

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

Peace Not Walls: Justice in Palestine & Israel

Continuing Sunday, March 7th 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."

This Sunday, Pastor Dustin will present on his own experiences

leading trips to Palestine and Israel, as well as his successful work at the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to prevent church funds from being invested in companies complicit in illegal settlements in Palestine and other human rights abuses around the world.

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, a q-tip 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!



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 is currently a Zoom only offering.

Lenten Evening Prayer: "Law" Wednesday, March 10th 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

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



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!

are a limited number of parking spots by the North Ferry Street entrance to the park (right next to where we'll be) for people with accessibility concerns. The event will be roughly thirty minutes and will take place rain or shine.

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 bring signs and thank you First Reformed Church of Schenectady for allowing individuals to park in their parking lot and walk over! There

Community Meditation and Prayer

Continuing Thursday, March 11th 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, sometimes with a word of Scripture, we'll move into a roughly twenty minute guided meditation. This week will be led by Russell McDonald. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

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 broadcast on Facebook Watch.

Community Confirmation Class: "Romans"

Sunday, March 14th 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, his letters and draw

connections to Women's History Month. This Sunday we'll begin to discuss Paul's Letter to the Romans and discuss a short TedX talk from Tara Teng, "Jesus Made Me a Feminist." This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**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 is currently a Zoom only offering.

**Lenten Evening Prayer: "Look"
Wednesday, March 17th 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!

**Pre-Palm Sunday Pickup
Saturday, March 20th from
3:00pm - 7:00pm (new time)**

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

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 broadcast on Facebook Watch.

**Community Confirmation Class:
"1st & 2nd Corinthians"**

Sunday, March 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, his letters and draw connections to Women's History Month. This Sunday we'll discuss Paul's Letters to the Corinthians and discuss the story of Hildegard von Bingen. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

**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 is currently a Zoom only offering.

Lenten Evening Prayer: "Sacrifice"
Wednesday, March 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!

Palm Sunday Mass
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

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 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 Youth 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 circle back with the same guests who 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-optation

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 is currently a Zoom only offering.

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 Tenebrae Service Friday, April 2nd at 7:00pm

We'll be holding a service of Tenebrae (the Latin word for darkness), in which we hear the Passion narrative recited, culminating in the death of Jesus. Pastor Jonathan will preside, Jill Becker will serve as cantor, and several members of the congregation will participate in reading. The service will be broadcast both on the "Worship Online" section of our website and on Facebook Watch.

Easter Egg Hunt & Children's Vigil Saturday, April 3rd at 10:00am The Olochnowicz Estate

Join the young people of Messiah for one of our favorite traditions... an Easter Egg Hunt at the Olochnowicz Estate! Try to find the

golden egg and maybe you'll even get a chance to meet the Easter Bunny! Following the Easter Egg Hunt, we'll continue our tradition of a brief, kid-friendly version of our Easter Vigil service around a campfire. Masks, social distancing and checking in for contact tracing purposes will be required. For more information, please contact Kristen Olochnowicz.

The Great Vigil of Easter 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 Sunrise Service (in real life!) Sunday, April 4th at 6:15am 705 Curry Road in Rotterdam, New York

Far from the extravagant pomp and circumstance that most Easter morning services are, the

first Easter was probably quite solemn. It was only a few days after Jesus had been put to death. But on that early morning, women became the first proclaimers of the Good News when they met the angel, exhorting them to go and tell the disciples, "He is risen!"

This year, we recognize that Easter is still complicated. We have had an incredibly difficult year of mourning and grieving. But we also recognize that Easter is a time of hope. Therefore, the Worship and Music Committee has agreed to hold an In-Person, Outdoor Easter Sunrise Service. We'll be gathering at 6:15 AM, just in time for a 6:30 AM sunrise. It will be cold, dark, and plain; much like the first Easter. But it will also be a time of hope; a time for us to be together, if even but for a few moments, leaning into the hope that is to come.

We will be gathering in the north field at the old Trinity Reformed Church property, with plenty of wide-open space and parking. Please bring a lawn chair and a mask. Pastor Jonathan will be reading the Easter message and leading us in a simple Easter Hymn.

Please note, we will still hold a full Easter celebration at 10:00 AM on Facebook Live, as we have done for every other Sunday. This is an additional option for those who wish to gather and usher in Easter's hope together. We hope to see you there!

Easter Sunday Mass Sunday, April 4th at 10:00am

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! 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.

