

# The Messenger

A monthly publication from our Spirit filled church.

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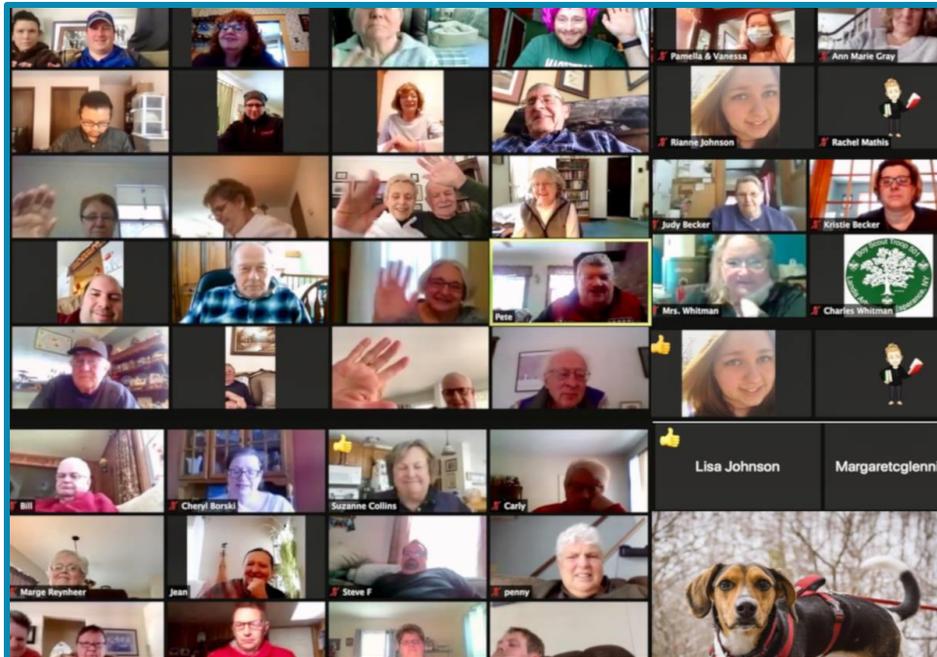


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We are a Spirit filled church following Jesus Christ.

## Community Events

### Peace Not Walls: Justice in Palestine & Israel

Continuing Sunday, February 14th  
at 8:45am

<https://zoom.us/j/94311937514>

In this weekly adult education course, we will examine the history of the Palestine-Israel Conflict and efforts to develop a positive peace, where there is justice and systems and structures in place that build positive relationships and work to establish equity and support anti-racist policies. Grounded in concern for the dignity of all people, full respect for human rights, healing and reconciliation, and a theology of accompaniment, we will explore how Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims may work together for peace with justice in what many call "the Holy Land." We will draw upon readings and videotapes as well as arrange conversations with experts on this topic and leaders

in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Those who want to move beyond awareness-raising will be encouraged to participate in accompaniment and advocacy activities. Currently, this will be a Zoom only offering.

### Mass for Transfiguration Sunday Sunday, February 14th at 10:00am

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism

and shines in us also for others to see. Pastor Jonathan will preach and Pastor Dustin will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Transfiguration Sunday for Kids! Sunday, February 14th at 12:00pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Transfiguration Sunday for Kids, we reflect on the story of Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kings 2:1-12 and discuss what it means to be a leader! This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on Facebook Watch.

### Shrove Tuesday Drive Thru Pancake Supper Tuesday, February 16th from 4:30 - 6:30pm 705 Curry Road in Rotterdam, New York

Messiah's annual cherished tradition of a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be different this year but better than ever as

our first major event organized by the people of Messiah and Trinity Reformed as one unified faith community! All in the neighborhood are invited to drive into the former Trinity Reformed parking lot at 705 Curry Road in Rotterdam from 4:30 - 6:30p where our young people will bring a free pancake dinner right to your car! Everyone will also receive mardi gras beads to celebrate the night and ashes to go for the self-imposition of ashes the following day. As a COVID-19 friendly version of our annual Burning of the Palms tradition, Schenectady County Firefighter of the Year John Crowther and his family will be on hand to burn notecards where folks will be invited to write whatever they've been suffering from over this last difficult year. All volunteers running the event will be required to wear masks, practice social distancing and follow Messiah's COVID-19 Safety Plan while all guests will be required to remain in their cars. A free will offering will be taken to support our Food Pantry and Youth Campership Fund. Don't you dare miss the party and bring your neighbors!

