

# The Messenger

A monthly publication from our Spirit filled church.

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We are a Spirit filled church following Jesus Christ.

## Community Events

**Vespers for New Years' Eve**  
**Thursday, December 31st at**  
**6:00pm**

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

Gosh, 2020 has been one of the most difficult of years in all our lifetimes. At the turn of the year however, we meditate on endings and beginnings, knowing that all the world's time begins and ends in God. We watch and keep vigil for the coming of God's justice in the year with a brief reflection from Pastor Dustin and a meditation lead by Russell McDonald. This service is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Vespers for the Feast of the Name**  
**of Jesus**

**Friday, January 1st at 6:00pm**

From the beginning, by virtue of our baptism, we are called Christian. We were "Christ-ened" at the font. Bearing his name, we share the same Father and are

invited to address him intimately: Abba! Jesus bears our sins in humble obedience to the will of the Father. Today we pray that the mind of Christ, whose name we bear, would be our own. It is a good way to begin, again, another year. In this brief pre-record service, join Pastor Dustin for a brief reflection on what it means to be a Christian in 2021. The service will be broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Peace Not Walls: Justice in**  
**Palestine & Israel**  
**Sundays beginning January 3rd**  
**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 Epiphany Sunday &**  
**Home Blessings**

**Sunday, January 3rd at 10:15am**

Since at least the fourth century, Christians have taken time at the end of Christmastide to remember the visitation of the Magi, the distant travelers and the first Gentiles to recognize the Good News of Jesus! With the

visitation of the Magi, the end of the Christmas story reminds us that Christ was born for everyone, without exception! This Epiphany Sunday, we'll have a virtual visit from our Magi, traditionally known as Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar. Pastor Jonathan will preach and Pastor Dustin will preside. Throughout the rest of the day Pastor Dustin will once again make himself available to briefly visit and bless the homes of congregation members for the upcoming year, another traditional aspect of Epiphany. If you'd like to have home blessed, please contact Pastor Dustin asap at [pastor@messiahschenectady.org](mailto:pastor@messiahschenectady.org). The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Epiphany for Kids: "The Magi"**  
**Sunday, January 3rd at 12:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Epiphany for Kids, we reflect on the visit of the magi (also known as the three king or wise men) to the baby Jesus and their message that Christ's light is for everyone, without exception! This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Compline for the Epiphany of Our Lord**  
**Wednesday, January 6th at 7:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/95880152222>

At Messiah we've traditionally transferred the Epiphany of Our Lord, a celebration of the visitation of the Magi to the baby Jesus, and thus spreading of Christ's light throughout the world to all people, to the first Sunday of the new year. But do the math! There are Twelve Days of Christmas after all and thus we'll

also take some time the evening of Epiphany to have some conversation regarding our call to spread the light of Christ through word and deed to all people! Our conversation will be surrounded by a beautifully sung rendition of our evening Compline service by our young people. This service is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Meditation and Prayer**  
**Thursdays, continuing January 7th 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 Baptism of Our Lord**  
**Sunday, January 10th at 10:15am**

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to recreate the world in the image of

God's vision of justice and peace. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Epiphany for Kids: "Order"**  
**Sunday, January 10th at 12:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Epiphany for Kids, we reflect on Christ's presence at the beginning of the world in Genesis 1:1-5 and in our baptisms as well! This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Confirmation Class: Acts of the Apostles (2 of 5)**  
**Sunday, January 10th at 6:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/92815271554>

All middle school aged children in our local community and their families are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program using the collaborate curriculum from Sparkhouse! 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 month of January our young people will study the Book of Acts and discussing how to mission of the earliest Christians reflects the work of Christians today. On this particular Sunday, our young people will reflect on their own research into various figures in Christian history including Óscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Hildegard of Bingen, Dorothy Day, Mitri Raheb, Shane Claiborne, William Barber, Teresa of Calcutta, Toyohiko Kagawa and Leymah Gbowee. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Mass for the Second Sunday after  
Epiphany: RIC Sunday  
Sunday, January 17th at 10:15am**

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God. This is also the Sunday at the start of each and every single year we recommit to being a Reconciling in Christ congregation that "welcomes and actively invites all people into full participation in the body of Christ without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, ability, marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation." 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](#).