Worship & Music Ministry Team Meeting

Monday, April 5th 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, usually on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm. The link for tonight's meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/96341841016>.

Mass for the Second Sunday in Easter: "Sharing"

Sunday, April 11th at 10:00am

The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need. Pastor Jonathan will preach and preside. The service will be broadcast both on the "Worship Online" section of our website and on Facebook Watch.

Easter for Kids: "Sharing"

Sunday, April 11th at 12:00pm

Today on Easter for Kids, Ms. Betsy, Ms. Cheryl, and some VERY special guests discuss how the first Christians shared with one another in Acts 4:32-35. This course is broadcast on Facebook Watch.

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 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>.

Mass for the Third Sunday in Easter: "Wondering"

Sunday, April 18th at 10:00am

The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements

of our Sunday worship. 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 for Kids: "Wondering"

Sunday, April 18th at 12:00pm

Today on Easter for Kids, Pastor Dustin, Ms. Betsy, and Ms. Cheryl reflect on the wonder of the disciples when they share a meal with the resurrected Jesus in Luke 24:36b-48. This course is broadcast on Facebook Watch.

Community Confirmation Class: "Galatians"

Sunday, April 18th 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 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 April we'll discuss how the epistle of the New Testament relate to the subject of caring for creation. This Sunday we'll discuss Paul's Letter to the Galatians and the recent Lutheran World Federation Youth Global Prayer for Climate Justice. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

Care & Concern Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 21st 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>.

Mass for the Fourth Sunday in Easter: "Creation"

Sunday, April 25th at 10:00am

Depending on COVID19 positive test rates, our Worship & Music Committee, along with our Congregation Council, is currently contemplating the idea of celebrating our first in-person regular Sunday Mass in over a year outside on the Sunday closest to Earth Day. Pastor Dustin will preach, and Pastor Jonathan will preside over a creation themed service, perhaps in our Parish Yard at Messiah! Whether we decide to gather in person or not, the service will be broadcast both on the "Worship Online" section of our website and on Facebook Watch.

Easter for Kids: "Creation"

Sunday, April 25th at 12:00pm

We don't know for sure, but we may be able to gather our young people together this Sunday for a walk outdoors to experience the beauty of God's creation! Stay tuned for more details!

Community Confirmation Class: "James"

Sunday, April 25th 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 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 April we'll discuss how the epistles of the New Testament relate to the subject of caring for creation. This Sunday we'll discuss the Epistle of James and speak with a very special guest from Greenfaith on the connection between faith and caring for God's creation. This is currently a Zoom only offering.

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 News

Your worship and music committee are continuing to discern, alongside of the Congregational Council, moves to resume in-person worship in some format. Alongside of the in-person, outdoor Easter Sunrise Service, we will be considering what other sorts of gatherings might be appropriate as the weather warms and vaccines become more widely available. As always, feel free to reach out to Pastor Jonathan who is chairing the committee, or any of the other committee members if you have thoughts, questions, or concerns.

Lead at Messiah!

While a number of folks have stepped up in recent months, we're still looking for a variety of 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. We are also looking for one final member of our Congregation Council. If any of these things sound of interest to you, please contact Pastor Dustin!

