COVID19, we were not able to host any of our regular events from our summer axe throwing night to our Christmas Party in the Parsonage. We greatly look forward to gathering together again soon!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

We have SO many men in our congregation, new and longtime members, who simply do not know each other. There are so many possible opportunities to connect, from hikes to bowling nights, service with Habitat for Humanity to supporting our veterans. The possibilities are TRULY endless! Inspired by the legacy of our elders, we WILL be reinvigorating the Mighty Men of Messiah in the year ahead! One idea that has come up recently is to organize a monthly Men's Breakfast at Tops once we can safely gather again in-person safely. Get excited gents!



Ed Underkoffler, one of the most longtime and dedicated members of our congregation, celebrated his 90th Birthday in our Narthex just days before Messiah closed its doors due to COVID19. Ed is a model of a man grounded in Jesus Christ!

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

This is one of the top ministries of our congregation where new leadership is needed to organize events and begin connecting our many new and longtime members with one another, especially after so long apart during COVID19. If you're interested in helping coordinate this important group, please speak with Pastor Dustin!

Women of the ELCA

PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

REVIEW OF 2020

Due to the coronavirus, we were only able to have one event this year, a WONDERFUL forum on navigating loss with representatives from the Joan Nicole Prince Home and Rianne Johnson presenting.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Without a doubt, 2021 will be a year of rebuilding our vibrant WELCA ministry with SO many new faces once we can gather together again in-person. One thing we know for sure is that whether we have to social distance or not, WELCA Pie Baking will be back this fall!



Rianne Johnson presents on our Navigating Loss forum last February.

WELCA TREASURER REPORT

BALANCE FORWARDED 12/31/19:	\$878.06
REVENUE	
Offerings and Donations	\$23.00
Interest	\$0.25
TOTAL	\$23.25
EXPENSES	
Communion Supplies	\$158.10
Reception Expenses	\$128.24
Care & Concern:	\$75.48
Gifts & Donations:	\$166.25
TOTAL	\$428.07
ACCOUNT BALANCE 12/31/20:	\$373.24

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Gresham, Treasurer

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Dotty Diegel, Joyce Gresham, Barb Hallett, Betsy Ryan, Jody Fleming, Allison Bode, Judy Becker, Karen Kreischer, Jill Becker (President)

Over 55 Gang

PURPOSE

To foster socialization and mutual support amongst members roughly over age fifty-five.

REVIEW OF 2020

Throughout this year of pandemic we were still able to organize two events for our Over 55 Gang. Shortly before COVID forced us to suspend in person gatherings we hosted a planning luncheon in the Fellowship Hall where we planned a bunch of events from a Lake George Cruise to a mini-golfing excursion that of course was never able to take place. That said, early this fall we were able to have a very well attended and socially distanced outdoor gathering hosted by Brian and Gloria Maki that was a WONDERFUL time to reconnect with friends new and old we miss so much!



One of our last in-person gatherings for a planning luncheon before social distancing began.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

After such a difficult year, we'll be working overtime to provide regular opportunities to reconnect and social through meals, another Lake George cruise and other types of outings as soon as possible. We are also looking into providing additional mental health resources for seniors who may be struggling amidst COVID19.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Brian Maki, Gloria Maki, Gladys Cath, Barb Hallett (Chair)



Brian Maki showing off some his and Gloria's incredible birds at our fall luncheon.

Welcome Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

To strengthen Messiah's commitment to "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."

REVIEW OF 2020

This is a brand new ministry of the congregation created through the restructuring plan adopted in *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025*. One of our greatest efforts was cosponsoring and hosting the inaugural gathering of Schenectady Safe Space, an organization "founded in 2019 to provide a safe place for fostering dialogue, friendship, and sense of community for the LGBTQIA+ community in Schenectady County, NY." We had an absolutely incredible talent show where folks shared songs, stories, poetry and more in a radically inclusive and welcoming environment.



Crystal Murray, Katrina Murray, Ibrahim Pedriñan and Pastor Dustin with the founders of Schenectady Safe Space at their kickoff event last January.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

During our recent Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday we announced the commissioning of an RIC Recertification Process as requested by our certifying organization Reconciling Works. We believe this process will more fully allow us to live into one of our core values as a congregation of being welcoming and inviting for all God's children. We additionally look forward to once again participate in Schenectady Pride along with fellow affirming congregations through Schenectady Clergy Against Hate and will seek to explore additional partnerships with Schenectady Safe Space, Schenectady NAACP and other like-minded organizations promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. A joint Bible study with the people of Duryee African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is currently being co-planned by Pastor Dustin and Rev. Nicolle Harris for Friday, May 7th at 6:30pm.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Dakota Schaffer, Merle Longwood, Crystal Murray, Katrina Murray, Ibrahim Pedriñan, Logan Nicol and Kimlee Marquise

Young Adult Group

PURPOSE

To support the spiritual and social needs of young adults in the congregation and the local community.

REVIEW OF 2020

While we were only able to have one in person event before COVID19, our young adults have sure been busy! We sponsored a group trip to *The Vagina Monologues* at Proctors this year, a play that explores a wide variety of topics through the eyes of women of all backgrounds and serves as a major fundraiser for our local YWCA every year in Schenectady. After March when most of the world went virtual, we were actually able to connect with more of our college students and young adults at distance than ever before through various Zoom gatherings and guest visits on Vespers to talk about the experience of navigating COVID-19 as a young adult. We closed out the year by recording a Christmas Day Matins service with music provided by Sophie Mathis and prayers provided by Kiersten Becker.



Rianne Johnson, Rachel Longmire, Charis Thompson and Pastor Dustin at the *Vagina Monologues* at Proctors.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

The future of young adult ministry is bright at Messiah with two young adults, Eric Cawley and Katie Becker, nominating to serve on Congregation Council this year. Upcoming initiatives will include additional mental health support for college students and an in-person, socially distanced hike once the weather gets warmer. Networking with young adults from other faith communities is also a prime interest.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

This ministry is informally led by Pastor Dustin but we would LOVE new leaders to help advise and grow this critical ministry as our young adult members and neighbors need more support and connection than ever. If you are interested, please reach out to Pastor Dustin.

Social Action Ministry Team

Bread of Life Food Pantry



Our youth and young adults really stepped up to ensure the ongoing functioning of the food pantry in the early days of the pandemic. Thank you to Jacob Gooding, Katrina Murray, Nathaniel Murray and Aaron Martin, along with René Dunda-Martin, Jill Becker and Rich Becker pictured here (before we knew to always be wearing masks!)

Because of the Pandemic we work with the same volunteers each day we are open. We have moved to the Sunday School rooms in the back and are now welcoming guests in the parking lot.

Thanks to the Schenectady Foundation for giving us a grant to purchase 2 refrigerators. Also, a big thank you to Bill Ellis for donating, to the pantry, a freezer. We have received several donations, both monetary and product of which we are very grateful! Thanks to Kristie Becker for her work in getting the pantry a credit card. This makes it a lot easier when shopping.

Also, thanks to Betsy and Jim Ryan for all our Food Bank deliveries, Jill & Steve for shopping and all our "food pantry fairies" who are always dropping food off.



Betsy Ryan, Judy Becker, Dotty Diegel, John Diegel, Joyce Gresham and Pastor Dustin with our beautiful new refrigerators provided by the Schenectady Foundation. Thank you!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Within a couple of months, we will be members of the Food Pantries of the Capital District. This will give us delivery from the Regional Food Bank, free baby food, diapers and formula! Beginning January 25th, we will be receiving a free produce delivery every day we are open, thanks to the Schenectady Foundation!

We are very grateful for all the support from the Congregation, who make it possible to run the pantry. God has blessed us all!

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

WAY, WAY TOO MANY TO COUNT! THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO EVERYONE!!!!!!

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Becker & Joyce Gresham, Bread of Life Food Pantry Co-Chairs

PURPOSE

To serve our neighbors in need and build community.

REVIEW OF 2020

2020 has been a very busy time for the food pantry, because of the Pandemic, we have experienced, unfortunately, so many food insecure families. We are just so thankful that we could keep our pantry opened. Richard, Jill, Nathaniel and Katrina Murray kept our pantry open at the very beginning.

We are open 3 days a week for our guests and the 4 days a month, we pack food for guests in quarantine and those who cannot get to a pantry. We have a gentleman from the community that delivers the groceries for us. All is "no touch" and are left on their porch!

We have served 1265 guests, 11,385 meals in 2020! For 2019, we served 864 guests 7911 meals.

Bread of Life Food Pantry Budget

2021 Operational Budget

2021 PROJECTED REVENUE	
Category	Revenue
Food Pantry Designated Fund Revenue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support, Thrivent Choice (\$1,200) • NYS COVID-19 Food Delivery Funds (\$6,000) 	\$7,200.00
Regional Food Bank Account Revenue : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned for the Hungry Grant (\$1,000) • Regional Food Bank Grant (\$150) 	\$1,150.00
Operational Budget Supplemental Fund	\$2,000.00
TOTAL Projected Annual Revenue	\$10,350.00
2021 PROJECTED EXPENSES	
Category	Expenses
Food Pantry Designated Fund Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items purchased at the Regional Food Bank • Items purchased at local grocery stores 	\$7,250.00
Regional Food Bank Account Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items purchased at the Regional Food 	\$1,150.00
TOTAL Projected Annual Expenses	\$8,400.00
GRAND TOTAL PROJECTED ANNUAL INCOME	\$1,950.00

Projected Budget for 2022 - 2024

EXPENSE	2022	2023	2024	Total
Food Purchases w/ Food Bank Account	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$3,300.00
Food Purchases w/ Designated Fund	\$10,072	\$13,759	\$18,216	\$42,047.00
TOTAL Estimated Expenses	\$11,172	\$14,859	\$19,316	\$45,347.00

Current Data

- Revenue to the Food Pantry Designated Fund in 2020 was \$10,866.05 including grants, New York State funding for emergency COVID-19 related deliveries and giving from members and friends of the congregation.
- Revenue to the Regional Food Bank in 2020 was \$2,200, including a \$1,000 grant from Concerned for the Hungry and a \$1,200 donation from a generous member of Messiah. Thank you!
- Expenditures from the Food Pantry Designated Fund in 2020 was \$5,786.35 and expenditures from the Regional Food Bank Account in 2020 was \$1,955.44 for a grant total of \$7,741.79.
- The Food Pantry Designated Fund as of 12/31/20 has a balance of \$6,043.10.
- Clients increased by 44% in 2020, due in part to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A total of 1265 guests were served 11,385 meals in 2020 (3 meals per day for 3 days per client).