**Epiphany for Kids: "Listening"  
Sunday, January 17th at 12:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/94695686497>

Today on Epiphany for Kids, we reflect on the importance of listening to God as young person as told through the story of Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:1-20. This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Confirmation Class:  
Acts of the Apostles (3 of 5)  
Sunday, January 17th at 6:00pm**  
<https://zoom.us/j/92815271554>

All middle school aged children in our local community and their families are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program using the collaborate curriculum from Sparkhouse! 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 month of January our young people will study the *Acts of the Apostles* and discussing how to mission of the earliest Christians reflects the work of Christians today. On this particular Sunday and in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. day and Black History Month, we'll devoted this class to MLK's legacy and how his story reflects similar stories in the *Acts of the Apostles*. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**One Messiah: A Community  
Forum on Our Common Future  
Wednesday, January 20th at  
6:30pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/99224358914>

Whew... what a year 2020 was in so many ways! Amidst the heartbreak of COVID19 however, the Spirit has been at work in our midst building something new with our friends down the street at Trinity Reformed Church! All across America, from our largest cities to our smallest villages, there are far too many small congregations of similar denominations who have remained divided around the linguistic, ethnic and racial divisions of a century ago and the long forgotten (by most) theological arguments of half a millennia ago. These small congregations of similar denominations have SO many gifts to share in service to Christ

reflected in the face of their neighbors, and my gosh, their communities NEED them! In some small way, we believe we are taking a bold step in providing one possible template for that very sense of ecumenical and interfaith collaboration called for in these unprecedented times.

While this all so, so exciting, we fully recognize that for members of both of our congregations, as well as our friends and neighbors, this is also likely a time of great anxiety and many questions, all exacerbating by our limited ability to be physically together during COVID19. With that fact in mind, all are invited to take part in something we're calling One Messiah: A Community Forum on Our Common Future. Many of the consultants who have helped us develop everything from initial plans for the Trinity Reformed property to our new staffing structure and more will be on hand to answer your questions and hopefully build a common understanding of where we're heading. While there will be time during the presentation itself to ask additional questions, we are asking our members to submit questions beforehand using either our [virtual survey](#) or a paper copy included in the back of this newsletter by Sun. January 10th.

You can join on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/99224358914>. If you would prefer just to watch, the event will also be broadcast on our website at <http://www.messiahshenectady.org/worshiplive.html> and on our Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/MessiahLC](http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC). If pandemic conditions allow and in line with our New York Forward COVID19 policy, a limited number of individuals without technical

capabilities MAY be able to gather in person to participate together on Zoom. If you are someone with limited technical capabilities, please contact me ASAP, as we want your voice included in this important discussion!!!!

**Mass for the Third Sunday after Epiphany: Prayer for Christian Unity**

**Sunday, January 24th at 10:15am**

On these Sunday, with Christians around the world, we gather in prayer for the reunification of Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic Church, all in service to the face of Christ in our neighbor. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. By the way, this is the anniversary of our last in-person worship service at Trinity Reformed Church before the start of the pandemic so let's gather together to celebrate the new things God has done since that time! The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Epiphany for Kids: "Reluctance"**

**Sunday, January 24th at 12:00pm**

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

Today on Epiphany for Kids, we reflect on the story of the reluctant prophet Jonah in Jonah 3:1-5, 10 and how sometimes, God might call us to do things we'd never expect! This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Confirmation Class: Acts of the Apostles (4 of 5)**

**Sunday, January 24th at 6:00pm**

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

All middle school aged children in our local community and their families are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program using the

colaborate curriculum from Sparkhouse! 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 month of January our young people will study the *Acts of the Apostles* and discussing how to mission of the earliest Christians reflects the work of Christians today. On this Sunday of Prayer for Christian Unity we'll discuss the good work of ecumenical organizations around the world, from the World Council of Churches to the ACT Alliance and Church World Service. We discuss the wider ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America like ELCA World Hunger, ELCA Global Mission, ELCA Advocacy and more. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Mass for the Presentation of Our Lord: Candlemas**

**Sunday, January 31st at 10:15am**

Candlemas, also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, is an ancient Christian tradition that marks the end of the Christmas-Epiphany season (many used to keep up their Christmas trees until this time). Held during the darkest, coldest part of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, the tradition of Candlemas includes a blessing of candles to be taken home as reminder of the returning light. Especially as so many of us struggle with seasonal depression this time of year, be sure to join us in a joyful service that looks forward to brighter days and gives thanks for the Light of Christ! Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship](#)

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

**Epiphany for Kids: "Light"**

**Sunday, January 31st at 12:00pm**

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

Today on Epiphany for Kids, we reflect on the of Jesus as a child in the Temple in Luke 2:22-40 and discuss how we can all share the Light of Christ this Candlemas! This course is both held live on Zoom and broadcast on [Facebook Watch](#).