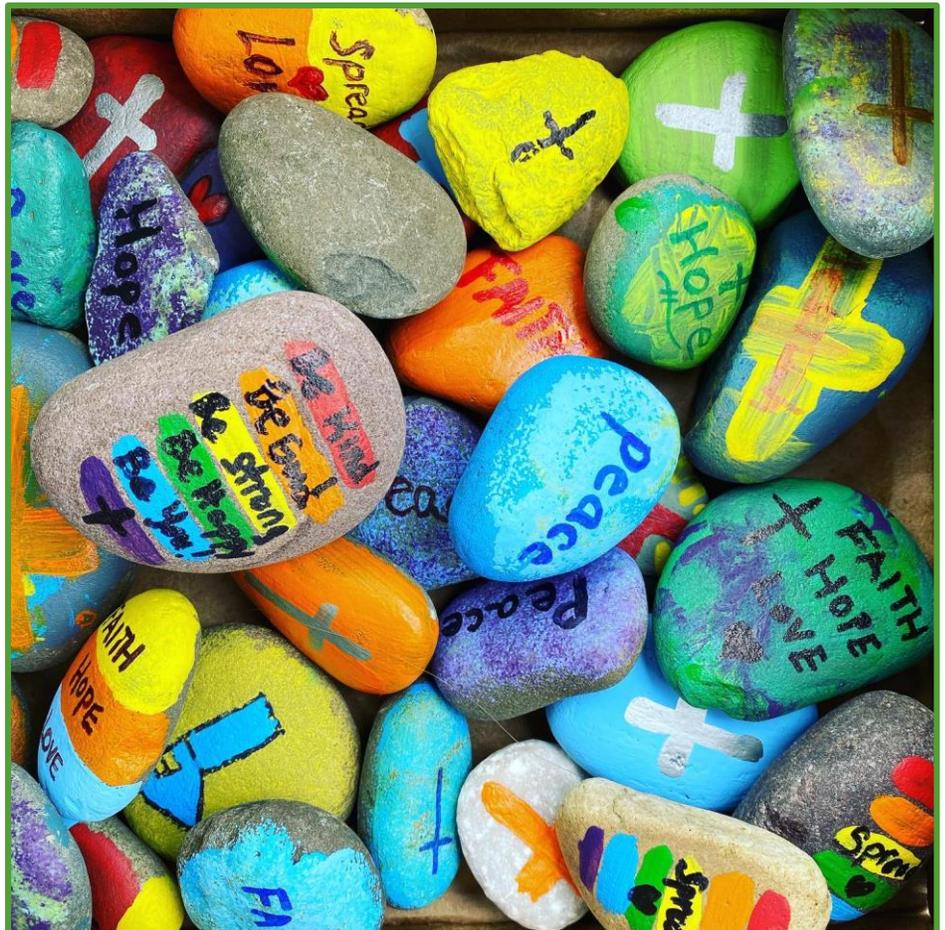
Worship Support at Messiah

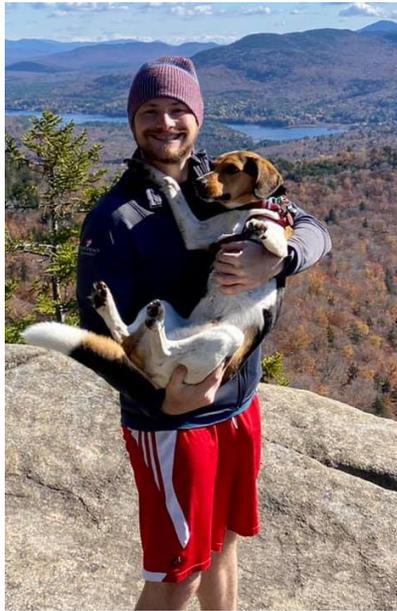
We all have various sized households and some of our members and friends have reported they are beginning to run out of communion wafers. If that describes you, our wonderful Care & Concern Committee Chair Barb Hallett has offered to deliver you more supplies! Simply give her a call if needed!



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.





March 2021 Senior Pastor's Letter

Thursday, March 4th, 2021

Dear siblings in Christ,

Whew... I'm writing to you all at the end of an absolutely amazing week in the life of our congregation! My soul feels lighter than it has in quite a while! While our Congregation Council will have a special meeting next week to discuss the final proposal, I am happy to announce that Messiah's application to receive \$30,000 in pre-development funding to turn Trinity Reformed into a comprehensive community center for the good of our neighbors in Rotterdam HAS BEEN ACCEPTED. Along with a VERY generous \$10,000 anonymous gift, that should give us all the funding we need to work through a process to seek a development partner to build senior and/ or workforce housing around the existing church structure by the end of the year. Our Community Center Task Force also met for the first time this week, discussing that the overarching work of our community center is something like "Bringing neighbors together across all that divides us to be fed in body, mind and soul." We'll likely be released a survey soon to our food pantry clients, congregation members and neighbors alike looking at what additional support services are needed in our community. Plans to make our Worship Center accessible are in their early stages but progressing, as our plans to launch a Capital Campaign to fund that work. Just yesterday, I was BLESSED with the opportunity to co-lead a Bible Study with Rev. Nicolle Harris of Duryee African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on Hamilton Hill. We had about twenty folks participating, evenly split between members of each of our congregations, for a wonderful conversation about Christ's call to work together across the color line for the good of the community. Next week I'll co-host a similar conversation with Rabbi Matt Cutler and members of Congregation Gates of Heaven... join us on Wednesdays at 2:30p! Seven months of work on the Schenectady Police Reform Collaborative Steering Committee is nearly complete, and while I'd say there were a number of shortcomings throughout the process, on the whole, there does appear to be broad consensus amongst both police and community leaders on the vast majority of reforms. See... we can agree on some things when we listen to one another! We had a wildly successful and well publicized Shrove Tuesday Drive Thru Pancake Supper a couple weeks back and our next in-person event will be this Sunday, when twenty of our kiddos and their families will gather together for an afternoon of snow tubing at West Mountain in Queensbury. You'll see in this newsletter that we'll begin experimenting with a number of other in-person, primarily outdoor events for folks of all ages, from a Palm Sunday walk at Thacher Park to an Easter Sunrise Service in Trinity Reformed's parking lot to PERHAPS our first in person regular Sunday morning worship service celebrating Earth Day later this April!!!

