

The Messenger

A monthly publication from our Spirit filled church.

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Messiah Lutheran Church
2850 Guilderland Avenue
Schenectady, New York 12306
www.messiahschenectady.org

Email:
office@messiahschenectady.org

Phone:
518.355.2311

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/MessiahLC



We are a Spirit filled church following Jesus Christ.

The Month Ahead

Trick or Treat at Messiah!
Tuesday, October 31st from
4:00 - 7:00pm

Join Pastor Dustin, members of our Outreach Ministry and the one, Willard Excelsior Bear, for a spooky, scary evening! We'll have FULL SIZE candy bars for all the kids and fun Halloween party games like the Monster Mash and Bobbing for Apples to boot! All are welcome to stop by Messiah's parking lot and be sure to bring some friends!



Regional Food Bank Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday, November 4th from
9:00am-11:00am
965 Albany Shaker Road,
Latham, NY 12110

On Saturday, November 4th, the Social Action Committee will have a volunteer opportunity at the Regional Food Bank packing food from 9AM-11AM. There are still a couple of slots available; the sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex. Please speak with Judy Becker for more information.

All Saints Sunday
November 5th at 10:15am

Each year on All Saints Day we remember our friends and loved ones who are no longer

with us. On November 5th during a special time in the worship service we invite you and/or your family to come forward with a votive candle (which we will provide) and place it on the table in front of the altar. A sheet is on the bulletin board to list those loved ones who have passed away since last year (along with their date of death if you happen to know it). The names of those individuals will be read during the prayer and a special candle will be lit in their memory.

Fall 2017 New Member Class
Sunday, November 5th
following worship

Have you been attending Messiah for a while now and

beginning to think about taking the next step in your faith journey? Well talk with Pastor Dustin or Allison Bode asap because enrollment in our Fall 2017 New Member Class has begun! Class takes place on Sunday, November 5th as we use the promises one makes in baptism to learn about both our faith and how Messiah works.

New member households are then paired with a sponsor family and we all gather together for our New Member Dinner on Wednesday, November 8th.

New members will then be welcomed into our Spirit filled community on Sunday, November 12th. That's a lot of dates, so if you can't make everything... no worries! Pastor Dustin is available for at least one makeup conversation per household! Finally, if you're a current Messiah member and would like to serve as a sponsor this fall, please speak with Pastor Dustin or Allison Bode.

**SICM Harvest for the Pantry
Sunday, November 5th from
4:00-7:00pm**

**First Reformed Church of
Scotia**

**224 North Ballston Ave, Scotia,
NY 12302**

SICM invites all to their 10th Anniversary edition of Harvest for the Pantry – a dinner to raise funds for the SICM Emergency Food Pantry featuring home-made dinner of either chicken parmigiana, beef burgundy, or a vegetarian dish; a silent auction; pick-a-prize; and an

evening of fun and fellowship to show your support for their food pantry. Tickets are \$30 per person - \$25 is eligible for GE matching - and are available either at the SICM office (1055 Wendell Ave, Schenectady) or you can contact either Nancy Stellrecht or Betsy Ryan. We hope to see you there!

**SICM Assembly
Tuesday, Nov. 7 at 7:00 PM
Mount Olivet Missionary Baptist
Church
1068 Park Ave. Schenectady,
New York 12308**

As you are aware, there is a great amount of food insecurity in Schenectady County. This topic will be focus of the next SICM Assembly. There will be a panel presentation on the county food plan, success to date and action steps. All are welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please speak with Betsy Ryan or Nancy Stellrecht, SICM Assembly delegates.

Worship & Music Committee Meeting

**Monday, November 6th at
7:00pm (Narthex)**

Join us for our last Worship & Music Committee meeting of the year as we evaluate all our fall worship services, plan for Advent and Christmas, make decisions about the future of Coffeehouse Worship and more! All are welcome and if you have any questions please speak with Pastor Dustin or Jill Becker.