**Community Confirmation Class: Acts of the Apostles (5 of 5)**

**Sunday, January 31th at 6:00pm**

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

All middle school aged children in our local community and their families are invited to join us for our weekly virtual Confirmation Class program using the colaborate curriculum from Sparkhouse! 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 month of January our young people will study the *Acts of the Apostles* and discussing how to mission of the earliest Christians reflects the work of Christians today. On this Sunday our young people and their families are joined by their confirmation mentors to discuss all they've learned about the Christian movement and how they might be inspired to serve Christ in the future. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Mass for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Sunday, February 7th at 10:15am**

In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthen the

powerless. So, in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. The service will be broadcast both on [the "Worship Online" section of our website](#) and on [Facebook Watch](#).

## News You Can Use!

### 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 Community Service Chair, a Nursery Chair, a Youth Ministry Chair, a Welcome Chair, an Arts & Culture Chair, a Young Adult Chair, a Men's Group President, 2021 Nominating Committee Members and an Archives Chair. If any of these things sound of interest to you, please contact Sue Collins!

### Weekly Announcements Are On The Move!

Starting on Epiphany Sunday, the way we share our weekly announcements is changing. 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](#).

### 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 the email address below: [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.

### Pastor Dustin on Vacation

From December 25th to January 2nd, Pastor Dustin will be taking some much-needed days off for the holidays (while staying safely socially distanced of course!) In case of a pastoral emergency during these times, please

contact President Pete Jones and he'll put you in touch with Pastor Jonathan who is covering.

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

If you'd still like a copy of [Bread for the Day](#), our daily devotional for 2021, please let us know asap as all of our initial copies have been picked up! Additionally, based on the success of our Advent daily devotional, we'll be ordering copies of [A Story to Tell: Devotions for Lent 2021](#) soon as Ash Wednesday is just around the corner! Copies of both resources can be ordered preferable by using our [virtual order form](#) or by calling the church office by Sunday, January 17th, 2021.

Once the shipment comes in, we'll alert the congregation and copies will be left in our main entrance vestibule. All copies of these devotionals are given to our members free of charge... that's one of the myriads of ministries supported by YOUR pledge dollars each and every single year!

Finally, we encourage all our members and friends to join our Prayer at Messiah Facebook Group found [here](#). We'll soon release a follow up Christmas/Epiphany Community Building calendar for use in that space as well!

## **Parish Meetings**

### **Care & Concern Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, January 6th 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>

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

**Tuesday, January 12th 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. Pete Jones is our Ministry Team Coordinator and the team meets quarterly. The link for tonight's meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/91568452071>.

**Poor People's Campaign Statewide Faith Leader Call**  
**Thursday, January 14th at 7:00pm**  
[RSVP FOR THE JANUARY CALL HERE!](#)

Last month the NYS Poor People's Campaign held a first statewide gathering for faith leaders and

members of faith communities. Based on the enthusiastic response, we will begin holding these virtual gatherings monthly in 2021! The Poor People's Campaign will plan to continue meeting at 7:00pm on the second Thursday of the month going forward. These meetings will include meditation and prayer, reflection on the important role of people of faith in the Poor People's Campaign, and discussion of ways for faith leaders and faith communities to engage with the Poor People's Campaign at the local, state and national level as we combat the interlocking evils of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation and the distorted moral narrative of Christian nationalism. Especially if you're interested in getting more involved with our Social Justice Ministry at Messiah, this will be an incredibly important conversation! Join us!

**Fellowship Ministry Team Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 3rd 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 Coordinator role is currently vacant (gosh,

we'd love someone!!!) and the 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 York Forward COVID19 Safety Plan. Please join us!