**Bible Study with Pastor Dustin:  
"The Upswing"**

**Session One: "I/We/I"**

**Wednesday, February 17th at  
2:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

It was a time of rabid inequality, a viciously divided population and endemic poverty... ya know, the First Gilded Age of the late 1800s and early 1900s! This Lent, join Pastor Dustin for a seven part series looking at the Christians who worked together across racial and denominational lines to build a more equitable society from the 1890s through the 1960s, something historians have called

"the social gospel movement." A follow up Bible study series during the season of Easter called "The Next Upswing" will focus on how Christians today are reigniting the legacy of the social gospel for a new generation. Session One will focus on Amos 9 and provide a brief overview of the history of social cohesion in America over the last century based on Robert Putnam's recent book, "The Upswing" and draw parallels between the First Gilded Age and the present. The only required pre-work is reading the Bible passage and thinking about the focus question, "How has American life changed since the 1960s?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- [Kidd, Colin. "The Upswing review – can Biden Heal America?" \*The Guardian\*. 12 Nov. 2020.](#)
- [Marder, Lisa. "A Deep Dive Into the History of the Social Gospel Movement." \*Learn Religions\*. 20 May 2019.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Ash Wednesday Mass  
Wednesday, February 17th at  
7:00pm**

On Ash Wednesday we begin the ancient Christian tradition of embarking on a forty-day journey of Lent toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call,

we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world. Join Pastor Dustin and Pastor Jonathan for a very special mass including a virtual Imposition of Ashes using ashes distributed the night before at our Shrove Tuesday Drive Thru Pancake Supper. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Meditation and  
Prayer**

**Thursdays, continuing February  
18th at 6:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/92437622756>

From a Christian perspective, meditation is a powerful form of prayer that allows us to slow down our own minds and anxieties in order to hear how God might be speaking to us. Contemporary psychology, albeit using different words, agrees! Many studies have shown meditation and other forms of regular mindfulness training can lead to lower stress, improved sleep and better focus, amongst other benefits. After briefly reflecting on the day using our daily Bread for the Day devotional, we'll move into a roughly twenty-minute guided meditation. This week will be led by Pastor Dustin. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Mass for the First Sunday in Lent:  
"Promises"**

**Sunday, February 21st at 10:00am**

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the

way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world. Pastor Dustin will preach and Pastor Jonathan will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Lent for Kids: "Promises"

**Sunday, February 21st at 12:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Lent for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Cheryl discuss the first in a series of promises God makes to us through the story of Noah in Genesis 9:8-17. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Community Confirmation Class:

**"Saint Paul & the Early Church"**

**Sunday, February 21st at 6:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/92815271554>

All middle school aged children in our local community, their families and all who are interested are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program! Nearly every Sunday evening we gather to watch a video, engage in a brief Bible study and have a conversation about how to make sense of the complicated world we're living in through the lens of the New Testament. Throughout the Season of Lent we will discuss Saint Paul and the Pauline Epistles. This Sunday will serve as an introduction! This is currently a Zoom only offering.

### Bible Study with Pastor Dustin: "The Upswing"

**Session Two: "Awakenings and Conversions"**

**Wednesday, February 24th at 2:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

Session Two will focus on Saint Luke 4: 1-21 and trace the beginnings of the social gospel movement in America's Second Great Awakening, the abolition movement and leaders like Richard Allen and William Hamilton. We will also hear the story of Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden and other Christians who articulated what "the reign of God" looked like amidst the greatest societal sins of the First Gilded Age. The only pre-work required is reading the Bible passage and thinking about the focus question, "Have you ever had a conversion experience, and if so, what was it about?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- ["Andrew Carnegie: The Richest Man in the World: The Gilded Age." American Experience, PBS.](#)
- ["The Second Great Awakening: AP US History Crash Course." The Albert Team, 23 July 2020.](#)
- ["Our History." The African Methodist Episcopal Church.](#)
- ["Our Heritage." The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Lenten Compline

**Beginning Wednesday, February 24th at 7:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/91450926638>

**Every Lent at Messiah, we take some time to briefly gather on Wednesday in simple prayer, worship and conversation. This year's midweek Lenten offering**

**will be no exception! Surrounded by Evangelical Lutheran Worship's beautiful evening Compline service sung acapella by one of our awesome youth, Jesse Mathis, each week we'll discuss the theme of the previous Sunday's texts using our daily Lenten devotional *A Story of Tell*. Please join us "in the room" on Zoom live but you can watch the recording on Facebook at**

<http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC> afterwards as well!

### New York State Ecumenical Advocacy Day

**Sponsored by the New York State Council of Churches**

**Thursday, February 25th from 9:00am - 4:00pm**

In the early part of the last century, across ethnic divisions and denominations, Christians across America rose together against child labor, unsafe working conditions, and economic inequality, some of the worst sins of the First Gilded Age. As we once again work to build a society that looks more like the Reign of God, this time amidst the twin pandemics of systemic racism and COVID-19, join the New York State Council of Churches for a transformative virtual New York State of Ecumenical Advocacy Day of learning and action. Participants will spend the morning with a grounding in the historic social gospel movement and strategies for community organizing before learning more about specific issues affecting our state including Budget Justice, Criminal Justice Reform, Environmental Issues, Healthcare & COVID and Housing and Homelessness. Participants will then be scheduled to meet virtually with their state legislators beginning later in the afternoon and in the subsequent two weeks.

This event is free but please pre-register by clicking [here](#).