Faith Formation Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, November 8th at
7:00pm (Sunday School Room)**

Join in our quarterly Faith Formation Committee Meeting as we evaluate fall programming and gear up for Advent and the winter! If you have any questions, please speak with Chair Jean Jones.



Veterans' Day Service of Holy Communion

Sunday, November 12th at 10:15am

Join us for a brand-new ministry at Messiah where we take the time to honor the brave women and men who've given up so much to keep us safe. Our first ever Veterans' Day Service of Holy Communion will feature special prayers, brief remarks from vet Asm. Angelo Santabarbara and a special chance to honor all who've served in our congregation, especially Dave Ellis, a World War II vet and beloved member of our Spirit filled church. All are welcome and be sure to bring a friend or neighbor!

Coffeehouse Worship Sunday, November 12th at 5:30pm

Once a month we set aside an evening to be treated to some beautiful music by Douglas J. Chilton and worship in much the way of the original Christians, around a simple meal of bread and wine at the close of the day. Every Coffeehouse Worship we address a specific topic, with this month's being "What ought Christians to think about war and peace?"



God's Work Our Hands Saturday

Saturday, November 18th from 10:00am to 3:00pm

**Keane Elementary School
1252 Albany Street,
Schenectady, NY 12304**

This might be over a month away, but please be sure to sign up for God's Work Our Hands Saturday. ELCA congregations nation-wide have been participating in "God's Work. Our Hands." during these last couple of months. This will serve as an opportunity for us to explore one of the greatest Lutheran convictions: "that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace." We had a great time packing food baskets last year with them and are so happy to be doing it again. Please use the side entrance off of the parking lot, since the front doors will be locked. A sign-up sheet will be available soon. For more information, please contact Judy Becker or Pete Jones.

Fall Calendar Meeting Sunday, November 19th at 11:30am

Immediately following our November 19th Service, we will be having our bi-annual calendar meeting where we plan events for the upcoming year through Spring-time and early Summer. Committee chairs and lay leaders are highly encouraged to attend!

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Guru Nanak Darbar of Albany 1944 Union St., Schenectady, NY 12309

Sunday, November 19th at 6:00pm

This is a relatively new event so details are still getting figured out, but Guru Nanak Darbar of Albany will be holding an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 19th at 6:00pm, hosted by the Schenectady Clergy Against Hate. This gives us a great opportunity to stand in solidarity, regardless of faith, and give thanks for all in our lives. For more information, please speak with Pastor Dustin.

WELCA Project Meeting Tuesday, November 21st at 7:00pm

WELCA will be holding their project meeting on November 21, 2017 at 7:00pm. We will be decorating small Christmas trees that will be delivered to our shut-ins. Hostesses are Molly Karrel and Linda Klein.

Confirmation Sunday Sunday, November 26th at 10:15am

Four of our youth, Mark, Cal, Devin & Olivia, have been hard at work over the last couple years learning about the Bible and Lutheran traditions, growing in their faith and connecting with their church. On this very special Sunday please join us as we confirm God's promises made to them in baptism and welcome them as full adult members of our Spirit filled church!

December Newsletter Articles Due

**Monday, November 27th at
10:00am**

Because of Thanksgiving, two email reminders will be sent out: one on November 13/14th and one on November 20th. Please try your best to get articles in on time, as this will be a very busy time of the year for many!

Faith Formation Book Discussion

**Tuesday, November 28th at
11:00am**

Book to be determined soon; please keep a lookout for future announcements or postings on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

Save the Date: 90th Anniversary Advent Workshop Sunday, December 3rd at 11:30am (after worship)

Be on the lookout for more news over the next few weeks about our upcoming Advent Workshop!

Advent Gatherings Wednesdays in December at 7:00pm

Take a break from the craziness of the season and join together in Spirit filled community to slow down and reflect on all the amazing ways our God in Christ continues to break into our lives! We'll once again celebrate the season with warm spiced cider and candlelit conversation and music! All are welcome!