Assumptions

- In 2021 we will effectively open a fourth week as we coordinate fresh produce distribution at the former site of Trinity Reformed Church. Additional produce is provided free of charge by the Regional Food Bank.
- From 2021 to 2024 we anticipate a 30% growth in clients per year and a 3% cost of inflation.
- It is currently unclear how the Bread of Life Food Pantry will interact with our wider "Community Center" ministry at the former site of Trinity Reformed Church. A new "Community Center Task Force" will make recommendations in that regard to the congregation by Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd, 2021. This may (or may not) significantly effect both projected revenue and expenditures.

Creation Care Ministry



Our Harvest Garden and Bread of Life Food Pantry was recognized by the New York State Assembly this God's Work, Our Hands Sunday! Asm. Angelo Santabarbara was on hand to present the award to our Urban Farming Fellow Sarah Olochnowicz.

PURPOSE

To foster eco-justice decisions and events among all activities and offices of the congregation.

REVIEW OF 2020

Despite the pandemic we had an extremely busy year at Messiah! While our annual Creation Care Speaker needed to be canceled last year due to the coronavirus, more members than ever got involved in our significantly expanded Rev. Richard Rieger Harvest Garden. We even had Sarah Olochnowicz serve as our first ever Urban Farming Fellow and installed well over \$1000 in new plants and infrastructure financing predominately through Thrivent Action Cards. Thank you Thrivent! Creation Care Sunday & Rogation Sunday worship services in the spring were a success despite being virtual and our celebration of the Season of Creation during the month of September was strengthened by Pastor Dustin and Pastor Jonathan pre-recording sermons amidst different environmental locations. We also hosted a virtual forum with Common

Energy to encourage our members to sign up for community solar. After a number of years of service, our incredible founding Chair Kären Telfeyan has recently stepped back from leadership while one of our new members, Nancy Stuebner, has now stepped into such an important role. Thank you Kären for your incredible work getting our Creation Care Ministry going!

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Gosh... there's so many exciting possibilities in the year ahead! Following recommendations from a recent energy audit, we are supporting our Property & Grounds Committee in installing new smart thermostats and energy efficient lighting in both Messiah's Worship Center and in the parsonage. We are supporting a New York State Faith Day of Action on March 11th in partnership with GreenFaith, NY Renews and the New York State Council of Churches urging for passage of the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA). Jean Jones, Ray Smith and others are already starting to talk about expanding our Harvest Garden again next year and Pastor Dustin is beginning to contemplate what socially distanced creation appreciation hikes might look like as the weather gets warmer. We are also exploring a number of options to go through a Green Congregation Certification Process similar to the process provided by Reconciling Works.



Dr. Merle Longwood, Ibrahím Pedriñan, Jean Jones, Crystal Murray, Pastor Dustin and friends attended a creation care workshop sponsored by the Reformed Church Regional Synod of Albany and Camp Fowler last winter.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Jean Jones, Merle Longwood, Kären Telfeyan, Eric Telfeyan, Crystal Murray, Ray Smith and Nancy Stuebner (Chair)

Community Service Ministry



Our young people are increasingly connected with a wide variety of community service opportunities!

PURPOSE

To guide our members in serving Christ in the face of their neighbors.

REVIEW OF 2020

This is a brand new ministry of the congregation created through the restructuring plan adopted in *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025*. Community service opportunities outside of our food pantry was limited this year due to the coronavirus, although we did organize a significant “Give Hope at Messiah” during the Advent/ Christmas season for the Mohonasen Clothing Closet and over \$600 to Save Our Street’s Adopt a Family Christmas Program. Thank you so much to all who contributed! Some of our members have also been able to sign up and volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps to assist in coronavirus vaccine distribution. Others have assisted at the SiCM Food Pantry and with Concerned for

the Hungry’s Thanksgiving Basket program that still happened this year in a more social distanced way.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

For years now at Messiah we’ve had a wide variety of community service opportunities from collections for various nonprofits to service at the Boys and Girls Club, SiCM Summer Lunch, the Regional Food Bank and more. We’ve also had major service events such as #HelpPortraitSchenectady. Our new Community Service Ministry will begin to organize all those various service opportunities together and begin to connect our members with new ways to serve. Additionally, based on the success of our “Give Hope at Messiah” Campaign during the Advent and Christmas season, moving forward we’ll be selecting up to three organizations we’ll be collecting items and funds for during each season of the church year: Advent/ Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Creation. This will coordinate our support of essential services in our local community and allow us to make a larger impact as ONE UNIFIED MESSIAH! Finally, there is great interest in more fully supporting Things of My Very Own, an organization that provides toys, toiletry items and more to recently evicted youth.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Linda Halbrend, Stacey Hodoroski, Devin Hodoroski, Gloria Maki, Kathy Bazicki, Phil Bazicki, Joyce Gresham, Judy Becker, Sue Collins, Kristen Olochnowicz, Grace Olochnowicz and Sarah Olochnowicz, Pete Jones (Chair)

Social Justice Ministry



Pastor Dustin, Ibrahím Pedriñan, Pete Jones & Merle Longwood with Bishop Macholz and other Lutheran leaders at NYS Ecumenical Advocacy Day last February.

Campaign, an organization continuing MLK's work of building a multi-racial movement to end poverty in America and a number of our members have participated in their events. Most notably, Pastor Dustin has been extremely involved in the racial justice movement through his work with Schenectady Clergy Against Hate (SCAH). Amidst the protests associated with the #BlackLivesMatter movement this past summer, both local police forces AND local #AllofUs activists requested that members of SCAH be involved with nonviolent protests to serve as "presence of peace." We'll tell ya, texting back and forth with the mayor, police and local activists leaders in the middle of a protest all at once is complicated but SCAH does believe its presence helped in preventing the violence and property destruction that took place in other cities from taking place in Schenectady. The Congregation Council voted to endorse Pastor Dustin's participation in this regard. As summer turned to fall and protest turned to dialogue, Pastor Dustin was and is extremely active in the collaborative group working to further reform the local criminal justice system in Schenectady and regularly attends meetings on racial disparities related to the COVID19 pandemic as well. Finally, we hosted our annual Offering of Letters this past fall with Bread for the World, a nonpartisan organization that advocates on anti-hunger legislation.

PURPOSE

To support our members and neighbors in living out their baptismal covenant to "strive for peace and justice in all the earth" in line with ELCA social teachings.

REVIEW OF 2020

This is a brand new ministry of the congregation created through the restructuring plan adopted in *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025*, but gosh, we've certainly been hard at work! With Pastor Dustin as President of the New York State Council of Churches (NYSCOC), we have a strong connection to efforts of faith communities to build a just, sustainable and equitable community. Through the Council a number of our members participated in NY State Ecumenical Advocacy Day this past February. During this past year the Congregation Council affirmed the principles of the Poor People's



Charis Thompson, Pastor Dustin, Jesse, Rachel and Sophie DeTeso and Rachel Longmire at a #BlackLivesMatter rally last spring.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Social justice will continue to be a major area of work in the year ahead. The New York State Council of Churches is organizing a virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Day this February and some of our members may participate in a virtual National Ecumenical Advocacy Day this spring as well. Barbara Quackenbush has begun to represent Messiah at local NAACP meetings, providing another important connection in social justice work. The movement to combat the climate crisis is of prime importance and thus we will participate in a New York State Faith Day of Action with New York Renews this March. Finally, Pastor Dustin has been tasked by Bishop Macholz to take the lead on organizing a statewide Lutheran advocacy collaboration between the ELCA Upstate New York Synod and the ELCA Metro New York Synod so stay tuned for more opportunities to "strive for peace and justice" in all the earth!

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Pete Jones, Ibrahím Pedriñan, Crystal Murray, Merle Longwood, Steve Converse, Rachel DeTeso, Barbara Quackenbush, Ray Smith and Kimlee Marquise

Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM)



Pastor Dustin and Pastor Jonathan pictured alongside fellow members of the SiCM Interfaith Task Force after SiCM's historic vote to become an interfaith organization on Tuesday, January 7th, 2020.

Just before COVID-19 hit and changed the world as we know it, Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM) had made an important transformative decision. In a unanimous vote at our January 2020 Assembly meeting, SiCM made the decision to expand into an organization of many faiths. Many of you were part of the conversations we had prior to the decision, and we are reaching out now to invite you to officially join us, as member organizations, by joining in supporting the social justice work, food insecurity programs and expansive information/referral system that SiCM supports.

We used the word "transformative" above, because that is our hope and vision-not to simply take what we've been and add new, but to become a new organization altogether, one based in the beliefs and values that all faiths hold common, and living that out together in diversity and mutuality. One symbolic, but important part of this will be discussion of a new name that would use terms more common to all faiths. Your congregation

would join committees, the board and have delegates represent you at the Assembly.

THANK YOU TO OUR CURRENT AND FORMER SICM DELEGATES!