### 2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation

**Sunday, February 7th at 12:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/96036269005>

From electing members of the Congregation Council to adopting a 2021 Annual Budget and more, our Annual Meeting of the Congregation is the time every year where we reflect on our last year of ministry and discern where God is calling us in the year ahead. This year of course will be even more consequential as we will consider the purchase of the former Trinity Reformed building, adopt necessary bylaw amendments and take other actions related to our new future together with the good people of Trinity Reformed Church. Per our governing documents, an *2021 Annual Report of the Congregation*, along with a *2021 Annual Parish Budget* and all resolutions for consideration will be released to the congregation via email by Thursday, January 21st, 2021 at the latest via email with paper copies available for pick up.

You can join on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/96036269005> or by calling in by dialing 1.929.205.6099 and entering Meeting ID 96036269005#. If pandemic conditions allow and in line with our *New York Forward COVID19 Safe Policy*, a limited number of individuals without technical capabilities MAY be



### January 2021 Minister of the Month: Charlie Zitzmann

My gosh, if there's one person who's been central to leading us through all the property and accessibility efforts of recent years at Messiah, it's Charlie Zitzmann. After serving as President a number of years back (and Vice President before that) and seeing a need for strong leadership in caring for our facilities, Charlie recently completed around FIVE years of service as our Property and Grounds Co-chair and Chair, greatly expanding our volunteer base, leading the installation of the parsonage septic system, a new efficient furnace for the sanctuary and so, so much more. He spent countless hours in meetings regarding both our accessibility project and in the earliest stages of unification efforts with Trinity Reformed Church. Without Charlie's years of effort, we wouldn't be where we are today at Messiah, that's for sure... his spirit of service to his community should inspire all of us! Thank you, Charlie, for all you do and congratulations on being our Minister of the Month!

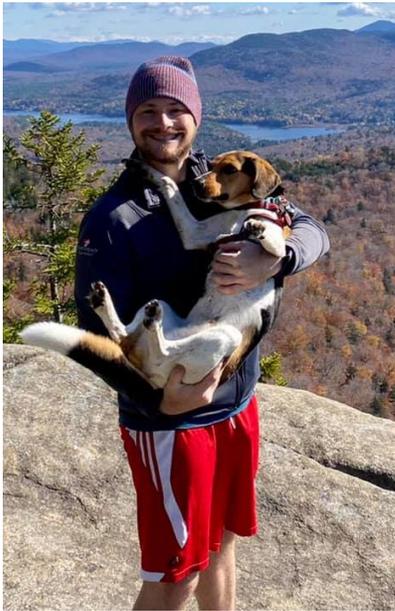
able to gather in person to participate together on Zoom and thus vote. If you are someone with limited technical capabilities, please contact Pastor Dustin ASAP, as we want your voice included in this important discussion!!!! If you would prefer just to watch, the event will also be broadcast on our website and recorded at [www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html](http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html) but "viewers" will not be able to vote due to amendments to New York State nonprofit laws related to COVID19.

### Faith Formation Ministry Team Meeting

**Tuesday, February 9th 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! Ibrahím Pedriñán is our Ministry Team Coordinator and the team meets quarterly. The link for this night's meeting is: <https://zoom.us/j/92199006383>.



## January 2021 Senior Pastor's Letter

Merry Christmas, dear siblings in Christ,

At the end of this most unprecedented of years, I write you with historic news regarding the future of our Spirit filled congregation. After one marathon of a meeting, years of discussion, and even while a "once in centuries" Christmas Star rose in the sky this past Monday night, our Congregation Council took the following major actions:

- Unanimously voted to accept a 2021 Membership Report that includes the transfer of all members of Trinity Reformed Church to membership with Messiah Lutheran Church effective December 31st, 2020 at 11:59pm.
- Unanimously voted to hire the Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck as Messiah's first ever Associate Pastor in a one year transitional role.
- Unanimously voted to hire Trinity staff members Dave Carkner as Messiah's new Parish Caretaker and Sarah Bachorik as Messiah's new Administrative Assistant to help further facilitate our transition. Our wonderful Parish Administrator Rianne Johnson and Parish Sexton Nicole Fatato will remain on staff doing quite the same wonderful work they always have.
- Building off the great work of our Budget & Finance Committee, unanimously voted to recommend a Unified 2021 Annual Budget reflecting the actions above for approval at our Annual Meeting of the Congregation scheduled for Sunday, February 7th, 2021 at 12:00pm.

Due to a number of Reformed Church in America and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America polity issues, this does not technically constitute a "merger" or "consolidation" of our congregations. Trinity Reformed Church will formally close with its members joining Messiah Lutheran Church, but this is still a historical milestone for the wider ecumenical movement of working together as "one holy catholic and apostolic church." As far as we know, we are one of the first congregations of ELCA Lutheran and former RCA Reformed members in the country.

