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

Our Antiracist Calling
Sundays, continuing October 11th at 8:45am
https://zoom.us/j/94311937514

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be anti-racist. Period. But what does that mean exactly? Through this fall, we will continue our course during our regular Sunday morning adult education hour at Messiah addressing that very question. Each Sunday will feature discussion of both a Bible passage and various resources that address racism and can help ground our understanding of current events through the lens of the Christian faith. The Zoom link is **https://zoom.us/j/94311937514** or you can even call in via phone at 929.205.6099 and then dialing 94311937514#.

Mass for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost: "Healing Sunday"
Sunday, October 18th at 10:15am

Traditionally at Messiah we use the Sunday closest to Saint Luke the Physician's Feast Day as a time for blessing, anointing and healing. This practice grew out of an early ELCA mandate to organize healing services amidst the worst of the HIV/AIDS crisis when the general public wrongly feared touching infected individuals. This year, during a different type of pandemic, we will be at distance, but that doesn't mean we won't focus on healing at a time it is more important than ever. Mass will feature a very special blessing and prayer for health workers and two Mission Moments from Barb Hallett and Hilda Hoffstetter about how Messiah's ministries have led to healing in their lives. After worship, everyone is invited to join our children on Zoom in Sunday School to help make cards for nurses and staff at Ellis Hospital. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Feast of Saint Luke, Evangelist
Monday, October 19th at 6:00pm

As part of Messiah's ongoing effort to recognize what are often known as "lesser festivals," on this day we recognize the writer of the Gospel According to Saint Luke, who was also often known as a physician. Grounded in the beginning and ending of Luke's gospel, Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53, we take some time talking about what "healing" means from the Lutheran perspective. If you are in need of prayer for healing, please drive up to Messiah's Oak Street main entrance for a brief drive-by prayer following COVID19 guidelines. You can watch our brief service on on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Children's Sunday School
Sundays, continuing October 18th at 12:00pm
https://zoom.us/j/94695686497

Kiddos age pre-k through middle school and their families are invited to join us for the kickoff of

another awesome year of Children's Sunday School at Messiah! After an awesome opening with Pastor Dustin, kids will separate into three Zoom Rooms by age to work with their Sunday School Leaders through an awesome project and conversation on the same texts we discussed during worship. You might have a friend or neighbor whose looking for an opportunity to help their kids learn good values in such a complicated world. Please invite them to Children's Sunday School at Messiah! To register your child for Sunday School, or any of our ministries for young people, please fill out our new, convenient and HIPAA compliant online form for each child/ youth. As part of our recognition of Healing Sunday all our kids will be making thank you notes for the incredible staff of our local Ellis Hospital so please join us!!!

Autumn 2020 New Member Class
Sundays, continuing October 18th at 4:00pm
https://zoom.us/j/93010793117

Gosh, there's A BUNCH of folks who have expressed interest in joining our congregation whether they heard about us through family members, are looking for meaning and purpose amidst such difficult times, or simply found us online! If you're one of those folks, this virtual offering is for you!!! Over the course of seven sessions, Pastor Dustin and a bunch of volunteers will introduce you to Messiah and Luther's take on the Way of Christ through the short classic work "Baptized We Live," an incredible resource by Rev. Daniel Erlander. Participants are encouraged to attend each week, although occasionally scheduling issues over this longer course are no problem at all! The class will continue on 10/18, 11/1, 11/8 and 11/15 and a copy of "Baptized We Live" will delivered to households who express interest. **Even if you missed our first two sessions, no worries, you certainly still can join!** Simply confirm your interest with Pastor Dustin by using our new handy dandy virtual (and secure) registration form. Our Fall 2020 New Member Class will be welcomed in as official members of our Spirit filled congregation during a very special Mass for the Feast of Christ the King on Sunday, November 22nd.

We got some new fancy signage in our food pantry – including a banner!

colaborate: A Community Confirmation Class for Middle Schoolers
Sundays, continuing October 18th 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! This fall every week we'll watch a video, engage in 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. To register your youth for Confirmation Class, or any of our ministries for young people, please fill out our new, convenient and HIPAA compliant online form for each child/ youth. This week's class will be on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew.