Sue Collins, Carly DiSanto, Betsy Ryan and our beloved saint Nancy Stellrecht

Worship & Music Ministry Team



We had a packed house for our Second Annual Mass of Prayer for Christian Unity jointly held with Trinity Reformed Church!

PURPOSE

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. Ministries of the Worship & Music Ministry Team include Altar Guild, Choir, Prayer Ministry, Meditation Ministry, and Sanctuary Preparation Ministry.

REVIEW OF 2020

2020 has been a year. I'm sure you've heard that numerous times already. In terms of worship at Messiah, we really have had QUITE a year of transition. Our last in-person mass at Messiah was on March 15th, 2020 – the Third Sunday in Lent. We quickly upgraded our internet infrastructure, purchased some basic equipment, and began our first at-home service on March 22nd, 2020 – the same day New York's Stay-at-Home Order went into effect. Pastor Dustin, Rich Becker, Jill Becker, Rianne Johnson, and Doug Chilton were pivotal in the beginning of this long transition.

Holy Week was online. Easter was online. Pentecost was online. Father's Day was online. We did have a very small gathering for Blessing of the Animals in-person but with strictly enforced social distancing. Reformation Day, All Saints Day, Christ the King, Advent, Christmas, and every other service in-between... all online.

As worshipping at home continued into the Fall, we made numerous improvements to at-home worship – especially with the addition of Pastor Jonathan Vanderbeck as our interim Minister of Music after the retirement of Mr. Doug on September 30th. We began incorporating more pre-recorded videos which opened a wide window of creative opportunities for us. Sermons could be preached from anywhere; we could include various people in worship in unique ways – we even had a baptism outside in a river! Our virtual choir even had a debut on Christmas Eve.

This surely isn't our preferred way to do things, but for living in the middle of a global pandemic, we truly did grow in 2020. Thank you to all who stepped up during 2020 to make this year as "normal" as could be during worship at Messiah. Whether you were an assisting minister, a lector, participated in choir, were behind a camera, or helped lead a compline or matins service – your work was so appreciated by many.



Our youth running our annual Burning of Palms on Shrove Tuesday as we prepare for the Lenten fast.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Rianne Johnson stepped down as Worship & Music Ministry Team Leader in November 2020 and Pastor Jonathan Vanderbeck is now our interim ministry team leader until near the end of 2021. We have hopes to continue virtual choir opportunities. Our meditation ministry is also going strong and has been held regularly on Thursdays at 6:00pm.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Judy Becker, Dotty Diegel, Betsy Ryan, Linda Klein, Rachel Mathis, Linda Buehler, Rianne Johnson, Joyce Gresham, Pamella Ford, Jill Becker

Respectfully submitted,
Rianne Johnson

Stewardship Ministry Team Report

Budget & Finance Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To craft the annual budget and then review the approved budget vs. spending throughout the year to position the church in a viable financial position. A sub-set of the committee also performs the annual audit.

REVIEW OF 2020

The committee's 2020 proposed budget, with input from Council, was approved at the annual Congregational meeting.

The annual audit of the 2019 church accounts was successfully completed and submitted to Synod

We received approval for the first round of PPP loans and used that money towards 2020 salary payments. All required paperwork was submitted, and the loan was approved for forgiveness. Credit cards were obtained through Charity Charge for the food pantry.



Our Congregation Council voting to recommend our Draft 2021 Parish Budget for approval, marking a major shift in the life of our congregation, on Monday, December 21st.

Insurance for Messiah and the parsonage was transitioned from Preferred Mutual (via The Merriam Insurance Agency) to Church Mutual.

We contracted with Teller Property Maintenance for snow removal services at Messiah and Trinity. The committee's 2021 proposed budget was crafted and presented to Council. The co-treasurers and financial secretary continue to provide committee chairs with a means for knowing his/her committee budget and spending to date. The co-treasurers, financial secretary and Pastor continue to hold monthly meetings to review finances, discuss challenges and develop solutions relative to the church finances. The committee continued quarterly meetings to review the current state of finances and make recommendations to Council as needed.

We ended 2020 with total revenue exceeding total spending by \$23,204.24. This is due in part to a combination of increased giving and decreased expenses as a result of the COVID restrictions.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

The 2021 proposed budget will be reviewed and voted upon at the annual meeting of the Congregation. The audit of the 2020 church finances will be conducted in March.

Trinity Reformed will be added to the Church Mutual insurance policy in the first quarter of 2021, when their current policy expires.

The Budget and Finance committee will continue to meet quarterly in 2021 to constantly assess where we are financially and, when necessary, make recommendations to Council in an effort to address concerns.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Neal Fisher, Bill Fleming, Karen Kreischer, Dave Barnett, Penny Incitti, René Dunda-Martin, Phil Bazicki and Kristie Becker (Chair)

Respectfully submitted,
Kristie Becker, Budget & Finance Chair

Communications Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To serve God by showing Christ's ever present love, justice and mercy through the Gospel. It is our mission to form bonds within the congregation members and the surrounding community.

REVIEW OF 2020

This year of pandemic has certainly been a scramble, as nearly all we do as a congregation has become virtual communications. Highlights include a focus on putting out positive messages on Facebook and Instagram, increased advertising and Pastor Dustin's five days a week program Vespers in the first months of the pandemic.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

In the year ahead, with the help of Katie Becker, a new Council Member and communications professional, we hope to reinvigorate our committee around developing a formal communications plan. Additionally, as budgeting allows, we would like to develop a part time Director of Communications position at Messiah to assist in graphic design and expanding our virtual footprint.



In the midst of this summer's #BlackLivesMatter national struggle against systemic racism, our Communications Committee hosted a conversation with a number of our members about how spread the Good News of Christ's radical message of inclusion and diversity.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Molly Karrel and Tom Collins (Co-Chairs)

Archives Ministry



A young Ed Underkoffler, who led the building of our current sanctuary, hands Pastor Richard Rieger the keys to the new church building for the first time during the Dedication of the Sanctuary on March 20th, 1966.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To document and interpret the historical identity of the congregation with orderly records so that heritage will be preserved and can be built on into the future.

REVIEW OF 2020

This is a brand new ministry of the congregation created through the restructuring plan adopted in *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025*.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

In the year ahead, we plan to begin working with our new Administrative Assistant, Sarah Bachorik, along with Rianne Johnson and Joyce Gresham, to begin organizing, cataloging and preserving the decades of archives kept in our church building, particularly as we journey towards our centennial anniversary in 2028.

Another proposed project is to begin recording an oral history with interviews of longtime members and elders.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Support is needed!

Mission Support Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To guide the congregation in its understanding of how Christian stewardship fulfills the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

REVIEW OF 2020

The Mission Support Ministry is proud of the 2020 campaign.

This was a strange year for The Mission Support Ministry. We participated in a program called Building a Culture of Generosity. This program led by Pete Reuss from the company GSB guided us through our fall campaign which was highly successful. We increased or pledge revenue by more than 10%. Thanks to this program we have built many strategies that will help in the future. Thank you to all members who sent in a pledge and supported out efforts this past fall.



Our youth and their parents raising funds for Camp Calumet during Virtual Reach the Beach!

Our Congregation continues to do an outstanding job by adding to their pledging for the coming year.

Thank you.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

In the year ahead we expect to conduct a Capital Appeal alongside our annual Financial Mission Support Campaign in the fall with further assistance from GSB. We also will conduct a Time & Talent Stewardship Campaign, either virtually or once we can return to in-person worship.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Ann Marie Grey, Marilyn Barnett, Rebecca Bliss, Adrienne Westfall and Penny Incitti (Chair)

Property & Grounds Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To organize the maintenance and continual improvement of all congregation property in a manner consistent with the mission of the congregation.

REVIEW OF 2020

This year saw a significant change in the leadership of our committee as Charlie Zitzmann and Rich Stigberg both stepped back after years of service as our Property Chair and Grounds Chair, respectively. Thank you so much Charlie and Rich for your many years of ministry in such critical roles at Messiah! Despite such significant changes we took advantage of the lack of building use to make a significant number of improvements in recent weeks under the leadership of our new Property & Grounds Chair Steve Friebe and new Parish Caretaker Dave Carkner:



Thank you Charlie for your many years of service as our Property Chair!

- New boiler and control wiring has been done
- Repairs to the women's room toilet
- Repairs to exit lights and installed new parking lot light timers
- Reinstall downstairs coat rack & repaired entrance sign and quartz light
- Repaired food pantry entrance door and installed a pantry loading ramp
- Installed a camera and monitoring system at the pantry entrance. Installed new smoke & CO detectors and replaced light bulbs as needed

We also cleaned out the garage, removed dead trees, made a number of parsonage repairs, installed new harvest garden beds and conducted two successful Service Days throughout the year.



Many thanks to Rich Stigberg who has served MANY years as our Grounds Chair, pictured with his step-son Kyle Avery.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Repairs to be conducted in the months ahead include:

- Thermostat wiring in Fellowship Hall and update thermostats In Fellowship Hall, Narthex, and Sanctuary
- Repair covers on parsonage basement windows & install adequate basement lighting
- Replace timer for entrance light into the narthex and inspect all fire extinguishers
- Install new storm windows on parsonage dining room and repair outside water hose connections
- Repair sanctuary tiles and stain wood siding outside of the church building

Work in January 2021 has increased to bring our church to a level needed now to be ready for in person worship, in person fellowship, and to ensure the bread of life food pantry operates smoothly as the pantry grows. My goal as Property chair is to have our building, and grounds to a high standard. As time goes on and we become accessible, and grow. I am excited and look forward to our next step.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Rich Becker, Paul Bode, Bill Ellis, Diane Insero, Karen Keenan and Steve Friebe (Chair)

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Friebe, Property & Grounds Chair

Personnel Ministry

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

To support the work of the pastor and staff in carrying out the mission of Messiah Lutheran Church.