**Mass for the Second Sunday in  
Lent: "Trust"  
Sunday, February 28th at  
10:00am**

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ. Pastor Dustin will preach and Pastor Jonathan will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Lent for Kids: "Trust"  
Sunday, February 28th at  
12:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Lent for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Cheryl discuss the story of Abraham's trust in God as explained in Romans 4:13-25. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Confirmation Class:  
"Paul's Theology"**

**Sunday, February 28th at 6:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/92815271554>

All middle school aged children in our local community, their families and all who are interested are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program! Nearly every Sunday evening we gather to watch a

video, engage in a brief Bible study and have a conversation about how to make sense of the complicated world we're living in through the lens of the New Testament. Throughout the Season of Lent we will discuss Saint Paul and the Pauline Epistles. This Sunday we'll begin to discuss Paul's perspective on Jesus based on 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10! This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Worship & Music Ministry Team  
Meeting**

**Monday, March 1st at 7:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/96341841016>

Interested in helping our faith community figure out how we'll continue to ground ourselves in the Way of Jesus each and every Sunday? Join our Worship & Music Ministry Team! In addition to planning for regular Sunday services, this group also coordinates our Choir, our Altar Guild/ Sanctuary Prep, our Meditation & Prayer ministries! The team meets (almost) every month on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm. The link for tonight's meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/96341841016>.

**Care & Concern Committee  
Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 3rd at 1:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/91838754902>

As one committee of our wider Fellowship Ministry Team, Care & Concern is all about making sure our members in need of care are regularly reached out to and supported in the midst of loss, health crises and more. This group also directs our growing mental health and addiction ministries as well as our soon-to-be developed Memorial Garden. Barb Hallett is our Committee Chair and the committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at

1:00pm. The link for today's meeting is:  
<https://zoom.us/j/91838754902>.

**Bible Study with Pastor Dustin:  
"The Upswing"**

**Session Three: "The Color Line"  
Wednesday, March 3rd at 2:30pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

Session Three will focus on Galatians 3: 15-29 and the early social gospel movement in historic black churches, including leaders like Henry McNeal Turner and Reverdy Ransom. The session will also discuss the influence of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington on the social gospel movement, the founding of the NAACP and the frequent lack of support from white social gospel leaders. Rev. Nicolle Harris of Duryee Memorial AME Zion Church will serve as a guest co-leader for this session. The only pre-work required is reading the Bible passage and thinking about the focus question, "Why is Sunday morning still the most segregated hour of the week in America?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- [Felder, Cain Hope. "Henry McNeal Turner." This Far By Faith, PBS.](#)
- ["Reverdy Ransom." Wikipedia.](#)
- ["Niagara Movement – Cornerstone of the Modern Civil Rights Movement." National Park Service.](#)
- [Dorrien, Gary. "The Social Gospel in Black and White, Then and Now." Canopy Forum. 20 July 2020.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Mass for the Third Sunday in Lent: "Law"

**Sunday, March 7th at 10:00am**

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world. Pastor Dustin will preach and Pastor Jonathan will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Youth Tubing at West Mountain Sunday, March 7th at 2:00pm

As COVID-19 rates lower throughout the Capital Region, our NY Forward Safety Plan will once again allow us to gather outdoors in a socially distanced way. And a fun afternoon of tubing is an awesome way to do just that! Join the youth and families of Messiah for an awesome two-hour block of tubing at [West Mountain](#) in Queensbury. The cost for Messiah youth is only \$10 per child/ youth with our Youth Fund picking up the rest! Please RSVP by Sunday, February 21st at the latest with Pastor Dustin at 603.953.8782 to reserve your spot!

### Zentangle with Russell McDonald, CZT

**Monday, March 8th from 6:00pm  
- 8:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/96824715061>

As the inaugural event of Messiah's Arts & Culture Ministry, join our very own Russell McDonald, Certified Zentangle Teacher, for a beginner friendly drawing night using the Zentangle Method! [Zentangle](#) is a way to use drawing that helps us relax, focus, expand our imaginations, respond confidently to the unexpected and feel gratitude and appreciation for this beautiful world and all that we can do! All participants will need at home is a pen, a pencil and a clean sheet of paper! If you're stressed, looking to learn a new skill or just to connect with others during such a difficult time, this event is for you!

### Stewardship Ministry Team Meeting

**Tuesday, March 9th at 7:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93024204486>

Our Stewardship Ministry Team is the group of committees at Messiah that allow us to support our four major program areas. Without being good stewards of our Budget & Finance, Communications, Personnel, Property & Grounds, Mission Support, Archives, Safe Church ministries and more, there's no way we could engage in all the life-changing ministries we do at Messiah. A particular focus of this conversation will be implementing all the major decisions made at our 2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation regarding consolidation with the people of Trinity Reformed, the reinventing of that property into a community center and making our worship center fully accessible. The

ministry team meets quarterly. The link for tonight's meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/93024204486>.