Lessons from the Holy Land with Rev. Khader Khalilia & Karin Brown
Tuesday, October 20th at 7:00pm
https://zoom.us/j/92075628472

Did you know that there are Lutheran congregations in Palestine and Jordan? Join Reverend Khader Khalilia, ELCA Director of Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries and a good friend of Pastor Dustin's who grew up in Palestine and now serves as a pastor in Brooklyn, for an evening of conversation about what is currently going on in the Holy Land, the many ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and what lessons we can learn from that church's witness amidst our own divisions here in America. Karin Brown, Director of the ELCA's Peace Not Walls Ministry, will also join us to discuss how as Lutherans together we are all working to build a just peace in the Holy Land. All are encouraged to join us on Zoom but the event

We haven't taken many pictures due to the lack of events going on, but here's one from blessing of the animals!

will also be broadcast on Messiah's Facebook Watch page.

The Prophets: Then and Now
Bible Study Led by Pastor Dustin Wright of Messiah, Schenectady
Wednesdays, continuing October 21st & 28th at 11:00am
https://zoom.us/j/96312464865

Grounded in Abraham Heschel's classic work "The Prophets," Pastor Dustin leads us through a five part course on the prophets of Hebrew Bible from a joint Christian/ Jewish perspective. After an introductory day on the prophetic tradition with local Rabbi Matt Cutler, we'll spend an hour each week digging into Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and The Twelve in that order. All days will also connect the issues the prophets were speaking about with contemporary social justice issues of our time. Only an NRSV Bible is needed and participants without Zoom capabilities can also call-in by dialing 19292056099, putting in Meeting ID 96312464865 and then pressing #.

Prophetic Faith: Issues in Moral Reckoning
with Rev. Leonard D. Comithier, Jr.,
Senior Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Albany
Wednesday, October 21st at 7:00pm (rescheduled)
https://zoom.us/j/92221611590

Of this month's Community Forum at Messiah, the Rev. Leonard D. Comithier, Jr., Senior Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Albany and a prominent local civil rights leader wrote the following:

"I am four generations removed from slavery in America (with a fair amount of "inherited rage") and have come to understand that in order to begin to understand the full damage that America has done to the black, brown, red and white world over the past 400 years, I approach this discussion by extrapolating the general from the specific, not the other way around. One hundred and fifty-seven years since the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery's grandchildren are more likely to die of violence than their white counterparts. Yet, elected officials in 2020 deny the existence of systemic racism and who cannot reconcile "White privilege". Could this phenomenon be what prompted Jesus to say, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6)? The Prophet Isaiah says the same thing (Isaiah 29:13). Our "Prophetic Faith" beckons us to engage in a moral reckoning. We owe it to each other. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "We will either live together as brothers and sisters, or perish together as fools". We owe it to ourselves! A moral reckoning forces a critical inventory of who we take ourselves to be and to make a decision to choose life."

Join Rev. Comithier, Pastor Dustin and members of Messiah's Faith Formation Team for a nonpartisan discussion of how our faith calls us all to be prophets amidst COVID19, the national reckoning on race and a time of great division in our society ahead of a rapidly approaching election. You can either "be in the room" on Zoom with us or simply tune in on Facebook Watch and the forum will be recorded for future viewing.

Community Meditation
Thursdays, continuing October 22nd at 6:30pm
https://zoom.us/j/92213668480

Join us for a virtual half hour of community meditation led by Pastor Dustin, who is beginning training in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction method with the UMass Medical Center this fall. As we face the coronavirus together, these virtual half hour meditation gatherings are intended to help our members, friends and neighbors cope with anxiety, relax, and work through the collective trauma we are all experiencing.

Feast of Simon and Jude, Apostles
Wednesday, October 28th at 6:00pm

Simon and Jude (actually Judas, but he's called Jude to better distinguish him from Judas Iscariot) are listed among Jesus' inner circle of disciples. In today's gospel, John 14:21-27, Jude's question ("How is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?") is in response to what Jesus says in verse 19: "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live." The answer to Jude's question will come in Jesus' resurrection, the appearances of the risen Christ, and the coming of the Spirit. During this service, we'll reflect on how Christ continues to reveal himself in our contemporary world. You can watch our brief service on on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost: "Healing Sunday"
Sunday, October 18th at 10:15am

Traditionally at Messiah we use the Sunday closest to Saint Luke the Physician's Feast Day as a time for blessing, anointing and healing. This practice grew out of an early ELCA mandate to organize healing services amidst the worst of the HIV/AIDS crisis when the general public wrongly feared touching infected individuals. This year, during a different type of pandemic, we will be at distance, but that doesn't mean we won't focus on healing at a time it is more important than ever. Mass will feature a very special blessing and prayer for health workers and two Mission Moments from Barb Hallett and Hilda Hoffstetter about how Messiah's ministries have led to healing in their lives. After worship, everyone is invited to join our children on Zoom in Sunday School to help make cards for nurses and staff at Ellis Hospital. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for Reformation Sunday
Sunday, October 25th at 10:15am