REVIEW OF 2020

This was a MASSIVE year for the Personnel Committee. In addition to supporting our existing staff through the unique challenges of the COVID19 pandemic (and keeping everyone fully on the payroll) we drafted a new robust Employee Handbook and have fully brought Messiah's personnel policies in line with New York State labor laws.

In addition to adopting new policies we have developed position descriptions for all of our employees, including our new Parish Caretaker, Dave Carkner, our new Administrative Assistant, Sarah Bachorik and our new Interim Associate Pastor, Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck.



Mr. Doug's final service on Sunday, August 30th, 2020.

After over thirty years of ministry at Messiah, our one and only Douglas J. Chilton retired from his position as Musician & Cantor, playing his last service with us Sunday, August 30th, 2020. Thank you Mr. Doug and Cecile for so many years of wonderful ministries at Messiah!

The following Sunday we welcomed Pastor Jonathan as our Interim Minister of Music, a role he will continue to fulfill while we remain worshipping virtually in 2021. The search for a new permanent Minister of Music while continue as soon as we can begin contemplating a return to in-person worship.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

The only area of work that remains to be completed in terms of staff restructuring is actually figuring out what it means for Pastor Dustin to serve as a "Senior Pastor" with an expanded staff. We are also developing a Sabbatical Policy in partnership with the Congregation Council and will soon conduct an all-staff meeting in order to connect our growing staff for another year of life changing ministry at Messiah.



Welcome Pastor Jonathan! Pictured here with members of Trinity Reformed after their historic vote to consolidate with Messiah on Sunday, October 18th, 2020.

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTRY LEADERS!

Joyce Gresham, Christine DeMento, Pete Jones and Pamella Ford (Chair)

2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Opening Litany (five minutes)
- II. Approval of 2021 Congregation Meeting Agenda & 2020 Congregation Meeting Minutes (five minutes)
- III. President's Report & Pastor's Report (five minutes)
- IV. Financial Reports (five minutes)
- V. Ministry Team Reports (five minutes)
- VI. Annual Report of the Upstate New York Synod (five minutes)
- VII. Old Business (zero minutes)
- VIII. New Business (fifty minutes)
 - A. Discussion and Adoption of Resolution "One Messiah"
 - B. Discussion and Adoption of "2021 Parish Budget"
 - C. 2021 Nominating Committee Report
 1. Nominations of Three Full Term Members of the Congregation Council
 - a) Suzanne Collins
 - b) Eric Cawley
 - c) ???
 2. Nominations of Two Two-Year Term Members of the Congregation Council
 - a) Rachel DeTeso-Mathis
 - b) ???
 3. Nominations of One One-Year Term Member of the Congregation Council
 - a) Katie Becker
 4. Nominations for Two Delegates to the 2021 Upstate New York Synod Assembly & 2021 Hudson-Mohawk Conference Assemblies
 - a) Merle Longwood
 - b) Kimlee Marquise
 5. Nominations for Two Delegates to the 2021 SiCM Assemblies
 - a) Suzanne Collins
 - b) ???
 6. Nominations for Four Members of the 2021 Nominating Committee
 - a) Pete Jones (Chair)
 - b) Katie Becker
 - c) René Dunda-Martin
 - d) Phil Bazicki
 - D. Affirmation of SiCM Membership & Purpose Statement:
 - To serve the evolving needs of the community and its individuals;
 - To challenge faith communities, both member and non-member, and their individual members, and the general population, to provide greater involvement and service in the local community;
 - To foster understanding, trust and cooperation among faith communities and their individual members while cultivating an environment of mutual and respectful learning and sharing of traditions.
- IX. Announcements and Communications (ten minutes)

Resolution: “One Messiah”

Whereas the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Messiah (hereafter Messiah Lutheran Church) adopted *Messiah in Your Lifetime: A Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025* on February 2nd, 2020;

Whereas the people of Messiah Lutheran Church commissioned the “Who is My Neighbor Taskforce” to “provide a comprehensive overview of options for use of both our properties... regarding how our facilities can best support the vision, values, purpose, long-term goals and objectives of our joint strategic plan with a particular focus on accessibility concerns” on February 2nd, 2020;

Whereas a final report was given by the “Who Is My Neighbor Taskforce” to the congregation on January 20th, 2021 at the virtual “One Messiah Forum” with a recording of that report made publicly available;

Whereas in line with *A Memorandum of Understanding between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Messiah and the Schenectady Classis of the Reformed Church in America*, a joint Financial Mission Support Campaign has been successfully conducted, staff members of the former Trinity Reformed Church have been hired as of December 26th, 2020 and the members of the former Trinity Reformed Church have been transferred as members of Messiah Lutheran Church as of December 31st, 2020, now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that Messiah Lutheran Church:

1. Thanks the members of the “Who Is Our Neighbor Task Force” at the completion of their work;
2. Approves the Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck as its contracted Interim Associate Pastor in a form proposed by Bishop John Macholz of the Upstate New York Synod until November 26th, 2021;
3. Approves the purchase of the former Trinity Reformed Church's property from the Schenectady Classis of the Reformed Church in America in the amount of \$ (to be determined; the total of any legal closing costs required on behalf of the Classis of Schenectady) following the completion of recommended property and environmental assessments;
4. Authorizes the use of up to \$10,000 for legal, property inspection, acquisition and pre-development work on that property;
5. Requests the Congregation Council to appoint an Accessibility Task Force to make final recommendations regarding necessary improvements to Messiah's Worship Center for approval of the congregation on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd, 2021;
6. Requests the Mission Support Committee to conduct a Capital Appeal Campaign to finance those necessary improvements, with the support of the Rev. Pete Reuss of Gronlund, Sayther, Brunkow, in the autumn of 2021;
7. Requests the Congregation Council to appoint a Community Center Task Force to craft a development plan for the Bread of Life Community Center for approval of the congregation on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd, 2021;
8. Authorizes the change of name of the congregation to “Messiah Lutheran Church” and the Communications Committee to develop a new logo to reflect that change.

2020 Annual Meeting of the Congregation Minutes

held February 2nd, 2020

Members present: Dave Barnett, René Dunda-Martin, Randi Dunda-Martin, Linda Klein, Denise Larrabee, Jean Jones, George Small, Allison Bode, Michael Mitchel, Rianne Johnson, Phil Davis, Dotty Diegel, John Diegel, Linda Buehler, Barb Sandmeyer, Kathy Bazicki, Kristen Olochnowicz, Vanessa Ford-Roether, Ann Marie Gray, Phil Bazicki, Rich Becker, Kristie Becker, Bill Ellis, Stacey Hodoroski, Eric Cawley, Hannah Cawley, Karen Keenan, Joyce Gresham, Betsy Ryan, Barb Hallett, Jill Becker, Steve Friebel, Pamela Ford, Crystal Murray, Nancy Stellrecht, Karen Kreisler, Carly DiSanto, Gloria Maki, Brian Maki, Hilda Hoffstetter, Linda Halbrend, Penny Incitti, Karen Telfeyan, Penny Incitti, Hannah Crowther, Tammi Crowther, Chip Crowther, Judy Becker, William Becker, Ibrahím Pedriñan, Peter Jones, Tyler Jones, Rachel Mathis, Jackie DeTeso, Merle Longwood, Marilyn Barnett and Pastor Dustin Wright.

1. Call to order a 11:51 am. Prayer offered by Pastor Dustin Wright.
2. Minutes from the 2019 Congregational Meeting were accepted unanimously.
3. President's report and Pastors report were presented.
 - a. President Peter Jones noted that creating a strategic plan was very important during this past year and provided highlights of the many activities which have taken place
 - b. Doug Chilton made an announcement that he will become a snowbird September 1, 2020 and will need to step down as a full time musician at Messiah. A motion was made by Jill Becker and seconded by Kristen Olochnowicz thanking Doug for his 30 years of service. The worship and music committee along with Pastor Dustin have been discussing the next steps for the process for finding a replacement musician. Anyone with questions can speak to the personnel committee.
 - c. Pastor Dustin thanked everyone who has turned out with support and dedication during this past year which has been both joyful and difficult.
4. Financial reports were presented. Pete Jones acknowledged and thanked René Dunda-Martin for all her hard work to get the reports together
5. Committee and Organizational Reports were presented.
 - a. Kristen Olochnowicz wanted to clarify that this was not a planned year for family fun day however depending on what happens with the building, we may still have it.
6. The Annual Report of the Upstate New York Synod was presented
7. A motion was made by Penny Incitti to accept all reports, seconded by Judy Becker.
8. New Business
 - a. Discussion and Adoption of Messiah in Your Lifetime Strategic Plan. The plan results from all the meetings and conversations that have occurred creating a five year strategic plan. We have grown in recent years and this important document will articulate who we are and what we want to be. There will be many decisions to be made in the future and we can reflect back on this document to ensure the decisions we make are in line with the guidelines set forth in this document. Motion to accept the Messiah in Your Lifetime Strategic Plan made by Steve Friebel, seconded by Merle Longwood.
 - b. Discussion and Adoption of Amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELC of Messiah. Every three years ELCA puts out a model constitution most of which must be adopted with some optional items. A motion was made by Steve Friebel to accept the Amendments, seconded by Joyce Gresham.
 - c. The 2020 budget was presented by Kristie Becker. The budget in the packet was approved by council and differs slightly from the original version. Total revenue vs. expense will start out \$5152 in the red. Historically we have done better with lower expenses and higher income than expected. Projections are conservative. A motion to accept the 2020 budget made by Kathy Bazicki, seconded by Paul Bode.
 - d. Nominating Committee report- Motion made to accept all the nominations noted below made by Kristen Olochnowicz, seconded by Betsy Ryan.
 - i. Full term members Congregation Council: Joyce Gresham, Carly DiSanto, Karen Keenan
 - ii. Delegates to the 2020 Upstate NY Synod Assembly: Rianne Johnson, Ibrahím Pedriñan
 - iii. Delegates to the 2020 Hudson-Mohawk Conference Assemblies: Rianne Johnson, Ibrahím Pedriñan
 - iv. Delegates to 2020 SICM Assemblies: Betsy Ryan, Nancy Stellrecht
 - v. 2020 Nominating Committee: Suzanne Collins, Pete Jones, Anne Marie Gray, Ibrahím Pedriñan.

