



Messiah Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Peter Klotz
Hudson Mohawk Conference
Saint Peter's Lutheran Church
2776 US 9
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Sunday April 17th, 2016

Dear Rev. Klotz and fellow committee members:

When I read the qualifications for the Congregational Discipleship Award, someone who "should exemplify what it means to answer the call to discipleship - one compelled to share their faith and service others in the home, congregation, community and God's world," I immediately think of Judy Becker.

A near lifelong member of Messiah Lutheran Church, Judy has lived out God's call to discipleship in all the categories listed above for over seven decades. As a young adult, her and her soon to be husband Bill grew in love with God and one another while serving as advisors to Messiah's Luther League. While working in the home to raise up three incredible children, Rich, Jill and Kristen, all who would be qualified to receive this discipleship award in their own right, she was part of the team of mothers who launched a nursery school at Messiah in a time when our local Rotterdam community was in desperate need of a such a ministry. She soon took on leadership of our nursery school, providing the children of Rotterdam with a rich, Christ-centered learning environment for well over twenty years.



Judy serving with her granddaughters at the SICM Summer Lunch program.

Judy has led a tireless life of Christian discipleship by serving our congregation in many other capacities. Just to name a few, she ministered to our young people as a Sunday School teacher, sings in the choir, provides great insight on our Worship & Music Committee, writes cards to our homebound and sick members, has led our Women of the ELCA chapter in countless banner making and service projects and served for many years as our representative to the monthly assemblies of the Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM).

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Judy with myself and two of our young people at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Bread of Life Food Pantry last September.

As I first arrived at Messiah, I quickly realized Judy was not only on our Congregation Council, but also in charge of about half of our ministry committees! As we have rapidly grown as a Spirit filled church over our last two years together in both membership and programming, she has best modeled another key aspect of discipleship for all leaders in our congregation: delegating and knowing when to step back in order to best steward her time and talents. That doesn't mean she has slowed down however, not by a longshot! In response to an article in the *Daily Gazette* about increased levels of hunger in Rotterdam's school children, she felt a call to start a new ministry at Messiah, the Bread of Life Food Pantry, which is especially geared towards serving students and their families.

Judy leads a life of discipleship in a way that not only affects her family, congregation and local community, but indeed touches her nation and the

wider world. Seeing a need to build more locally sustainable communities and households, she started a 4H program with her daughter and granddaughters at Messiah to teach nutrition, cooking and small-scale farming skills, which will in turn lead to the creation of a new community garden. Most notably, in response to Presiding Bishop Eaton's call for ELCA congregations to become spaces for moral discernment around our country's greatest collective sin, that of racism, Judy was instrumental in not only hosting a well attended viewing of Bishop Eaton's webcast on the subject, but also pushed for a highly successfully Lenten dialogue about racism that touched on topics such as the criminal justice system, institutional racism and white privilege.

This Sunday as a congregation we spent time exploring the story of the disciple Dorcas in Acts 9 and hearing the good news of Christ's promise to be especially at work in the lives of ordinary saints serving their communities rather than just the elite and powerful folks who are so often focused on in our history books. While exploring Dorcas' story, I could not help but think about how Judy Becker has lived out a similar life of discipleship, simply and humbly following her baptismal calling in the home, congregation, community and God's world. I feel blessed, honored and indeed overjoyed to submit Messiah's nomination of Judy Becker for our conference's Congregational Discipleship Award... seriously, I'm about to tear up as I write this! Thank you for your consideration of this nomination and may God's peace be with you.

In Christ,

Rev. Dustin G. Wright
Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church