On this, the feast day where we take to reflect on how the Spirit is continually at work reforming Christ's Church, we also take time to consider how we are feeling called to invest in our congregation's life changing ministries in 2021, especially as we continue to move towards becoming one congregation as Messiah and Trinity together! We'll have two very special Mission Moments from Laurie Lumbra, a member of Trinity discussing how much volunteering has changed her life as well as Chris Camisso, a guest of the Bread of Life Food Pantry. Budget & Finance Chair Kristie Becker will also her give her annual talk on financial mission support in order to help us discern how the Spirit is calling us to respond in 2021. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Every household in our congregation should have or will soon receive a follow up letter and pledge card, but you can also make your Statement of Intent for 2021 virtually by filling out a brief Google form at this link: https://forms.gle/LQdgcvCoQTb3wR5e8. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Election Prayer Vigil with Schenectady Clergy Against Hate
Wednesday, October 28th at 7:00pm
https://zoom.us/j/92039550959?pwd=ZmlUbHRheIBFdHFuNjk2aU1OZ1pWdz09

Gosh, no matter our politics, we all know this year's presidential election has been perhaps the most divisive in our lifetimes. Fears of violence and disputed results abound and sometimes, even the closest of families and communities have been fractured by political differences. That's why Schenectady Clergy Against Hate are calling all members of our local faith communities, as well as all those of goodwill, to join us for a multi-faith and non-partisan evening of lamenting divisions, praying for nation and sharing word of hope. All interested can either join us "in the room" on Zoom or watch on Facebook at www.facebook.com/clergyagainsthate.

Feast of the Reformation
Saturday, October 31st at 6:00pm

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission. During this prerecorded service Pastor Dustin will reflect on how the Church is continually being called to change amidst COVID19. You can watch our brief service on on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for the Feast of All Saints
Sunday, November 1st at 10:15am

Gosh, we've lost so much and so, so many people this year, but in faith, we know that all our saints are always with us! On this Sunday we take time to celebrate the lives of our members, friends and loved ones who have died, especially over the past year. Near the beginning of the service, all are invited to light a candle in their homes. Following a special remembrance of the many members we've lost this year, we'll also have an opportunity to share names of folks we're remembering on Facebook and have Pastor Dustin read them in the service. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost: "Veteran's Day"
Sunday, November 8th at 10:15am

An annual tradition at Messiah is to create space on the Sunday closest to Veteran's Day to reflect on the importance of national service and thank our many members, friends and love ones who have sacrificed to protect our country. In addition to special prayers for peace and a moment of celebrating the members of our congregation who have served, we'll also ground ourselves in the "Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids" in Saint Matthew 25: 1-13. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for the 24th Sunday after Pentecost: "Talents"
Sunday, November 15th at 10:15am

On this Sunday we contemplate the "Parable of the Talents" in Saint Matthew 25:14-30 and take time to pause, reflect and celebrate as we journey towards the completion of the most complicated liturgical year of our lifetimes. Pastor Dustin will preach and preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

Mass for the Feast of Christ the King
Sunday, November 22nd at 10:15am

On this, the final Sunday of the liturgical we reflect on what the "Kingdom of God" means and also welcome in our awesome Autumn 2020 New Member Class! Pastor Jonathan will preach and Pastor Dustin will preside. Check out worship at http://www.messiahschenectady.org/worshiplive.html or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MessiahLC!

News You Can Use!

Technology Support at Messiah

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

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.

A Culture of Generosity

Did you know that the median protestant church member in the United States only gives 0.62% of their income to the church? For most people the reason for this has less to do with their wealth or income and more to do with intentionality and regular systematic giving. Over the course of a year, $1 per day comes to a gift of $365, which for about 35-40% of Americans would be significant growth in their

giving to the church. The average Starbucks coffee costs $2.75. This amounts to over $1,000 if one is purchased every day of the year.

Regular, systematic giving can help all of us become more generous. We get overwhelmed when we think about larger numbers like $1,000. However, most of us can find $2.75 per day. As you think and pray about your generosity this year, we're happy to announce four families in our congregation have teamed up to inspire us to consider how systematic giving may help all of us become more generous. Last year we received fifty Intent Cards from our members and this year four of our families have agreed to contribute a one-time challenge grant of $3,000 to our congregation if we reach sixty-five Intent Cards of any amount for 2021!