Thank you to the outgoing council members Jackie DeTeso, Stacey Hodoroski, Dave Barnett.

e. Discussion and Adoption of Resolutions concerning out Capital Plan.

Overview of the Capital Plan was provided by Pastor Dustin. Two years ago today Bill Becker made a motion to start a master plan for our building. An architect was brought in to create a plan and three task forces were created to support the project. The grant writing taskforce submitted a major grant request to ELCA world hunger. We did not receive the grant however have been given guidelines on changes to make to better next submission. The solar energy taskforce completed an energy audit which resulted in ways to save and we signed up for community solar. The property team worked on getting a new furnace installed. They spoke to the architect to see if we could consolidate the two plans but unfortunately the cost was double of what was expected. Related to working with Trinity Reformed - We would like to have combined worship with them in the future. At this time we are unsure of what will happen going forward and what will best fulfill God's service and our community. Both congregations are looking forward to more joint opportunities to get to know each other. Overall we are doing something very special as a congregation and possibly this could be a model for Churches in the future.

- Thank you to all the existing task force members
- Grant writing task force has been proposed as an ongoing group
- Covenant time and prayer with Trinity Reformed
- Pastor Dustin with work with Pastor Johnathon and councils to ensure strategic plan covers all that is needed.
- Charlie Zitzmann, Neal Fisher and Joyce Gresham will work with the "who is my neighbor" case study.

9. Announcements and Communications

Sign up for solar energy

10. Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Bode at 1:03 Seconded by Penny Incitti.

Notes from the Parish Register & Pastoral Acts

MEMBERS GAINED IN 2020 (46):

1. Baptism (4)
 - Nathaniel Murray – February 9, 2020
 - Pryor Zimmer – July 26, 2020
 - Clara Pantalone – September 27, 2020
 - Joseph Pantalone – September 27, 2020
2. Affirmation of Faith (18)
 - Barbara Quackenbush & Ray Smith – November 22, 2020
 - Rebecca, Clark, & Matthew Bliss – November 22, 2020
 - Krista Russo – November 22, 2020
 - Nancy, Dave, & Andrew Stuebner – November 22, 2020
 - Kimlee Marquise & Tracy Shepherd – November 22, 2020
 - Gladys Cath & Sheri Lamb – November 22, 2020
 - Michael Mitchel – November 22, 2020
 - Amy Roach – November 22, 2020
 - Edward & Kim Pomykaj – November 22, 2020
 - Lisa Johnson – November 22, 2020
3. Transfer (24)
 - Connie Aldrich – December 31, 2020
 - Judy Barnes – December 31, 2020
 - Don Bergeron – December 31, 2020
 - John Cook – December 31, 2020
 - Barbara Evans – December 31, 2020
 - David Howland – December 31, 2020
 - Richard & Lois Hyde – December 31, 2020
 - Michael Jegabbi – December 31, 2020
 - Jenny Laraway – December 31, 2020
 - Laurie Lumbra – December 31, 2020
 - Paul Meluch – December 31, 2020
 - Alexander Salgado – December 31, 2020
 - Linda Santiago – December 31, 2020
 - David & Lois Snyder – December 31, 2020
 - Inge Stuart – December 31, 2020
 - Maria & London, Dakota, & Ezra Vasquez, Raven & Vayda Gonzalez – 12/31/20
 - Adrienne Westfall – December 31, 2020
4. Other sources and statistical adjustment (0)

MEMBERS REMOVED IN 2020 (20):

1. Death (6)
2. Inactivity (13)
3. Transfer (0)
4. Other sources and statistical adjustment (1)

MEMBERSHIP AT END OF 2020: 221

2018 Avg. Attendance: 75 | 2019 Avg. Attendance: 74 | 2020 Avg. Attendance: HAHA!

FUNERALS:

April 30, 2020: Bob Reisinger – Conducted at Schenectady Memorial Park by Rev. Dustin Wright
August 24, 2020: Joe DeMento – Conducted at McNulty Funeral Home by Rev. Dustin Wright
October 27, 2020: Nancy Stellrecht – Conducted at DeMarco-Stone Funeral Home by Rev. Dustin Wright

WEDDINGS:

None

Treasurer's Report

2020 Statement of Activity (Unrestricted Funds)

	JAN - MAR, 2020	APR - JUN, 2020	JUL - SEP, 2020	OCT - DEC, 2020	TOTAL
Revenue					
200400 PPP Loan/Grant		14,000.00			\$14,000.00
40050 Endowment Fund					\$0.00
40060 Endowment Income EICA Fund	5,238.13	2,658.34	2,661.54	2,661.54	\$13,219.55
40065 Endowment Income Total Bond Fund	82.31	53.50	72.02	67.01	\$274.84
Total 40050 Endowment Fund	5,320.44	2,711.84	2,733.56	2,728.55	\$13,494.39
40115 Holiday Offerings and Miscellaneous					
40115 Holiday Offerings and Miscellaneous					\$0.00
40130 Christmas Envelopes	22.00			220.00	\$242.00
40135 Easter Envelopes		375.00			\$375.00
40145 Holiday Flowers	72.00	16.00			\$88.00
40155 Initial Envelopes	79.00	5.00			\$84.00
40160 Lenten Donations	193.00	325.00			\$518.00
40175 Miscellaneous- Other		45.00	145.00	660.00	\$850.00
40180 Thanksgiving Envelopes				90.00	\$90.00
40185 Thrivent Choice Dollars		32.00			\$32.00
Total 40115 Holiday Offerings and Miscellaneous	366.00	798.00	145.00	970.00	\$2,279.00
40225 Offerings					
40225 Offerings					\$0.00
40230 Envelopes	15,413.00	22,603.00	14,038.00	23,524.00	\$75,578.00
40235 Loose Plate Offerings	1,365.50	100.00		29.00	\$1,494.50
40240 Tithely EFT Offerings	5,217.08	8,235.00	8,223.23	9,843.57	\$31,518.88
Total 40225 Offerings	21,995.58	30,938.00	22,261.23	33,396.57	\$108,591.38
40280 Rental Income	2,000.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	\$6,500.00
Total Revenue	\$29,682.02	\$49,947.84	\$26,639.79	\$38,595.12	\$144,864.77
GROSS PROFIT	\$29,682.02	\$49,947.84	\$26,639.79	\$38,595.12	\$144,864.77
Expenditures					
50100 Part 1 Benevolence					
50100 Part 1 Benevolence					\$0.00
50110 1.1 Local				650.00	\$650.00
50120 1.2 Synod	750.00	750.00	750.00	1,400.00	\$3,650.00
Total 50100 Part 1 Benevolence	750.00	750.00	750.00	2,050.00	\$4,300.00
50200 Part 2 Pastor					
50200 Part 2 Pastor					\$0.00
50210 2.1 Base Salary	8,473.94	10,560.53	11,575.23	11,575.23	\$42,184.93
50220 2.2 Social Security Offset	1,039.66	348.83			\$1,388.49
50230 2.3 Retirement Pension	1,767.69	1,767.69	1,767.69	1,767.69	\$7,070.76
50240 2.4 Health Coverage	1,757.87	1,797.15	1,797.15	1,797.15	\$7,149.32
50250 2.5 Disability & Survivor Benefit	451.73	427.17	324.06	324.06	\$1,527.02
50260 2.6 Car Allowance	206.48	492.21	249.56	271.42	\$1,219.67
50270 2.7 Continuing Education			667.00		\$667.00
50280 2.8 Professional Expenses	102.75		19.50	191.03	\$313.28
50285 2.9 Equity Housing Allowance	526.76	576.99	576.99	619.99	\$2,300.73
Total 50200 Part 2 Pastor	14,326.88	15,970.57	16,977.18	16,546.57	\$63,821.20