Greening of the Church Sunday, December 10th at 11:30am

Please join us for one of the most joyful events of the year as we deck the halls (and the sanctuary) here at Messiah in anticipation of the birth of Jesus! We plan on decorating more than just the sanctuary and putting up the nativity scene this year so we'll need lots of help for all ages. Pastor will be providing mulled sweet cider and treats as well! Please join us!

News You Can Use

Advocacy News

Many thanks to everyone who participated in Messiah's first Bread for the World Offering of Letters last month! We drafted thirty-three letters to our federal legislators urging them to vote no on a proposed budget that will drastically cut critical anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs, such as the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), low-income tax credits, and Medicaid over the next ten years. While the initial budget resolution was indeed passed by the US Senate last week, this fight is far from over. If you'd like to find out how your representative and senators voted on their chamber's budget resolution. Call [800-826-3688](tel:800-826-3688) and thank them if they voted "no." If they voted "yes," tell them you are disappointed.

Faith-inspired advocacy work isn't just about federal issues, but state and local issues as well! In fact, **save the date because on Tuesday, March 13th from 9:00am - 4:00pm the Rev. Norma Malfatti, who's previously visited Messiah for our Leadership Retreat last year, is organizing a Lutheran Day at the Capitol!** The day will include a variety of brief workshops on key issues including creation care, economic justice, what's at

state in the budget and more. The highlight of the day will be visiting with your member of the State Senate and Assembly or their staff. If you'd like more information, please speak with Pastor Dustin.

WELCA PIE SALE

It's that time of year to think about pies for the holidays. WELCA will once again be holding a pie sale to benefit our upcoming service projects. The pie selections are as follows: **Apple** or **Sugar Free Apple** (sweetened with Splenda®), either **baked** or **"Bake-at-Home"** ("Bake at Home" pies are homemade, freshly prepared 9" pies, boxed for easy storage in your freezer and are ready for you to bake whenever you need a home baked pie! We will even include the baking instructions!) **And, of course, our ever popular Air Pie** (all of the satisfaction of donating without any of the calories in a traditional pie). All pies must be pre-ordered (and pre-paid for - \$10 each) by **November 12, 2017** and will be available for pick up on **November 19, 2017**. If you are unavailable to pick up your pies, we will freeze them for you and you can pick them up at your convenience.

Community Office Hours
Tuesdays, 12:00pm - 2:00pm at
Tops American Grill, Bakery &
Bar

Want to meet up for some casual conversation over lunch or a cup of coffee? Have a faith question or need help planning a new ministry or

event at Messiah? Join Pastor Dustin at a local favorite eatery of Messiah members, Tops American Grill, Bakery & Bar here in Rotterdam. He'll be available most Tuesdays from 12:00pm - 2:00pm, meeting with members of the congregation and our local neighbors alike. Be sure to stop by!

Social Action Adopt a Family

We have a family to adopt for Christmas. There are 3 children and 4 adults, plus the grandmother. We will be collecting donations for them until December 10th. If you wish to donate, please give your donations to Jill Becker.

Care and Concern

The Care and Concern committee has been quite busy this past month. We are averaging visits to the Glendale home every two weeks. We are pleased that we are able to make more frequent visits. Our most recent Pot Luck Dinner, held Sunday, Oct 22 was extremely successful. We had 28 people in attendance. Linda Buehler provided piano music after the meal, which everyone enjoyed. We celebrated Al Califano's 100th birthday. There will be more on this dinner in next month's Messenger. 10 cards were sent out.

Confirmation Class

Golly! There's so much to report! We have a huge confirmation class this year and everyone's having a blast

learning about their Lutheran heritage, participating in Breakfast Club and volunteering at events like our Tops Breast Cancer Awareness Event a couple weeks back. SIXTEEN youth and family members attending our Double M Haunted Hayride this year, which will hopefully be indicative of how active our youth will be for years to come!

Faith Formation News

Faith Formation meeting will be held November 8th at 7pm. Plans will be discussed for Advent. Book discussion will be on Nov 28th at 11am. Book to be announced. Reformation Book Fair will be held on Oct 29 and November 5th in the Narthex after worship. Adult Ed. will continue on Sunday mornings at 9am with the study of the Book of Acts.