You should have recently received an Intent Card in the mail, but you can also use our Virtual Intent Card found here: https://forms.gle/LQdgcvCoQTb3wR5e8. Thank you so much for all you do, please continue to engage with the stories and Mission Moments shared by members of Trinity and Messiah and join us on Reformation Sunday, October 25th to celebrate our growing culture of generosity! If you have any questions, please speak with our Mission Support Chair Penny Incitti at either pennyincitti@gmail.com or on her home number, 518.356.2460. Please leave a message and she will call you back!

Messiah Launches a College Student Support Ministry!!!
Did you know Messiah has at least thirteen members and friends of the congregation either off at college or away in military training? Especially at a time when it is so difficult to be far from home, Messiah's Care & Concern Committee is launching an exciting new ministry to support our young adults who are pursuing a higher education! Our goal is for each of our young adults to receive a care package at least once a semester from the congregation with basic pantry staples, faith resources, some home baked cookies and more! We need your help though to make this new ministry a reality! If you'd like to contribute to this project, please either use our online tithely giving system or write out a check with "College Student Fund" in the memo line. We'll certainly need some volunteer cookie bakers as well! For more information, please contact Care & Concern Chair Barb Hallett at squeaky7762@aol.com.

A Letter from the Personnel Committee

Dear friends in Christ,

The Personnel Committee met this past week on a zoom meeting and discussed various things; one of which is the very important topic of work-life balance and the need for church employees to have periods of "recovery" to refocus, regroup and recharge. Especially in a time when working from home has become the norm for many of us, it becomes more difficult than usual to "turn off" work when it is not one's regular work hours. In addition, the fact that churches are a unique place to work because the "shop is open" at times when most people are resting; given weekend services, mid-week church meetings, small groups and special events all take their toll on church employees and this can lead to ministry burnout.

According to the Families and Work Institute (FWI), American workers feel overworked and employers that provide effective workplaces help minimize this effect. In a study done by FWI it was suggested that employers should be creating work environments that support employees and help them manage the many conflicting issues and pressures in their own lives. Of course this is important for all employees, but at this time, due to specific conversations that we have had, we are particularly concerned with the positions of Pastor and Church Administrator. In efforts to promote a healthy work environment and protect the church's employees we would like to request the following:

First, refer to the following On Call hours listed for both Pastor and Rianne before contacting them:

- Rianne only works Wednesdays 11am – 3pm, Thursdays 10am – 6:00pm, and Fridays 11am - 3pm primarily from home due to COVID19
- Pastor Dustin is on call Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 9:00pm and Sunday 8:00am - 8:00pm and does not currently have set office hours due to the COVID19.

Second, know email always works best to contact Pastor or Rianne as it provides a logged communication that can be referred back to:

- Contact Rianne via the church office email address: office@messiahschenectady.org
- Contact Pastor via his church email address: pastor@messiahschenectady.org
- Please refrain from using Rianne's personal email address or phone number for church business
- You can always call the parish office at 518.355.2311 which is routed to Pastor Dustin and Rianne during their regular working hours.
- Pastor Dustin is happy to communicate via text during his regular on call hours but do know texts easily get buried so please limit this as much as possible.

Third, remember Pastor's set days off are Friday and Saturday – in the event of a pastoral emergency on one of these days or when he is away on vacation, please contact one of the following who will assist you and/or contact Pastor if warranted with your concern. Please specify if the matter is confidential and can only be discussed with Pastor:

- President – Pete Jones at jonesp714@gmail.com or 518.867.2489
- Vice President – Sue Collins at scollins@nycap.rr.com or 518.605.2171
- Personnel Committee Chair – Pamella Ford at pfordny@aol.com or 917.414.9790
- Mutual Ministry Committee Chair - Christine DeMento at DCadjld@aol.com or 518.569.6002

Pastor's days off and Rianne's time that she is not scheduled in to work are days of rest and respite for them. Respecting their personal time off is important for their work-life balance and for Messiah to fulfill our role as a good employer. We ask the members of the congregation to help make this a positive, productive, enjoyable and fulfilling workplace for our employees.

Of course, we will continue to monitor things and make changes as necessary. We appreciate constructive input and feedback to help improve this process.

Blessings to all,
The Personnel Committee

SICM Update

The search for a new Executive Director for Schenectady Community Ministries continues even as this incredible coalition of faith communities works to strengthen its social justice work on top of running Schenectady's largest food pantry. Pastor Dustin's leadership of the SiCM's Interfaith Task Force continues to work on connecting with a wider variety of congregations of different faiths. A virtual forum will take place in the coming months on the understanding of community service in different religions. A young adult and former SiCM staff member Rachael Curtis was recently elected as the new President of the organization.