	JAN - MAR, 2020	APR - JUN, 2020	JUL - SEP, 2020	OCT - DEC, 2020	TOTAL
50300 Part 3 Personnel					\$0.00
50310 3.1 Church Musician's Salary	2,106.42	2,270.97	2,340.00	2,250.00	\$8,967.39
50315 3.2 Church Musician's Social Security	432.95	183.57	197.32		\$813.84
50320 3.3 Church Musician NY SUI	6.30				\$6.30
50330 3.4 Supply Pastor	125.00			125.00	\$250.00
50350 3.5 Parish Administrator Salary	2,998.03	3,463.10	3,376.26	3,376.26	\$13,213.65
50355 3.6 Parish Administrator Social Security	628.24	280.70	284.71	267.53	\$1,461.18
50356 50356 Parish Administrator NY SUI	9.93				\$9.93
50360 3.7 Sexton Salary	1,270.93	1,382.73	1,425.00	1,425.00	\$5,503.66
50365 3.8 Sexton Social Security	267.61	112.18	120.16	120.16	\$620.11
50370 3.9 Disability and Workers Comp	370.34				\$370.34
Total 50300 Part 3 Personnel	8,215.75	7,693.25	7,743.45	7,563.95	\$31,216.40
50400 Part 4 Administration					\$0.00
50410 4.1 Office Supplies	152.88	53.99	294.77	103.04	\$604.68
50420 4.2 Telephone & Internet	251.12	246.71	214.71	279.42	\$991.96
50430 4.3 Postage	77.00	22.00		242.00	\$341.00
50440 4.4 Offering Envelopes & Supplies				252.13	\$252.13
50450 4.5 Toner Supplies and Maintenance	62.32	753.38			\$815.70
50460 4.6 Web Hosting & Domain	165.06	158.98	273.36	338.88	\$936.28
50470 4.7 IT Specialist	550.00				\$550.00
50491 4.10 Software	102.60	153.90	102.60	325.56	\$684.66
Total 50400 Part 4 Administration	1,360.98	1,388.96	885.44	1,541.03	\$5,176.41
50500 Part 5 Property	669.94				\$669.94
50510 5.1 Electric & Gas	1,253.19	1,088.17	736.12	1,059.00	\$4,136.48
50530 5.3 Town Taxes	312.86		75.00		\$387.86
50540 5.4 Trash Removal		55.08	73.44	36.72	\$165.24
50550 5.5 Lawn Care & Snow Removal				54.51	\$54.51
50570 5.7 Cleaning Equip & Supplies	18.12				\$18.12
50580 5.8 Building Maintenance	145.40	136.00		365.00	\$646.40
Total 50500 Part 5 Property	2,399.51	1,279.25	884.56	1,515.23	\$6,078.55
50600 Part 6 Parsonage					\$0.00
50610 6.1 Electricity & Gas	506.82	510.00	510.00	510.00	\$2,036.82
50620 6.2 Telephone & Internet	35.00			150.77	\$185.77
50630 6.3 Town Taxes	627.18		75.00		\$702.18
50640 6.4 Maintenance	143.51	28.40			\$171.91
Total 50600 Part 6 Parsonage	1,312.51	538.40	585.00	660.77	\$3,096.68
50700 Part 7 Worship & Music					\$0.00
50710 7.1 Candles & Communion Supplies				90.63	\$90.63
50720 7.2 Sundays & Seasons	74.28				\$74.28
50730 7.3 Holiday Flowers		104.85			\$104.85
50750 7.5 Piano Maintenance-Tuning	100.00	100.00		110.00	\$310.00

	JAN - MAR, 2020	APR - JUN, 2020	JUL - SEP, 2020	OCT - DEC, 2020	TOTAL
50770 7.7 Music				12.50	\$12.50
Total 50700 Part 7 Worship & Music	174.28	204.85		213.13	\$592.26
50800 Part 8 Faith Formation					\$0.00
50810 8.1 Sunday Church School	125.96		74.83	623.16	\$823.95
50820 8.2 Youth Ministry	26.02				\$26.02
50830 8.3 Confirmation	354.35		83.79	99.99	\$538.13
50840 8.4 Life Passages	255.34		257.97		\$513.31
50850 8.5 Devotional Materials	302.79	18.20	11.00	236.34	\$568.33
50860 8.6 Guest Speakers			250.00	49.99	\$299.99
Total 50800 Part 8 Faith Formation	1,064.46	18.20	677.59	1,009.48	\$2,769.73
50900 Ministry Support					\$0.00
50901 9.1 Stewardship		300.00			\$300.00
50905 9.5 Lutheran Subscription				79.80	\$79.80
50970 9.7 Leadership Development			148.50	20.00	\$168.50
Total 50900 Ministry Support		300.00	148.50	99.80	\$548.30
Total Expenditures	\$29,604.37	\$28,143.48	\$28,651.72	\$31,199.96	\$117,599.53
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$77.65	\$21,804.36	\$ -2,011.93	\$7,395.16	\$27,265.24
NET REVENUE	\$77.65	\$21,804.36	\$ -2,011.93	\$7,395.16	\$27,265.24

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	12/31/2019	12/31/2020
Checking Account	\$20,226.56)	\$50,985.27)
ELCA Endowment Fund	\$282,374.87)	\$299,283.00)
MM Robert Doremus Estate	\$7,149.11)	\$7,223.53)
Memorial Funds - Vanguard	\$3,407.09)	\$3,422.45)
Total Bond - Vanguard (Endowment)	\$12,647.99)	\$13,238.20)
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	\$325,805.62)	\$374,152.45)

Funds included in checking account balance 12/31/2020

Checking Acct Balance	\$50,985.27)
Less Permanently Restricted Funds	\$30,750.32)
Less Temporarily Restricted Funds	\$507.83)
Less Federal Payroll and FICA Tax Liability	\$537.96)
Checking Acct Funds Available	\$19,189.16)

Balance of Restricted Funds

Restricted Fund Balances as of 12/31/20

The process for creating and approving designated funds was formalized in 2017.

Permanently Restricted Funds	Balance 12/31/2020
Adult Education Fund	-\$113.62
Bible Fund	\$25.00
Campership Fund	\$853.90
Capital Project	\$8,946.07
Choir Fund	\$50.00
Creation Care Fund	\$200.00
Endowment Funds in checking account	\$4,474.63
Food Pantry Fund	\$6,043.10
Furnace Fund	\$380.00
Rich Hallett Accessibility Fund	\$3,025.00
Memorial Funds in checking account	\$7,001.07
Outreach Fund	\$267.18
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$402.00
Property Care Fund	-\$2,726.91
Sunday School Fund	\$1,115.51
Youth and Family Fund	\$743.77
TOTAL	\$30,800.32
Temporarily Restricted Funds	
ELCA World Hunger	\$120.00
Hymnals	\$58.57
Souper Bowl	\$329.26
TOTAL	\$507.83

Financial Secretary's Report

UNDESIGNATED FUNDS

	YTD
Offerings	
Offering Envelope (Pledged + Unpledged).....	\$107,373.08
Loose Plate Offering	\$1,494.50
Offerings Subtotal.....	\$108,867.58
 Endowment Revenue	
Endowment Fund Revenue (ELCA)	\$13,193.82
Endowment Fund Revenue (Vanguard)	\$300.57
Endowment Revenue Subtotal	\$13,494.39
 Holiday Giving and Miscellaneous	
Advent Folders	\$0.00
Bulletin Dedications.....	\$0.00
Christmas Envelopes	\$267.00
Easter Envelopes.....	\$375.00
Holiday Flowers	\$88.00
Initial Offering Envelopes	\$84.00
Lenten Folders.....	\$0.00
Lenten Midweek / Holy Week Envelopes	\$518.00
Miscellaneous: Travelers, Community Garden, Zoom, Tax Refund, Rug.....	\$1,519.67
Rental Property	\$6,000.00
Thanksgiving Envelopes	\$90.00
Thrivent Choice Dollars.....	\$95.00
Holiday Giving and Miscellaneous Subtotal	\$9,036.67
 UNDESIGNATED FUNDS SUBTOTAL	\$131,398.64

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Adult Education.....	\$0.00
Bible Fund.....	\$25.00
Campership Fund.....	\$359.00
Capital Campaign.....	\$2,954.00
Creation Care	\$150.00
ELCA World Hunger.....	\$170.00
Endowment Fund Contributions.....	\$4,150.00
Food Pantry	\$14,134.05
Memorial Fund Contributions.....	\$3,445.00
Outreach.....	\$0.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund.....	\$630.00
Property Fund	\$0.00
Rich Hallett Memorial Accessibility Fund	\$25.00
Special Projects Fund	\$1,009.26
Student College Support	\$927.00
Sunday School	\$0.00
Worship & Music.....	\$0.00
Youth and Family Fund.....	\$666.00
DESIGNATED FUNDS SUBTOTAL	\$28,644.31
 Total Revenue Subtotal.....	\$160,042.95
In Kind Donations	\$2,712.43
 TOTAL REVENUE.....	\$162,755.38

Endowment Fund Report

The Endowment Fund of Messiah Lutheran Church was established at the congregational meeting in January 1992. The primary emphasis was income – with stability – and growth of principal. Income is automatically deposited in a separate savings account and the treasurer is empowered to withdraw from this account if funds are needed for current expenses. In the event that this saving account would grow because the funds are not needed, then a separate decision would be made by Council to reinvest some of the funds back into endowment principal.

History of deposited amounts to this fund is:

1992	Beginning Amount	\$46,210	Lambert estate; Richter estate; Graupner estate; Kreischer family
1993 - 2004	Additions	\$31,518	
2004	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$60,000	Griffeth estate
2005 - 2008	Addition to Vanguard Total Bond (T.B.)	\$945	In memory of R. Doremus; C. Lindsay; H. Keseberg; P. King
2009	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$50,000	Doremus estate
2011	Addition to Vanguard T.B.	\$450	In memory of E. VanWormer; V. Parsons
2013	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$20,496	In memory of M. Juckett; E. Friebel; L. Miller
2015	Addition to Vanguard T.B.	\$300	In memory of L. Engvold; J. Baumler; G. Gresham; P. Laws; R. Stone; E. Friday
2017	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$9,300	In honor of Karen Kreischer; Sister Lorraine; In memory of Richard King; John Engvold; Tom Town; Pastor Reiger; Betty Friebel
2018	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$75	In memory of Craig Aldi; Joan Libby; Marion Lewis
2019	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$2,105	In memory of Christine Gaulin, Gerald Hoffstetter, Roseanne Hyde, Joseph Fisch, Dave Ellis, R Christoffel, Germaine Doremus, Robert Penn, Beverly White
2020	Addition to ELCA Endow.	\$4,150	In memory of; Beverly Niebuhr, Diane Fisher, Robert Reisinger, Denise Larrabee, Joseph DeMento, Nancy Stellrecht, Irene Joseph and William Becker

TOTAL DEPOSITS **\$225,549**

The ELCA endowment is managed with a long-term philosophy that contains a mix of fixed income investments for distribution and stocks to compensate for inflation. Calculating 4.25 percent of the average closing value of the last five years smooths the annual distribution. The stock market recovery, plus a significant addition from the Doremus estate, resulted in a big increase in account value and income for years 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013. Performance data for the year 2020 is indicated below:

	<u>Vanguard Total Bond</u>	<u>ELCA Endowment</u>
Start 2020	\$12,568.37	\$288,542.78
2020 Income	\$294.58	\$7,926.76**
2020 % Income	2.34%	2.75%
2020 Total Return	5.33%	3.72%
End 2020 Value	\$13,238.20	\$299,282.72**

**as of 11/30/2019

Total End 2011 Account Value: \$193,408.18 Total End 2011 Income: \$8,688.21
 Total End 2012 Account Value: \$208,263.07 Total End 2012 Income: \$8,236.15

Total End 2013 Account Value: \$254,601.85	Total End 2013 Income: \$8,121.14
Total End 2014 Account Value: \$265,519.09	Total End 2014 Income: \$9,454.17
Total End 2015 Account Value: \$254,964.88	Total End 2015 Income: \$9,871.56
Total End 2016 Account Value: \$252,493.65	Total End 2016 Income: \$9,542.70
Total End 2017 Account Value: \$282,149.51	Total End 2017 Income: \$9,877.82
Total End 2018 Account Value: \$275,477.31	Total End 2018 Income: \$8,055.04
Total End 2019 Account Value: \$295,020.86	Total End 2019 Income: \$7,991.78
Total End 2020 Account Value: \$312,520.92	Total End 2020 Income: \$8,221.34

* Percent total return includes income and value change (not considering additions to principal.)