All across America, from our largest cities to our smallest villages, there are far too many small congregations of similar denominations who have remained divided around the linguistic, ethnic and racial divisions of a century ago and the long forgotten (by most) theological arguments of half a millennia ago. These small congregations of similar denominations have SO many gifts to share in service to Christ reflected in the face of their neighbors, and my gosh, their communities NEED them!

At a time when more of our fellow Americans are suffering from food insecurity than at any time since the Great Depression and more of our neighbors are dying "deaths of despair" from things like suicide, opioid overdose and alcohol related illnesses than at any time in America's recorded history, all on top of the need for the largest mass mobilization since the Second World War to vaccinate and rebuild after this year of global pandemic, these small congregations of similar denominations need to work together, especially "for such a time as this."

In some small way, we believe we are taking a bold step in providing one possible template for that very sense of ecumenical and interfaith collaboration called for in these unprecedented times.

It is our long term vision to reinvent Trinity's current property into the sort of place a church building often used to serve as, albeit under different names. As an arts and culture incubator, a coworking space, a mental health resource center, an anti-hunger collective, and a workforce housing complex, all wrapped up in one Community Center, we'll be doing all we can to make sure we're serving Christ in the face of our neighbors in our wonderful little town of Rotterdam, New York.

Messiah's current space will remain and become fully accessible as our Worship, Fellowship and Faith Formation Center, where we'll continue to conduct the vast majority of the life changing ministries we always have and more.

There is still so much to work out, and so many questions that we are sure everyone wants answered (and some we want answered ourselves!) especially in this time when we are physically apart. Many votes, including those on budget, property and bylaws matters are the responsibility of all our members during our 2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation alone scheduled for Sunday, February 7th, 2021 at 12:00pm.

In order to better inform all of our members before this historic meeting and to answer all questions and concerns, we have scheduled a webcast and recorded forum called "One Messiah: A Community Forum on Our Common Future" on Wednesday, January 20th, 2021 at 6:30pm which you can join on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/99224358914>. If you would prefer just to watch, the event will also be broadcast on our website at [www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html](http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html) and on our Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/MessiahLC](http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC). If pandemic conditions allow and in line with our New York Forward COVID19 policy, a limited number of individuals without technical capabilities MAY be able to gather in person to participate together on Zoom. If you are someone with limited technical capabilities, please contact me ASAP, as we want your voice included in this important discussion!!!!

While there will be time during the presentation itself to ask additional questions, we are asking our members to submit questions beforehand using either our [virtual survey](#) or a paper copy included in the *January 2021 Messenger* by Sunday, January 10th.

Finally we all ought to give thanks for the INCREDIBLE and thoughtful leadership of our Congregation Council, as well Trinity's Consistory and the Schenectady Classis of the RCA for helping shepherd this project forward during such a complicated year. For now, though friends, especially as we approach the birth of Hope into our midst this Christmas, we celebrate the exciting way God is moving in our midst, as ONE, UNITED Spirit filled congregation grounded in Jesus Christ nourishing our local community in body, mind and soul!

In faith,  
Rev. Dustin G. Wright

**BREAD OF LIFE EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY DONATION ITEMS**

*Please place your items in the bin located by the sanctuary doors in the narthex. Thank you!*

**Grains**

Egg Noodles  
Pasta (spaghetti, macaroni etc.)  
Rice (plain)  
Rice Pouches (flavored)  
Other Grains

**Breakfast Items**

Unsweetened Cereal (Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies, etc.)  
Lightly Sweetened Cereal  
Pancake Mix (Complete)  
Pancake Syrup  
Oatmeal Packets  
Pop-tarts

**Vegetables (Canned)**

Corn  
Green Beans  
Peas  
Carrots  
Mixed Vegetables  
Tomatoes (stewed, diced, etc.)

