



Messiah Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sunday of the Holy Trinity, June 16th, 2019

Dear siblings in Christ,

As I write this Letter of Support for the Bread of Life Food Pantry, I stand in awe of all the amazing things God has done in this Spirit filled congregation over our last five years of ministry together. Someone recently asked me a great question, "What's your secret mission?" and I answered with something along the lines of, "Well as a pastor at least, it's to help show what it means to be a vibrant Christian community in the twenty first century." I firmly believe that together, with God's help, we've done just that. We've grown in Sunday attendance by 79% since 2013 and in membership by 57% during that same period. We've proclaimed the Good News of Christ in word and deed by organizing Community Family Fun Days and #HelpPortraitSchenectady, holding a variety of community forums on critical issues like racism, immigration and creation care, welcoming and celebrating our LGBTQIA siblings, pushing Schenectady Community Ministries towards becoming an multi-faith collective of congregations and so much more. However, as we enter our next five years of life together, the ministry and expansion of the Bread of Life Food Pantry is one of the premiere ways we will nurture relationships with God and one another throughout our neighborhood.

As Schenectady continues to gentrify and as we all grow burdened under the intersecting yokes of income inequality, ecological degradation and systemic racism, the Bread of Life Community Center will allow us "to feed the hungry, bridge divides and build a sustainable neighborhood." As we carefully and prayerfully expand to a weekly food pantry program and especially as we partner to provide additional programming and support services, I believe the line between "client" and "volunteer" will continue to blur as we all accompany one another through life and learn how God's at work in all our stories.

Imagine an evening just a few years down the road where no matter how long you've been going to church or haven't and no matter what you believe, you show up at Messiah to participate in a meditation session or gardening class. Later on, everyone works together to provide nutritious food for those in need. There is no discernable difference between folks who are serving and those who are being served, because everyone recognizes it's all part of the same darn thing called community. Some folks stay back to stand in prayer but whether they name it as such or not, all who gather that night leave feeling the hope of Christ's liberating love.

That, in short, is what with God's help I believe our Bread of Life Food Pantry can become. I invite you to join us in that holy work.

In Christ,
Reverend Dustin G. Wright

2850 Guilderland Ave. Schenectady, NY 12306 | 518.355.2311

www.messiahschenectady.org