2021 Proposed Parish Budget

	REVENUE	2020		2021	
	1. Regular Offerings	\$111,452		\$134,858	
	2. Endowment Revenue	\$10,500		\$10,800	
	3. Holiday Offerings & Misc.	\$8,775		\$11,375	
	4. Trinity Asset Transfer	\$1,800		\$1,500	
	Total	\$132,527		\$158,533	
	EXPENSES	2020	Inc/Dec	2021	Inc/Dec
Part 1	MISSION SUPPORT				
	1. Synod	\$3,400	\$400	\$4,000	\$600
	2. Local	\$250	\$0	\$400	\$150
	Total	\$3,650	\$400	\$4,400	\$750
Part 2	PASTOR				
	1. Base Salary	\$42,115	\$847	\$45,000	\$2,885
	2. Social Security (.0994 x base salary)	\$4,186	\$82	\$4,473	\$287
	3. Retirement Pension (12% of DC)	\$7,375	\$304	\$7,718	\$343
	4. Health Coverage (11.1% of DC)	\$7,343	\$626	\$7,132	(\$211)
	5. Disability & Survivor Benefits (2.2% of DC)	\$1,745	(\$618)	\$1,415	(\$330)
	6. Car Allowance	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$0
	7. Continuing Education	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
	8. Professional Expenses	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$0
	9. Equity Housing Allowance	\$1,925	\$157	\$2,000	\$75
	10. Mobile Phone Allowance	\$540	\$120	\$540	\$0
	Total	\$68,629	\$1,518	\$71,678	\$3,049
Part 2A	ASSOCIATE PASTOR				
	1. Base Salary			\$23,833	\$23,833
	2. Social Security (.0765 x base salary)			\$1,823	\$1,823
	Total	\$0	\$0	\$25,656	\$25,656
Part 3	PERSONNEL				
	1. Church Musician's Salary	\$9,360	\$300	\$7,200	(\$2,160)
	2. Church Musician's Social Security (.0765 x base salary)	\$716	\$23	\$551	(\$165)
	3. Substitute Musician	\$100	\$0	\$100	\$0
	4. Supply Pastor	\$625	\$0	\$0	(\$625)
	5. Parish Administrator Salary	\$13,505	\$1,733	\$14,779	\$1,274
	6. Parish Administrator Social Security (.0765 x base salary)	\$1,033	\$132	\$1,131	\$98
	7. Sexton Salary	\$5,700	\$216	\$5,870	\$170
	8. Sexton Social Security (.0765 x base salary)	\$436	\$16	\$449	\$13
	9. Disability & Workers Comp	\$2,400	\$800	\$936	(\$1,464)
	10. Choir Director Salary (see Church Musician's Salary)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	11. Social Security (see Church Musician's Salary)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	12. Property Caretaker			\$6,500	\$6,500
	13. Property Caretaker Social Security (.0765 x base salary)			\$497	\$497
	14. Administrative Assistant			\$2,340	\$2,340
	15. Administrative Social Security (.0765 x base salary)			\$179.00	\$179.00
	Total	\$33,875	\$3,220	\$40,532	\$6,657

Part 4	ADMINISTRATION				
	1. Office Supplies	\$750	\$0	\$750	\$0
	2. Telephone & Internet	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,500	\$500
	3. Postage	\$200	\$0	\$400	\$200
	4. Offering Envelopes & Supplies	\$250	(\$200)	\$250	\$0
	5. Toner Supplies and Maintenance	\$1,500	(\$300)	\$1,200	(\$300)
	6. Web Hosting & Domain	\$250	\$0	\$1,000	\$750
	7. IT Specialist	\$550	\$550	\$550	\$0
	8. Synod Assembly	\$800	\$125	\$800	\$0
	9. Software	\$1,150	\$550	\$900	(\$250)
	Total	\$6,450	\$725	\$7,350	\$900
Part 5	MESSIAH PROPERTY				
	1. Electric & Gas	\$5,500	\$0	\$4,500	(\$1,000)
	2. Liability Insurance	\$3,800	\$500	\$4,616	\$816
	3. Town Taxes	\$375	\$0	\$390	\$15
	4. Trash Removal	\$450	\$0	\$300	(\$150)
	5. Snow Removal	\$1,800	\$0	\$790	\$1,010
	6. Pest Control	\$300	\$0	\$300	\$0
	7. Cleaning Equip & Supplies	\$200	\$0	\$200	\$0
	8. Building Maintenance	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,300	\$0
	Total	\$13,425	\$500	\$12,396	\$691
Part 5A	TRINITY PROPERTY				
	1. Electric & Gas			\$2,400	\$2,400
	2. Liability Insurance			\$3,300	\$3,300
	3. Town Taxes			\$390	\$390
	4. Trash Removal			\$500	\$500
	5. Snow Removal			\$2,325	\$2,325
	6. Cleaning Equip & Supplies			\$200	\$200
	7. Building Maintenance			\$1,000	\$1,000
	Total			\$10,115	\$10,115
Part 6	PARSONAGE				
	1. Electric & Gas	\$2,300	(\$200)	\$2,100	(\$200)
	2. Telephone & Internet			\$840	\$840
	3. Town Taxes	\$700	\$0	\$750	\$50
	4. Maintenance (incl. sealing)	\$300	(\$50)	\$500	\$200
	Total	\$3,300	-\$250	\$4,190	\$890
Part 7	WORSHIP & MUSIC				
	1. Candles & Communion Supplies	\$250	\$150	\$500	\$250
	2. Sundays and Seasons	\$100	\$0	\$100	\$0
	3. Holiday Flowers	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$0
	4. Organ Maintenance	\$100	\$0	\$100	\$0
	5. Piano Maintenance/Tuning	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$0
	6. Music	\$300	\$0	\$300	\$0
	7. Licensing			\$650	\$650
	Total	\$1,550	\$150	\$2,450	\$900

Part 8	FAITH FORMATION				
	1. Sunday Church School	\$600	(\$100)	\$500	(\$100)
	2. Youth Ministry	\$500	\$350	\$500	\$0
	3. Confirmation	\$500	\$300	\$550	\$50
	4. Life Passages	\$350	\$100	\$550	\$200
	5. Adult & Community Education	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,000	\$0
	6. Cradle Roll and Nursery	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$0
	Total	\$3,050	\$1,250	\$3,200	\$150
Part 9	MINISTRY SUPPORT				
	1. Stewardship	\$700	(\$175)	\$800	\$100
	2. Outreach	\$100	\$0	\$100	\$0
	3. Care & Concern	\$100	\$50	\$100	\$0
	4. Social Action	\$50	\$0	\$50	\$0
	5. Lutheran Subscription	\$100	\$0	\$100	\$0
	6. Young Adult Group	\$50	\$0	\$50	\$0
	7. Leadership Development	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$0
	8. Creation Care	\$250	(\$50)	\$250	\$0
	9. Food Pantry Supplemental Fund	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0
	Total	\$3,750	\$1,825	\$3,850	\$100
	GRAND TOTAL	\$137,679	\$9,338	\$185,817	\$49,858



Upstate New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.

2020 Annual Report to Congregations



Happy Anniversary

Bishop John S. Macholz, UNYS

What a joy it was to welcome Bishop Leila Ortiz of the Metropolitan DC Synod to our midst as she preached on November 22 for the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the Lutheran Church. Bishop Ortiz along with other women clergy from our church lead worship and took the time to celebrate the gifts and graces that women have brought to this church as ordained pastors. We are so thankful for their gifts.

Work continues on creating and building the Gender Justice Task Force that will focus its attention on these specific issues in our world and in our church as we live into welcoming all of God's children in our midst. As this work continues you will be kept informed as to what is taking place.

We are also developing the Bishop's Advisory Council that will assist me in designing and creating a fund for this synod to support a specific ministry or need in our midst. We have met twice and will be meeting again at the end of this month. on Many Rooms, a part of our synod's web site, and will feature women in leadership positions across this synod and church.

A personal word of thanks. As some of you may know I've been travelling to the office in Syracuse over the past couple of months to meet with some staff members and process checks that arrive for mission support for this synod as well as support of other ministries and missions such as Zimbabwe and Zambia. It has been a joy to open envelopes and see checks offered from your great generosity to keep the ministry of the church locally as well as nationally and internationally alive and well. Your faithfulness has been a gift to behold with each one received and I am deeply grateful for all that you do to be present in this way, proclaiming the Gospel and moving ministry forward. You are a gift to so many!



SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual Upstate New York Synod Assembly, this year with our Bishop Election
June 3-5, 2021

In light of the current pandemic and in efforts to keep everyone as safe as possible, Synod Council voted to move our annual assembly to a fully online platform.

Please stay tuned to the weekly Upstate Update and our synod website (www.upstatenysynod.org) for full details on how to prepare and fully engage in this year's assembly and election as voting members of this synod.

This is an exciting new platform and offers opportunities to experience this time together in a whole new way!

This year our focus is:

Graced for the Sake of the World

Selected bible verse: First Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The 2020 Annual Report covers are available for download on the ELCA website.

These covers provide:

- A message from ELCA Presiding Bishop,
- Devotional materials to begin your annual meeting, including a hymn and responsive prayer,
- Explanations of ELCA churchwide ministries funded by Mission Support

The cover can be used alone or paired with Stories of Faith in Action. Both resources are free and available online.

To download the spreads or single pages go to: <https://elca.org/Resources/Stewardship>.

The digital version of Stories of Faith in Action can be found here: <https://www.elca.org/SOFIA>.



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Synod Office Move

Please note that with the move of the Synod Office there has been a change of address:

Please send all mail:

**Upstate New York Synod, PO Box #160,
 Syracuse, 13214.**

Minimum Compensation Guidelines

The 2021 Upstate New York Minimum Compensation are available online. They can be found, along with many other valuable resources for congregations on the Upstate New York Synod website in the "Resources" section:

<https://upstatenysynod.org/resources>

***New Constitution Revision
 Submission Process***

As of October 2020

Michelle Josephson, Asst. to the Bishop, Operations

For those congregations that have not yet submitted their 2019 revision, there is a new submission process: We ask that all constitutions be submitted in their soft copy (preferably MS Word) using the link below.

If you have not received a confirmation of your revision receipt, the system has now been set up to send them out automatically. A note to those listed in prior to the fix will be sent out by end of January. We understand how much work goes into revising the constitutions and appreciate your good work and compliance with the new ELCA model constitution.

Please note that we are still experiencing a delay in processing time, but are working to shorten the time frame and fix the bumps in the new system. We appreciate your work and patience as we all navigate this unusual new terrain.

[Link to Constitution Revision Form
 \(www.upstatenysynod.org/resources\)](https://www.upstatenysynod.org/resources)

2021 IRS Mileage Rates:

- ☛ 56 cents per mile for business use
- ☛ 16 cents per mile for medical or moving purposes
- ☛ 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

Candidacy during the Pandemic



Submitted by
Lisa Frauens,
United Lutheran Seminary,
2nd Year

I never thought I would be taking all of my seminary classes from home, preaching my first sermon to a camera, or learning the ins and outs of teaching confirmation over Zoom. I also didn't anticipate deepening my spiritual practice and making friends across the synod through the FLATT offerings, and I never thought that I'd be able to attend so many different worship services or learn from so many role models without leaving my home. This past year may not have been what I expected, but God blessed me through each of these opportunities. They opened my eyes to the unique gifts each of our pastors bring to ministry, and they helped me to recognize my own gifts as well.

I'm growing into my call more and more each day, and I'm thankful to everyone in the Upstate New York Synod for your support and prayers throughout my journey!



***Stay tuned online for details around
 our 2020 Bishop's Convocation!***

Stay connected with your synod on-line:
[upstatenysynod.org](https://www.upstatenysynod.org).

***While there, sign up for the Upstate Update and
 also receive the Midweek Musings!***



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**2021 Election of
the Synodical
Bishop
Upstate New York
Synod
Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America**

Synodical Discernment: What is it?

The election of a synodical Bishop is a long-term synod-wide process of discernment, prayer and conversation. It is not to be taken lightly nor based on popularity or likeability. Rather, it ought to focus on listening for the whispers of the Spirit, the insight and wisdom of others, and a clear understanding of the needs the office brings to this church.

The office of Bishop comes with tremendous responsibility and work, a great deal of oversight, the ability to collaborate with staff and extended leadership, and the willingness to be a servant of the church. As such, the individual we elect and how we move through the nomination and election processes is tantamount to the vitality and effectiveness of this church in this time and place.

To that end, Deans are convening people from across each conference to engage in discernment conversations. These may take place at conference assemblies, ministeria gatherings, congregations, or in other settings.

Questions to consider may include:

1. What is the role of the Bishop?
2. What are the constitutional requirements and responsibilities of the Bishop?
3. What is it we are looking for in a Bishop?
4. What certain gifts might a Bishop bring?
Are there specific gifts necessary for the office and if so, what are they?
5. What do we expect a Bishop to do for us?
How realistic are those expectations?
6. What are our synod's goals and priorities for ministry in this place?
7. Where do we want to be as a synod in five to seven years?

8. What are our synod's greatest challenges, opportunities, resources and liabilities?

These conversations are being summarized and collated so that beginning in January, 2021, the Deans will share responses with the rostered leaders and congregations of their conferences, encouraging further discussion through March 15 at which point all nominations must be in hand.

Whether or not you are a voting member to the 2021 Synod Assembly, I encourage all members of this synod to participate wholeheartedly in the synodical discernment conversations planned for your conference.

I also urge all congregations, if they have not done so already, to identify their voting members to the 2021 Synod Assembly so they also may participate fully in the process of electing the Bishop.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Madden, Vice President
Upstate New York Synod, ELCA

Things to know as we prepare for this year's online Synod Assembly:

To participate in this year's assembly, each attendee will need to have internet access and a device to connect (laptop, table or phone) to the online event.

All voting members will each be required to login from their own individual device.

Our format will include a platform for viewing and speaking as well as an electronic voting platform.

All voting members will be required to register prior to assembly in order to receive their voting login credentials prior to all Assembly events.

Now is a great time to subscribe to the synod's Upstate Update (www.upstatensynod.org) to stay up to date on all information, publications and details pertaining to this year's Assembly.



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***Grounded in the
Word during the
time of Covid:***
*Faith Practice Through
Devotion and Worship*

*The Rev. Lori Kochanski,
Assistant to the Bishop*

In March, when we were forced to begin practicing physical distancing by staying home, the synod staff worked extra hard to support the technical questions that came our way as congregations explored how to worship and gather digitally.

The synod staff supported congregations in learning different ways to worship and practice faith formation.

The synod staff has also begun to offer intentional opportunities for remaining grounded in the Gospel through daily devotion and other worship opportunities.

Every day a member of the staff leads nine minutes of reflection, prayer, music or practice using Facebook Live.

A Good Friday liturgy was shared with all. The bishop also led a Chrism Mass via Zoom and YouTube Live.

In the Spring, Bishop Macholz prepared a sermon that congregations were able to share as part of their digital worship services.

Some members of the synod staff, in partnership with the racial justice task force, organized a digital prayer vigil in response to the murder of George Floyd and the need for anti-racist action.

Every Sunday during June, July and August there was an opportunity for worshipping together at 4PM. Various pastors, lay folks and the staff of the synod took turns leading and preaching.

With the gift of technology, members of the staff have been able to be guest preachers and worship leaders throughout the synod while maintaining physical distance.

In September we offered a synod worship service of Hope and Lament.

In November we welcomed Bishop Leila Ortiz of the Metro DC Synod to preach at our service commemorating 50 years of ordaining women in the Lutheran Church. Rostered women from this synod were also leaders in worship on that day.

A team of leaders from various conferences worked together to create a worship service for individuals and congregations to use during the Christmas season. This effort was made possible with the help of many who shared their time and talent.

We continue to work on ways to offer support to congregations during this time of the pandemic and into the unknown future.

In all and through all and with all, God remains our hope and foundation.

Faithful Learning and Teaching Together
(FLATT): A collective of learning opportunities to grow in faithful witness and service.

In April 2020 we launched an online platform for synod wide faith formation and practice using Zoom technology.

Thanks to gifted teachers and leaders in our synod, we have offered more than 25 organized different opportunities for learning and growing. Some of the courses require a few weeks time commitment. Other workshops meet one time for learning and interaction. Total number of registrations for the courses is over 250 and growing daily.

The goal at the outset of this work was to create sacred space for learning together across a variety of interests and mediums. This goal has been surpassed because of the faithful witness of so many who want to know more so they can keep doing the work of God.

Courses are being developed to deepen learning, especially in the area of Bible, theology, preaching and church history.

This ministry began during the pandemic, but will continue to be a part of our life together far into the future.



A message from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear friends in Christ,

This year has been a challenging one! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the church and society. We have had to shift the ways we engage in ministry from a focus on in-person worship and meetings to livestream worship, virtual meetings and gatherings in the parking lot. We have had to shift to teaching children at home and working from home. We have not been able to travel to see friends or relatives or to celebrate life events. This has also been a time to address economic and social justice issues, to shift our thinking and our way of life.

In times such as this, our baptism in Christ makes a difference and makes us different. Like Christians before us, we recall that God is faithful to God's promises and God's people. We see that God enables us to connect with one another even when we are separated. Shifts in the world invite us to be innovative in how we do God's work and reach out to all ages in making disciples. We see that God is at work not only in our buildings but beyond them as well. We have found new ways to serve our neighbors and reach those in need.

As we experience this time of uncertainty, we sense something new emerging. In many places there are new strategies and renewed energy for ministry, often generated by emerging leaders. We have developed a framework to build on, and now is the time to engage in hard work together. As you do in your congregation, we want our collaborative efforts to be both faithfully thoughtful and sustainable. We want to build up the body of Christ today and for the future.

Looking across the church, I am grateful for your generous giving of time, talents and resources. Yes, God does continue to bless us! God will provide both relief from life's struggles and hope for a stronger church, God's church. We do not need to know how the future will unfold. As members in the body of Christ, we need only trust that God is with us and will provide.

Building up the body of Christ together,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.”—Ephesians 4:11-16