**Fruit (Canned)**

Peaches  
Pineapple  
Pears  
Applesauce  
Fruit Cocktail

**Protein (Canned/Jar)**

Peanut Butter  
Tuna  
Canned Beans (Pork & Beans, Baked Beans, etc.)  
Chicken  
Spam  
Ham

**Beverages**

Coffee (Decaf/Regular)  
Milk (shelf stable)  
Evaporated Milk  
Juice Boxes  
Tea

**Combination Foods**

Spaghetti Sauce  
Macaroni & Cheese  
Soup  
Canned Pasta (Ravioli, Spaghettios, etc.)  
Canned Stew  
Ramen Noodles

**Ready Made Meals**

Hamburger Helper  
Tuna Helper  
Boxed Meals with Meat

**Desserts/Snacks**

Cookies  
Pudding  
Granola Bars  
Animal Crackers  
Graham Crackers  
Crackers (saltine, butter, oyster, etc.)  
Fruit Snacks  
Raisins

**Miscellaneous**

Jelly/Jam  
Coffee Creamer  
Spices  
Oil  
Paper Towels  
Paper Napkins  
Dish Detergent

**Baby Items**

Baby Food (Stage 1 & Stage 2)  
Diapers  
Wipes  
Baby Wash

**Health Care Items**

Toilet Paper  
Soap/Shower Gel  
Shampoo  
Toothpaste  
Toothbrush  
Deodorant

**Should you wish to make a monetary donation to the Bread of Life Emergency Food Bank, please see  
Joyce Gresham**



## Schenectady County Public Health Services

### Household Quarantine Checklist:

1. I have selected \_\_\_\_\_ to be the designated room for quarantine
2. I have selected \_\_\_\_\_ to be the designated bathroom for quarantine. If we can't designate a bathroom, I have placed cleaning supplies in \_\_\_\_\_ bathroom so that the surfaces and handles can be cleaned after use.
3. I will get drinkable water from \_\_\_\_\_
4. I will set aside the clothes I will need for a 2 week quarantine, if I can't access the washing machine and dryer without being exposed to other household members
5. I have put aside enough food for a 2 week quarantine or I have someone, that will bring me food during this time. I know I can call the regional foodbank at 518-458-1167 ext. 108, if I run out of food.
6. I have enough medication put aside for a two week quarantine or I have been in contact with my pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_ and pharmacy phone # \_\_\_\_\_ to arrange for my medications to be delivered or I have someone, \_\_\_\_\_, who will pick up my medications.
7. I have remote access to my doctor or to a doctor through my insurance. I call this phone number \_\_\_\_\_ or use this website: \_\_\_\_\_ to access this service
8. I have access to mental health services either from my current mental health provider at \_\_\_\_\_ or I can call my doctor at \_\_\_\_\_ to get connected to services. I also know that I can call the anonymous National Association for Mental Health hotline at 1-800-273-8255 any time I'm feeling down and receive support.
9. I have access to substance use and misuse treatment services at \_\_\_\_\_ and if I don't have services now, but I end up needing services I know I can call either the COTI Project at 518-579-9233 or Project Safe Point at 1-866-930-4999.
10. I have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who are willing to help out with my childcare needs. I know that if I need to be hospitalized, I have filled out this form: [OCFS Emergency Temporary Custody Link](#) so that custody arrangement are in place for my children
11. I have access to reliable heat (or cooling as needed), and I know that if I don't, I can get help by calling SCAP at: 518-375-9181
12. I have reliable phone and/or internet access to check in with contact tracers to report health status as well as to communicate with family and friends. I know that if I don't have access to these due to financial hardship, that I should visit the Department of Social Services at 797 Broadway, Schenectady, NY 12305-2704
13. I have someone who will check in on me, \_\_\_\_\_
14. I have reached out to a religious organization (if needed) to learn how I can access their services virtually.
15. I have placed the basic health monitoring and infection prevention supplies I will need- face coverings, gloves, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and a thermometer in the room that I will use for the 2 week quarantine.

## **“One Messiah” Follow-up survey**

**At this moment, how comfortable would you be coming back to a service where everyone wears a mask, there is no group singing, folks are spaced out six feet apart and there is no coffee hour?**

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neither Likely nor Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely

**As the cold weather continues, would you like us to plan some winter-friendly in-person but outdoor gatherings in line with our New York Forward Safety Policy or keep things as they are now?**

- In-person with restrictions
- Keep things as they are for now

**How could we better serve you and your family right now during such a unique time?**

**What questions regarding the unification of our ministries with Trinity Reformed would you like addressed at our "One Messiah" Forum scheduled for Wednesday, January 20th at 6:30p?**

**Please list your name and the best way to contact you for follow-up.**