### Bible Study with Pastor Dustin: "The Upswing"

**Session Four: "The Social Crisis"  
Wednesday, March 10th at  
2:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

Session Four will focus on 1 Kings 21 and the response of social gospel leaders like Jane Addams, Vida Dutton Scudder, Harry Ward and Walter Rauschenbusch to abysmal living and working conditions, child labor, and related evils, particularly in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. The session will also discuss connections with the labor movement and the contribution of early Jewish reformers like Emil Hirsch. Rabbi Matt Cutler of Congregation Gates of Heaven will serve as a guest co-leader for this session. The only pre-work required is reading the Bible passage and thinking about the focus question, "How long have we been in our current social crisis?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- [Hyman, Paula E. "Beyond Place and Ethnicity: The Uses of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire." \*Jewish Women's Archive\*.](#)
- [Michals, Debra. "Jane Addams." \*National Women's History Museum\*. 2017.](#)
- ["Walter Rauschenbusch." \*Christianity Today\*.](#)
- ["Jews and Blacks in America." \*Moment Magazine\*. 2009.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Schenectady Prayer Vigil for Climate Justice

Thursday, March 11th at 5:30pm  
Riverside Park, 132 Front Street in  
Schenectady, New York

Join people of faith from across Schenectady County as we gather by the Mohawk River and pray for climate justice in concert with those around the world as part of Greenfaith's International Day of Action, "Sacred People, Sacred Earth." The event will include local faith leaders and activists as well as young people who will be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. Social distancing and masks will be required and there will be a virtual component for those who do not feel comfortable gathering in-person. Please wear white and bring signs! The event will be roughly thirty minutes.

### Mass for the Fourth Sunday in Lent: "Look"

Sunday, March 14th at 10:00am

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying. Pastor Jonathan will preach and Pastor Dustin will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Lent for Kids: "Look"

Sunday, March 14th at 12:00pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Lent for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Cheryl discuss the story of Moses and the Bronze Serpent in Numbers 21: 4-9. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Bible Study with Pastor Dustin: "The Upswing"

Session Five: "Councils, Red  
Scares and New Deals"

Wednesday, March 17th at  
2:30pm

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

Session Five will focus on 1 Corinthians 11: 17-26 and the institutionalization of the social gospel movement through organizations Federal Council of Churches, the YMCA and *The Christian Century* magazine. Contributions in the interwar and early post-war period from Frances Perkins, Reinhold Niebuhr, Dorothy Day, Harry Emerson Fosdick and the founding of Riverside Church will also be discussed, as will grassroots organizations such as the Highlander Folk School. The only pre-work required is reading the Bible passage and thinking about the focus question, "What is the role of the Church beyond our individual congregations?"

Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- ["History." National Council of Churches.](#)
- ["88 Years of Fighting for Justice." Highlander Research and Education Center.](#)
- [Cep, Casey. "Dorothy Day's Radical Faith." The New Yorker. 6 April 2020.](#)
- ["Harry Emerson Fosdick." Christianity Today.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Pre-Palm Sunday Pickup Saturday, March 20th from 10:00am - 2:00pm

On Saturday, March 20th drive by the Oak Street entrance of Messiah Lutheran Church to briefly meet with Pastor Dustin and Pastor Jonathan, receive a blessing and pick up free palms for Palm Sunday! All interested will also be photography waving their palms for a very special virtual Palm Sunday procession. All from the community are welcome!!!

### Mass for the Fifth Sunday in Lent: "Sacrifice"

Sunday, March 21st at 10:00am

God promises Jeremiah that a "new covenant" will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God's heart through Christ and draws God's love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God's love with all the world. Pastor Dustin will preach and Pastor Jonathan will preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### Lent for Kids: "Sacrifice"

Sunday, March 21st at 12:00pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Lent for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Cheryl discuss the story of Jesus predicting his death in John 12:20-33. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Bible Study with Pastor Dustin:  
"The Upswing"  
Session Six: "The Beloved  
Community"  
Wednesday, March 24th at  
2:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

Session Six will focus on Acts 2: 43-47 and will discuss the social gospel amidst the civil rights movement, MLK, Vietnam and the Poor People's Campaign of the 1960s. The black liberation theology of James Cone and contributions of feminist theologians including Rosemary Radford Ruether and Phyllis Trible will also be highlighted, as will the work of William Sloane Coffin. No pre-reading is required outside of the Bible passage but please think about the focus question, "What is the Good News of Jesus Christ in one headline?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- [Dellinger, Drew. "The Last March of Martin Luther King, Jr." \*The Atlantic\*. 4 April 2018.](#)
- [Adam, Rebecca Feldhaus. "James H. Cone, Founder of Black Liberation Theology, Dies at 79." \*NPR\*. 28 April 2018.](#)
- [Smith, Claire. "Feminist Theology." \*The Gospel Coalition\*.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Mass for the Sunday of the  
Passion**

**Sunday, March 28th at 10:00am**

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament

Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work. In addition to a very special virtual Palm Sunday procession, we will present "The Passion According to Saint Mark" with a cast of Messiah members directed by our very own noted local artist, the one Rachel DeTeso Mathis. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Palm Sunday for Kids  
Sunday, March 28th at 12:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Palm Sunday for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Cheryl discuss the story of Jesus' triumphant procession into Jerusalem and his subsequent arrest and betrayal. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Palm Sunday Hike at Thacher  
Park**

**Sunday, March 28th at 2:00pm**

Join our Creation Care and Adult Faith Formation Ministry for an IN PERSON flat and easy walk at Thacher Park. Jean Jones will lead a brief talk on the presence of God in nature. Masks and social distancing will be required. Come and reconnect with folks in the beauty of God's creation!