SICM News

The Empty Bowl's fundraiser, with 60 people attending, raised \$2,500. The K of C golf event raised \$3,000 for SICM.

After discussion regarding the presentation by David Bachelder, RN on the Single Payer Health Proposal, it was decided SICM will educate our members, rather than advocate for it.

Approximately 70 people visit the Food Pantry every day. The Pantry is always looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please call Shelly Ford at 518-346-4445.

Messiah Calendar News

Do you keep wondering what in the world is going on at Messiah but find it to be quite a pain to go fishing for your newsletter or get to your computer and pull up the parish calendar? You're certainly not alone! Please reach out to Rianne, Dakota, or Pastor Dustin and we will help assist you put our church calendar onto your google calendar (or whatever calendar software you use.)

90th Anniversary News

Join us after church services on December 3 for cake and coffee as we finish out our 90th Anniversary year!

Also, save this date on your calendars: **January 13, 2018 1pm-4pm for our Chili/Soup Cook Off Fund Raiser.** The money raised will continue to help defray the cost of the directory's. Watch the bulletin board for the sign-up sheet for what we think will be a great time

NOVEMBER MINISTER OF THE MONTH: BARB HALLETT



Barb Hallett is a retired RN and has four daughters. She has always been someone who takes care of others. She is and always has been a selfless woman.

Barb enjoys being a part of the Messiah family; she has been a member for almost 50 years! Barb is currently in the choir, co-chairs the care and concern committee, and is a member of the RIC taskforce.

Thank you so much for all that you do for Messiah, Barb!
Congratulations on being our November Minister of the Month!



PASTOR'S LETTER: REV. DUSTIN G. WRIGHT



'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

- Matthew 23:23

Golly, the verse above sounds pretty harsh at first, but actually, it's filled with incredibly good news!

It's one verse of a whole chapter in the Gospel According to Saint Matthew where Jesus lays into religious leaders of his time pretty heavy! Due to rabid anti-Semitism throughout much of the church's history, these sorts of verses were often interpreted to mean Jesus was critiquing Judaism as a whole, but that couldn't be farther from the truth... Jesus was Jewish after all and as He says in Matthew 5, "I came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it!"

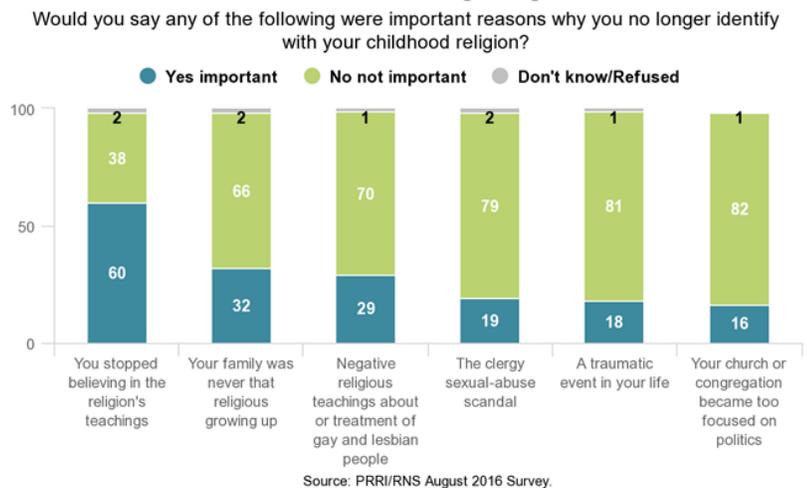
Jesus wasn't critiquing the religion of his day... not at all! What he was definitely doing however was **critiquing the religious leaders of his day**, folks who had turned the vibrant, life-giving, blueprint for life and society called the Torah into a strict, rigid, boring, dead sort of thing.