This season of Lent, know that our over year long journey in the wilderness is far from over, but it does appear to be rounding a major bend in a much more positive direction. I'm so, so thankful for your prayer, support and participations in the many life changing ministries of our Spirit filled congregation grounded in Jesus Christ!

In faith,

Pastor Dustin

Mental Health Matters with Pastor Jonathan, LMSW

Each month, Pastor Jonathan will be sharing brief insights about mental health. He is a licensed psychotherapist and believes mental health is as important as physical and spiritual health.

Lent is always a time of mixed emotions for me. A season designed to remind the church of its need for God; of penitence and of confession. While I think these things are always necessary, for the past several years, I've often thought *"The world is broken enough already. Do we really need another season designed to make us feel bad about ourselves?"*

It's a fair question, I think. In my experience as a psychotherapist, my clients, despite coming to therapy to address difficult life circumstances, often recoil when we attempt to lean into areas of past pain, hurt, and suffering. They tell me, *"I thought therapy was supposed to make me feel better. But every time I come in to talk about my difficulties, I end up leaving feeling worse than I did to begin with."*

This has been a hard year. We have been made brutally aware of the frailty of our human condition, with masks worn on faces like ever-present marks of ash, always reminding us of how close we are to our own earthly limitations. No matter what way you look at it, we have experienced a variety of losses and pain over the past twelve months. It is easy to give ourselves over to gloom.

Psychotherapists talk often about the "five stages of grief." While a bit overly simplistic, it is the idea that processing grief often passes through five distinct emotional experiences: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. For me, I've seen all five stages over the past year- denial of the reality of what goes on around us, anger at the injustice of it all, bargaining around what feels safe and reasonable, depression over feeling hopeless at the never-ending monotony, and acceptance coming when the full weight of the loss is acknowledged.

In this Lenten season, there is, in a particular way, a sense of profound grief that has overcome us. Pain and loss stare us in the face, threatening our shaky resolve. Many of us are experiencing one of those five stages. Many of us feel as if we have experienced all five, sometimes multiple times in the course of a week. We're overwhelmed, tired, short, and on edge.

As much as we might want to run away from this pain, I want to encourage us in this Lenten season to lean in to the grief. I often remind my clients that you never "get over" a loss, instead you have to "go through" the loss. This is hard. This is painful. And this is a season when we journey together. We are reminded that we are on a path with a Savior who understands this pain. As the author of Hebrews reminds us in chapter 4, verse 15 and 16: *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Christ is with us in this season. Let us boldly bring our pain, our hurt, our fatigue, and our needs directly to the one who is able to sympathize with us.

Beloved people of God, we are not alone. In this season, we are reminded, yes, of our need for God, but more importantly, that we have a God who meets us *in* our needs. We are not alone.

March 2021 Ministers of the Month: The Congregation Council



Gosh, when this past year's Congregation Council members signed up for a three-year stint on Messiah's main governing body, they all definitely got more than they asked for! From leading us through a year long pandemic and physical shutdown to moving nearly all of our life changing ministries online to successfully navigating our unification with Trinity Reformed, beginning the development of both our Bread of Life Community Center and laying the groundwork for accessibility upgrades to our Worship Center to keeping our congregation together amidst divisive times, there is SO much we've accomplished this past year! Special thanks go out to our outgoing President, Pete Jones, along with other outgoing members Joyce Gresham and Ann Marie Gray. Our returning Council members include Vice President Sue Collins, Treasurer René Dunda-Martin, Assistant Treasurer Phil Bazicki and Secretary Karen Keenan. Our brand-new members include Katie Becker, Eric Cawley, Crystal Murray, Rachel DeTeso-Mathis and we are still looking to fill one additional vacancy. Thank you to the Congregation Council for your awesome leadership and congrats on being our March 2021 Ministers of the Month!