**Passion Sunday Compline  
Sunday, March 28th at 7:00pm**

Once again, our Confirmation Class and high school youth will join us for a brief meditative service of song and prayer at the close of the first day of Holy Week. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship](#)

[Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Monday of Holy Week Compline  
Monday, March 29th at 7:00pm**

Our Holy Week line up of programming will revisit the same guests that were so wonderful last year! Tonight, Messiah's one and only Minister of Music Emeritus, Mr. Douglas J. Chilton, will join Pastor Dustin to play some beautiful music and discuss the theme of solidarity with the poor at the heart of today's gospel story, Saint John 12:1-11. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Tuesday of Holy Week Compline  
Tuesday, March 30th at 7:00pm**

Tonight's Holy Week Compline guest will be the Rev. Deron Milleville, a dear friend of Messiah, who will share some beautiful music and share about the work of his congregation, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Glenville, and how all our local Lutheran congregations can support each other. The theme of today's gospel story, Saint John 12:20-36, is all about Christ bringing light in the darkness, so Pastor Dustin and Pastor Deron will discuss how we can do just working together as Lutherans. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Bible Study with Pastor Dustin:  
"The Upswing"**

**Session Seven: "Heresy: What  
Went Wrong"**

**Wednesday, March 31st at  
2:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/93097533113>

On Wednesday of Holy Week, traditionally the day when the

Church reflects on the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, we will close our Lenten Bible study reflecting on John 13:21-32 and what went wrong following the death of MLK in 1968. From the advent of the Southern Strategy in the 1970s to the rise of hyper-individualism, the Moral Majority and the co-option of Christ's church by materialism and white nationalism in the 1980s, we will trace how the decline of the social gospel movement and ecumenism mirrored the decline of social cohesion in America. We will conclude by pointing to what "The Next Upswing" might look like, a topic that will be explored in more detail beginning this Easter season at Messiah. No pre-reading is required outside of the Bible passage but please think about the focus question, "How has church changed since the 1960s?" Optional pre-reading is as follows:

- [Perlstein, Rick. "Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy." \*The Nation\*. 13 Nov. 2012.](#)
- [DiBranco, Alex. "The Long History of the anti-Abortion Movement's Links to White Supremacists." \*The Nation\*. 3 Feb. 2020.](#)
- [Wallace, Carey. "White American Christianity Needs to Be Honest About Its History of White Supremacy." \*Time\*. 14 Jan. 2021.](#)
- [Evans, Christopher. "How the social gospel movement explains the roots of today's religious left." \*The Conversation\*. 17 July. 2017.](#)

This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Wednesday of Holy Week Compline**

**Wednesday, March 31st at  
7:00pm**

Messiah's very own Sophie Mathis will once again join us to discuss her experience of COVID19 as an international college student and share a song related to theme of Jesus' betrayal at the heart of Wednesday of Holy Week's gospel story, Saint John 13:21-32. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Maundy Thursday Mass**

**Thursday, April 1st at 7:00pm**

With nightfall our Lenten observance comes to an end and we gather with Christians around the world to recognize the Three Days of Jesus' last supper, death, and resurrection! At the heart of the Maundy Thursday liturgy is Jesus' commandment to love one another. Tonight's virtual service will include holy communion, beautiful hymns, and a dramatic presentation of the stripping of the altar. Pastor Dustin will lead this service. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Good Friday Worship**

**Friday, April 2nd at 7:00pm**

Join us on Good Friday for a solemn, contemplative service featuring the seven last words of Jesus. The service will feature dramatic readings and short musical reflections as we turn our thoughts and minds towards the Passion of the Christ. Pastor Jonathan will be leading this service. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship](#)

[Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Easter Vigil**

**Saturday, April 3rd at 7:00pm**

This is the night! This is our Passover with Christ from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom, from death to life. Based on the most ancient of Christian traditions, the Great Vigil is the heart of our celebration of the Three Days and the pinnacle of the church's year. We gather around the Sacred Fire, interpret modern life through the stories of our faith, our renewed in our baptismal promises, and share the food and drink of the promised land. Raised with Christ, we go forth into the world, aflame with the good news of the resurrection! Pastor Deron Milleville and the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, along with some very special guests, will join us to lead an abbreviated virtual version of this vigil as we await for the resurrection dawn! The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Easter Sunday Mass**

**Sunday, April 4th at 10:15am**

Despite the darkness of our times, on this resurrection morning we celebrate God's new creation in the waters of baptism and in the feast of victory. With great joy we celebrate this day of days, even as we begin the great fifty days of Easter. Filled with hope, we go forth to share the news that Christ is risen! This is straight up always the best Sunday of the year at Messiah! Join us for beautiful music and a number of our youth, as always, serving as Assisting Ministers. Pastor Dustin will preach and Pastor Jonathan will preside. The service will be

broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Easter Sunday Compline Sunday, April 4th at 7:00pm**