Honestly, especially as we arrive at the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, I wonder how Jesus might similarly critique how the Christian faith is spoken of all too often today as well. Look at that graph above from a study put out by Pew Research last year... **folks are leaving religious communities in droves, most typically as high school students, with the reason most often being they stopped believing the religion's teachings.**

As we work towards one of our goals for 2018, to, "Grow the relationships and programs necessary to keep our youth involved in our church after confirmation," let us ground ourselves and our children in the notion **that our God in Christ didn't really show up on earth to create new "religion," a strict, cookie-cutter, human created set of rules.** In fact, he laid into that sort of thing pretty heavy! Rather, our God in Christ showed up to point us toward Him, to liberate us from the worst of human muck and turn us towards living Eternal Life. **Being a follower of Christ is a lot more about a way of being and sharing a common language for the things of life that matter most than a strict set of beliefs or rules.** Let's help each other, and especially our young people, realize church is a place to love, live, question and serve, rather than a place to be indoctrinated or something... from that perspective, there's really nothing to stop believing, but there is a way to start living, the way of Christ!

May God's peace be with you,
Pastor Dustin

Reasons for Leaving Religion



PRESIDING BISHOP'S LETTER: REV. ELIZABETH EATON



This is the [500th anniversary of the Reformation](#). For the past year it has been “All Reformation All the Time!” Everything Martin Luther. The really observant have branched out to Philipp Melanchthon and Johannes Bugenhagen. True believers will dress their children up as Martin and Katie for Halloween, or if they tend toward the fear factor, Johann Tetzel.

Bring in the extra brass. Fire up the choir. Sing the fight song (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”). Dress in red. Binge-watch every Luther film and documentary. (I particularly liked Joseph Fiennes as the young, hot Luther.) This is our year! Oct. 32. Now what? When I am out and about the church, I like to ask people what it means to be Lutheran—what is distinctive about the Lutheran movement. Grace is almost always mentioned, along with justification. Some will say we are *ecclesia semper reformanda*—the church always being reformed. Others

point to our work for [disaster relief](#), [ELCA World Hunger](#), [advocacy](#) and other work for justice. Most of this is part of the Lutheran experience, but not unique to us. What then, did Luther uncover and what relevance does it have now?

Interestingly, Luther did not give his greatest emphasis to reform or to reforming the church. *Semper reformanda*—always reforming—was actually coined in 1947 by Karl Barth, a Reformed theologian. Liberation in Christ through faith was the freedom that transformed Luther. This freedom is what he wrote about most frequently and most passionately. The *Freedom of a Christian*, a short and accessible treatise, is probably most familiar. I commend it to you. In this brief work and in others, Luther makes the case that liberation in Christ is both a freedom **from** and a freedom **for**. Freedom **from** is liberation from all spiritual bondage. We are set free from being trapped in ourselves, consumed by ourselves, from the belief or terror that we can and must save ourselves, that our **self** is the center of the universe. Life in Christ is not an inward-dwelling experience. We are free to get over ourselves. Freedom **from** is liberation from the law's accusation and judgment. We are liberated from terror and despair, which are soul-crushing. We are liberated from the incessant and impossible task of measuring up. Freedom **from** liberates us from estrangement from God and God's creatures. Caught in sin and standing before a God who demands righteousness, when we believe we are responsible for our salvation, breeds resentment toward God and the objectification of others.

Freedom **for** means that in Christ we are set free for loving and serving others. Freedom is a relationship, not a new set of activities or the demands of a new law. Freedom **for** means that in Christ we are set free for loving and serving others. Freedom is a relationship, not a new set of activities or the demands of a new law.

Luther put it this way: “Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is a living, busy, active mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. ... And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown them this grace” (*Luther's Works*, 35:370-1). No longer is God transactional and others a means to an end. This freedom is scandalous because it is based on unconditional grace. It is a gift. Think about it—do we feel the burden being lifted? Think about it—do we feel the complete love of God? Think about it—do we now see others through God's eyes, free and beloved children? On Reformation Sunday we will hear Jesus' promise: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” ([John 8:32](#)). On Oct. 32 and beyond let us live in that freedom.