Advent Devotions at Home

This year our Faith Formation team is urging all households to use two wonderful daily devotionals in the home during the Season of Advent. *Our Hope and Expectation: Devotions for Advent and Christmas 2020-2021* is a wonderful resource for adults while Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas cards work great for families with children! These devotions will be provided completely for free to our members but please let Pastor Dustin know if you'd like a copy for your family by November 1st!

Ministry Team Meetings

Care & Concern Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 4th 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.

Worship & Music Ministry Team Meeting
Monday, November 9th 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! Rianne Johnson is our Ministry Team Coordinator and the team meets (almost) every month on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm. The link for this night's meeting is: https://zoom.us/j/96341841016.

Fellowship Ministry Team Meeting
Tuesday, November 10th at 1:00pm
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.

Faith Formation Ministry Team Meeting
Tuesday, November 10th 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.

Stewardship Ministry Team Meeting
Tuesday, December 8th 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 evaluating our 2021 Financial Mission Support Campaign, developing a 2021 Unified Parish Budget for Messiah/ Trinity, a review of our "Who is Our Neighbor" Consolidation Plan with our friends at Trinity Reformed and more. Penny Incitti is our Ministry Team Coordinator and the team meets quarterly. The link for tonight's meeting is: https://zoom.us/j/93024204486.

Social Action Ministry Team Meeting
Tuesday, January 14th 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. Pete Jones is our Ministry Team Coordinator and the team meets quarterly. The link for tonight's meeting is https://zoom.us/j/91568452071.

October 2020 Minister of the Month

Congratulations to our October 2020 Minister of the Month Russell McDonald!!! Russell has been instrumental in working with us at Messiah to improve our recovery support ministries and has helped a number of members through his service on our Care & Concern Committee. He's been a huge help working with folks to get them get on Zoom too! Russell even provided major assistance in putting together our fall Worship at Home kits. As if that was not enough, he's currently training in the same program Pastor Dustin is to lead our Thursday night meditation sessions. Russell is an inspiration to so, so many of us. Thank you Russell for all you do!

Pastor's Letter

Dear siblings in faith,

It's past midnight as I write this in order to make sure Rianne has everything she needs to put together another newsletter, out already a week late because of not having power or internet for close to five days. Indeed, the last couple months have been some of the most difficult and most exhausting of my over six years of ministry with you at Messiah Lutheran Church. So many of our members are struggling with anxiety, addiction, other health concerns and just plain loneliness after so many months of social distancing during COVID19. On top of my work with Schenectady Clergy Against Hate, my service on the City of Schenectady's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, launching virtual faith formation experiences for our young people and adults alike, supporting our lay leaders as we continue to navigate closer partnership with our friends at Trinity Reformed and more, ministering during this pandemic certainly has taken its toll on me, as it has for all of us.

That said, gosh, while I'm exhausted, I could not be more optimistic about our common future together. The reason for my immense hope is YOU, or perhaps more specifically, the reason for my hope is God's work through so many of your acts of service and ministry in our Spirit filled congregation. I was just talking with Rich, Jill and Pastor Jonathan... they spent FOUR HOURS recording music tonight for our worship services... that brings me hope. People like Sue Collins and Barb Hallett and Laurie Lumbra and Russell McDonald spent days this past month driving around to deliver our third Worship at Home Kits to over 125 households in our two congregations... that brings me hope. Penny Incitti, Dave & Marilyn Barnett, Rebecca Bliss, Adrienne Westfall, Ann Marie Gray and so many others have been working overtime to run an entirely virtual mission support campaign this year that I prayerfully hope will provide us with a strong financial grounding for consolidating our two congregations... that brings me hope. Folks like Paul Bode and Bill Ellis have stepped up to support members in need of care and companionship during such a difficult time through our Care & Concern Committee, a role that unfortunately has not until relatively recently been seen as the work of men in Christian communities... that brings me hope. Folks like Karen Kreischer, Joyce Gresham, Judy Becker, Jill Becker, Grace & Sarah Olochnowicz, Betsy & Jim Ryan and so many others making sure our neighbors our fed through the Bread of Life Food Pantry... happy fifth anniversary!!! Folks like Amanda Pantalone and April MacMurray and Cheryl Borski have showed up on Zoom every single Sunday to help our children grow in their faith in Jesus Christ... that brings me hope.

You, you, bring me hope. Thank you. And with God's help, I have no doubt we'll be able to meet whatever challenges we might face in the months ahead.

In Christ,
Pastor Dustin