Did you know the evening of Easter Sunday is separate recognized commemoration outside of the celebration of Christ's resurrection in the morning? Given our crazy world, Pastor Dustin will take some time reflecting on how the first followers of Jesus experienced the resurrection and how we might as well. The appointed story for tonight is Luke 24:13-49, Jesus' appearance to the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. This pre-recorded service will be broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Easter Monday Compline Monday, April 5th at 7:00pm**

What a difference a day makes. The crucified Jesus has been raised by the power of God "and of that all of us are witnesses." Peter, David, Matthew, and even the soldiers standing guard are witnesses. All of us are witnesses. "My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices." Alleluia! Pastor Dustin will reflect on Saint Matthew 28:9-15a and what it means to say "Alleluia!" in the face of so much fear and change in our world. This pre-recorded service will be broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

### **Pastor Dustin on Vacation**

Pastor Dustin will be taking his annual post-Easter vacation from Monday, April 5th - Saturday, April 17th. If you are in need of emergency pastoral support, please contact Pastor Jonathan.

### **Social Action Ministry Team Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 13th at 7:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/91568452071>

This is by far our most active ministry team at Messiah! Our Social Action Ministry Team is the space through which we discern all the ways we're called to serve our neighbors following the Way of Jesus Christ! We do this in a wide variety of ways, through our Social Justice, Creation Care, Community Service, our work with Schenectady Community Ministries, the Bread of Life Food Pantry ministries and more! The top priorities for discussion in this upcoming meeting include how we can continue to support social justice causes like #BlackLivesMatter and Pride as well as the continued transformation of our Bread of Life Food Pantry into a full-fledged community center for the Town of Rotterdam. Our ministry team meets quarterly. The link for tonight's meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/91568452071>.

### **Fellowship Ministry Team Meeting Wednesday, May 5th at 7:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/99082870648>

At Messiah many of us have somehow actually grown closer while physically apart... gosh, the Spirit is certainly at work! The purpose of the Fellowship Ministry Team is to provide opportunities for all of our members (and perspective members) of all ages to connect, hear one another's stories, and have fun! This group includes the Mighty Men of Messiah, Women of the ELCA (WELCA), Care & Concern, Young Adult Group, our Kitchen Committee, Over 55 Gang, our Welcome Committee for new and perspective members and our new Arts & Culture ministry. The ministry team meets quarterly.

The link for this afternoon's meeting is:

<https://zoom.us/j/99082870648>. In this meeting in particular we'll discuss what smaller group fellowship activities we can hold in-person within our New Year Forward COVID19 Safety Plan. Please join us!

### **Faith Formation Ministry Team Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 11th at 7:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/92199006383>

Want to help guide how our congregation studies the ancient wisdom of Scripture, explores our connection God and creation and help our young people have a strong, ethical foundation? Join our Faith Formation Ministry Team! This group includes Adult Education, Children's Sunday School, Cradle Roll & Nursery, Youth and Outdoor Ministries! Help us teach folks of all ages how our faith calls us to teach that EVERYONE is created in God's image! The ministry team meets quarterly. The link for this night's meeting is:

<https://zoom.us/j/92199006383>.

## **News You Can Use!**

### **Worship and Music Highlights**

It's been a wonderful adjustment transitioning from simply providing worship every Sunday to now serving as staff liaison to the Worship and Music Committee. While we remain in these difficult times, we do have some exciting opportunities coming up.

Following the wonderful reception to the virtual choir offering of Silent Night on Christmas Eve, I will be working to pull together a simple anthem for the choir to sing for Easter. More details to come, but if you're in choir, SAVE THE DATE

for Saturday, Feb. 20. We'll be meeting in the morning, one at a time, to record. Look for an e-mail from myself and/or communication from Jill Becker as before. We'll let you know what we're singing beforehand!

There will be several opportunities for folks to read Scripture and liturgy in Lent. We'd LOVE to have as many voices as possible, specifically those who might not have done so in the past. It's really easy! We'll arrange a time to meet with you, provide you what to say, and record. If you're interested in being put on a list for reading, please email me (Pastor Jonathan) at [revjonathan16@gmail.com](mailto:revjonathan16@gmail.com)

Friends, we know it has been hard; we are going on a year of this pandemic. Worship remains different. But we are also reminded that God does not require that we worship in a specific place, in a specific way, or in a specific time. We follow a God who constantly is outside of our expectations; who continues to show up in new and surprising ways. Let us not lose heart. Let us worship God, together. Amen!  
-Pastor Jonathan

### **Lend Your Voice to Building a More Just, Safe and Inclusive Schenectady!**

As part of our local community's response to the protests against racial injustice this summer, Pastor Dustin and a number of other Schenectady Clergy Against Hate members have regularly participated in the Schenectady Police Department's Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. This group of community leaders, working in collaboration with local police and government officials, have been tasked to conduct a

comprehensive review of how racial injustice and disparities in treatment can be addressed in our local criminal justice system. As part of that process, the general public has been encouraged to participate in a roughly ten-minute survey by Monday, February 15th, 2021 that can be found here:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQDT8D9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQDT8D9). Please lift up your voice as part of the effort of building just, safe and inclusive Schenectady!

### **Lead at Messiah!**

Every year on the first Sunday in February at Messiah, everyone gathers for an Annual Meeting of the Congregation where we discuss all we've accomplished, look towards the future, pass budgets, elect leaders and often take additional actions that need a full vote of the congregation. This coming year we'll meet on February 7th after worship, whether virtually or in-person, to do all those things and most notably, decide upon a series of actions that will finalize our consolidation with our dear friends at Trinity Reformed. Stay tuned for more details but in the meantime, perhaps you're considering taking on a new role at Messiah and our Nominating Committee wants to hear from you! This year the committee is chaired by Sue Collins and includes Pete Jones, Ann Marie Gray and Ibrahím Pedriñán. In addition to finding candidates for a minimum of four Congregation Council members this year, we'll also be electing two delegates to the ELCA Upstate New York Synod Assembly and Hudson-Mohawk Conference Assemblies as well as two delegates to the Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM) Assembly. Besides these elected positions we're also

looking for new leaders to fill a number of appointed roles including a Social Justice Chair, a Nursery Chair, a Youth Ministry Chair, an Arts & Culture Chair, a Young Adult Chair, a Men's Group President and an Archives Chair. If any of these things sound of interest to you, please contact Pastor Dustin!

### **Supporting Our Seniors**

Eddy SeniorCare, the Capital Region's only Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly(PACE), is a special model of care that provides the necessary supports to adults 55 and older with long-term healthcare needs so they may safely remain in their own homes. PACE is designed to put each participant at the center of their care and surround them with a clinical team who provides and coordinates all aspects of their healthcare (including primary care, rehab therapies, social work, prescriptions, assistive devices, etc.), as well as providing social supports, and even transportation to medical appointments. For more information, please call 855-376-7888 or visit [EddySeniorCare.com](http://EddySeniorCare.com).

### **Weekly Announcements Are On The Move!**

This past month we changed how we share weekly announcements during Sunday Mass. Now, you will see the many things happening at Messiah before the service starts. Announcements will appear on your screen at approximately 10:10 a.m. during each Sunday's service, just prior to the prelude. Additional information on all announcements can be found on our website, [www.messiahschenectady.org](http://www.messiahschenectady.org).

### **Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM) Update**

On Tuesday, February 2, Pastor Dustin and Suzanne Collins attended SiCM Assembly. Joanne Rafalik, Interim Director, spoke about how donations are down from local churches, and this funds the Food Pantry. The new building is taking shape and progressing well. There will be a Souper Bowl Fundraiser the first Sunday in February, and information can be found online. A "Fill the Van" event at the Niskayuna Co-Op on February 12th, from 10:00am to 5:00pm, for which food donations are appreciated. May 2nd is the virtual Crop Walk, again with sign ups and information on the SiCM website. In a unanimous vote, the Reverend Dr. Amaury Tanon-Santos became the new Executive Director of SiCM, beginning in March. A native of Puerto Rico, Dr. Tanon-Santos received his BA from the Universidad de Puerto Rico, then a Masters of Divinity from Princeton, and his Doctorate in Urban Ministry from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Dr. Tanon-Santos looks forward to working in the Schenectady urban environment, and he has extensive experience working in Puerto Rico, the New York City area, and lately as the Synod Networker for the Synod of the Northeast, working in New England and New York.

### **Worship Support at Messiah**

We all have various sized households and some of our members and friends have reported they are beginning to run out of communion wafers. If that describes you, our wonderful Care & Concern Committee Chair Barb Hallett has offered to

deliver you more supplies! Simply give her a call if needed!

### **Technology Support at Messiah**

We need to make sure all of us stayed connected! If you're someone in need of help getting on or using Facebook, contact Randi Dunda-Martin at 607.228.7770, Joyce Gresham at 518.355.5177 or Carly DiSanto at 518.630.5299. If you need help with email, Tithely (our virtual giving platform) or Realm (our virtual church directory), contact Penny Incitti at 518.356.2460. For Help with Zoom (an online digital conferencing technology used for meetings, Fellowship & Faith Formation), contact Russell McDonald at 208.920.3974, Penny Incitti at 518.356.2460, Rich Becker at 518.461.0034, Sue Collins at 518.605.2171 and Tom Collins at 518.605.1304. While we encourage all our members to connect with virtual Sunday worship on Facebook as it builds better community, you can also watch live on our website at <http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html>. The page is updated with a new live feed of the service every Sunday right after 10:00am with a recording posted there throughout the week. If you are having issues connecting with virtual Sunday worship, PLEASE contact Pastor Dustin at [pastor@messiahschenectady.org](mailto:pastor@messiahschenectady.org)

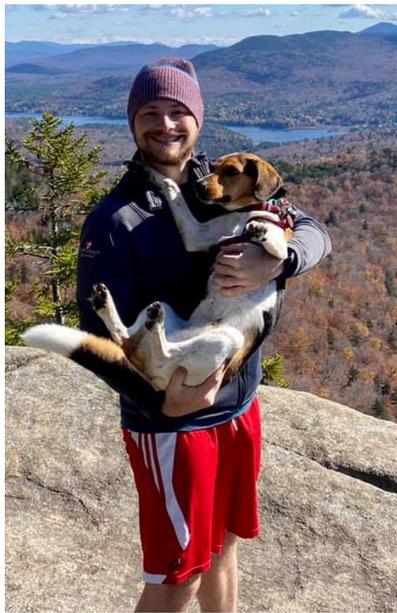
### **Mental Health, Addiction and Recovery Support**

If you're someone in need of addiction or recovery support, our very own Russell McDonald has offered to help connect you with the right resources and communities! Please reach out to him at 208.920.3974. If you're in need of any other mental health care, please don't hesitate to

message Pastor Dustin at 603.953.8782.

### **One Messiah Reads the Bible!**

Additional copies of [Bread for the Day](#), our daily devotional for 2021 and copies of [A Story to Tell: Devotions for Lent 2021](#) have arrived! Please be sure to pick up a copy in our narthex vestibule!



## February 2021 Senior Pastor's Letter

Dear siblings in Christ,

On Sunday, February 7th, 2021 our congregation in a series of near unanimous votes agreed to take the following actions, completing a critical stage of the unification process with Trinity Reformed Church:

- Officially called the Reverend Jonathan Vanderbeck as our Interim Associate Pastor.
- Approved the purchase of the Trinity Reformed building in order to redevelop the site into a community center for the good of our local neighborhood in Rotterdam.
- Commissioned an Accessibility Task Force to develop final recommendations for modifications to our Worship Center by Pentecost Sunday, May 29th, 2021.
- Commissioned a Community Center Task Force to craft a development plan for the proposed Community Center by Pentecost Sunday, May 29th, 2021.
- Requested our Mission Support Committee to conduct a Capital Appeal Campaign this autumn with the assistance of Rev. Peter Reuss of GSB to help fund necessary accessibility upgrades to our worship center.
- Authorized our legal name change to Messiah Lutheran Church and the commissioning of a new logo, that after discussion will certainly reflect our designation as a welcoming and affirming community with ReconcilingWorks.
- Reaffirmed our membership in and commitment to the purpose of Schenectady Community Ministries.
- Elected new Council Members and drafted a visionary 2021 Parish Budget.

And my gosh, over the last few days, the incredible staff and volunteers of our one, unified congregation got right to work putting our decisions into action! Our full staff all met together for the first time, along with our Personnel Committee, to get to know one another and begin figuring out how to work together as one Messiah! Welcome Dave, Sarah and in his new capacity as Interim Associate Pastor, Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck!!! Our awesome Mission Support Chair Penny Incitti is already hard at work getting a team ready for a once in a generation capital appeal to once and for all make our worship center fully accessible for all with the help of Rev. Pete Reuss from GSB. Our new Accessibility Task Force, which will be fully made up of people with disabilities or their family members, will work with potential architects to develop a final master plan for our worship center. Barb Hallett, Rianne Johnson and Hanna Avery have currently agreed to serve on this task force. Judy Becker, Lisa Whitman and Tina Bascom (who recently started a nonprofit called Bare Necessities), have so far agreed to serve on our Community Center Task Force, which will work to draft a Business Plan for our Bread of Life Community Center. By the time you read this, both of those task forces should be fully staffed with more incredible volunteers and starting their work. Thank you so much to all those who have already volunteered for these critical leadership roles! I'll be serving as the staff liaison to our Accessibility Task Force while Pastor Jonathan will serve as the staff liaison to the Community Center Task Force. The resolution we adopted last Sunday calls for both task forces to report back final plans at a Special Meeting of the Congregation scheduled for Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd, 2021. Finally, I just received notice that our application to the New York State

Attorney General's Office for \$30,000 in pre-development funding for the Trinity site has been submitted and we should know the results of that application shortly.

And gosh, on top of all that, a community wide Drive Thru Pancake Supper at Trinity, a very special Ash Wednesday Mass, a new Bible Study I'll be leading on how Christians built a more equitable, unified America in the first half of the 20th century and how we can do it again... things are busy at Messiah, but my gosh, we are doing God's work!!!!

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for all you do to support our transformational ministries at Messiah, especially as we get to work rebuilding and serving our neighbors after such a devastating year!

In faith,  
Pastor Dustin

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## February 2021 Ministers of the Month: Bread of Life Food Pantry



2020 was a very busy time for the food pantry due to the pandemic leading to so many more food insecure families in our neighbor. Thank you to Rich Becker, Jill Becker, Nathaniel Murray and Katrina Murray for keeping our pantry going when our long-term volunteers had to shelter at home. At this point however, the pantry is open three days a month for our guests and four days a month for deliveries. In 2020 the pantry served 1265 guests, 11,385 meals in 2020, up from 864 guests and 7911 meals in 2019, a 44% increase. Many thanks go out to Joyce Gresham, Judy Becker, Karen Kreischer, Betsy Ryan, Jim Ryan, Jill Becker, Steve Friebel, Kristen Olochnowicz, Sarah Olochnowicz and Grace Olochnowicz for all they continue to do to make Bread of Life operational. Thank you to all our Bread of Life Food Pantry volunteers and congratulations on being our Ministers of the Month!