



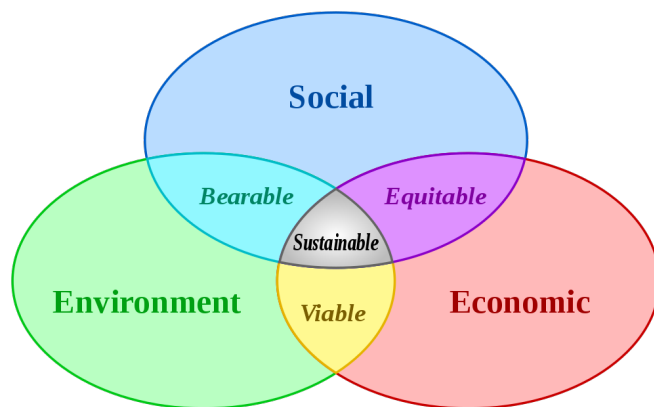
# MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

## A Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2026

### + VISION STATEMENT +

We believe God's vision for Rotterdam, Schenectady County and the greater Capital Region is a community grounded in human connection and sustainability\*, where everyone can live abundantly, where everyone can learn from our diversity and where everyone can live free from fear.

\* In this document we define sustainability as "addressing present economic, social and environmental realities without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same." For a visual representation, please see the Venn diagram to the right.



### + CORE VALUES +

**We are a welcoming and inviting congregation.** Grounded in Hebrews 13: 1-2, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it," we believe everyone is created in the image of God and therefore we welcome and actively invite all people into full participation in the body of Christ without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, ability, marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

**We are a proactive congregation.** Grounded in Acts 1:8, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," we believe the Holy Spirit empowers and leads us as we prayerfully take risks, develop innovative ministries and get to work witnessing to Christ through word and deed.

**We are a learning congregation.** Grounded in Psalm 25: 4-5, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long," we believe that justified by grace we can freely question, discover and grow

in our understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ through worship, faith formation, social action and fellowship.

**We are a socially engaged congregation.** Grounded in Micah 6:8, *"What does the Lord require of you but do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God,"* we believe acts of individual service and striving for peace and justice, grounded in prayer and worship, all go hand in hand. Guided by the canonical Old and New Testaments, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and the confessional documents and social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we serve our neighborhood as a safe place for difficult conversations about the social issues of our time. In collaboration with interfaith and ecumenical partners, nonprofits, businesses and local government, we serve Christ in the face of our neighbors.

**We are a congregation together.** Grounded in Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12, *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help... A threefold cord is not quickly broken,"* we believe no one is created to live alone. A diverse family of imperfect people, we celebrate together and worship together, eat together and sing together, serve together and discern together, journeying through life together in community with Christ and one another.

#### + MISSION STATEMENT +

**We are a Spirit filled congregation grounded in Jesus Christ, nourishing our local community in body, mind and soul.** Saved by grace, renewed by worship and set free by the love of God, we collaborate with like-minded individuals and organizations to feed the hungry, bridge divides and build a sustainable neighborhood in Rotterdam, Schenectady and the wider Capital Region of New York.

#### + MINISTRY TEAMS, FIVE YEAR GOALS & LONG TERM OBJECTIVES +

##### **FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Faith Formation Ministry Team is to cultivate lifelong curiosity about faith (including doubts) through educational programming and practices that promote justice and liberation for all of God's people at each step of life's journey.

The **overall goal** of the Faith Formation Ministry Team is to ensure that people at all stages of faith will have opportunities to listen, share, be heard, and experience the Way of Christ.

##### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal include:**

- Cultivate an environment of mutual learning and teaching.
- Provide consistent and age appropriate faith formation opportunities for young families, youth and young adults.
- Expand our Summer Meals for Kids program.

- Proactively invite and engage neighbors and friends to increase in the number of new families and children joining our congregation.
- Identify, encourage, and support more intentional opportunities for people of all ages to discern a call to rostered ministry.

**Ministries within the Faith Formation Ministry Team include:**

- Cradle Roll
- Children’s Sunday School
- Youth
- Adult Education

**FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Fellowship Ministry Team is to cultivate a sense of trust, acceptance, connection and support amongst members and friends of the congregation while supporting newcomers as they begin to engage with our faith community.

The **overall five year goal** of the Fellowship Ministry Team is make sure members, friends and the wider community know and feel that Messiah is a local center of community where everyone can feel welcomed, connected, supported and loved.

**Long-term objectives to reach that goal include:**

- Strengthen our weekly coffee hour following worship supported by a diverse group of volunteers.
- Increase support of seniors in the congregation and the wider community by providing speakers addressing issues including grief, depression and loneliness.
- Strengthen lay-lead fellowship groups for women, men, young adults and seniors with special emphasis on connecting with new members and strengthening connections between existing members.
- Strengthen our new member welcome process to not only welcome newcomers but support them in connecting with the wider congregation once they become members.
- Create quarterly opportunities for members, friends and the wider community to connect through music, arts and cultural events.
- Serve as an ongoing space of local community art and expression.

**Ministries within the Fellowship Ministry Team include:**

- Arts & Culture
- Care & Concern
- Hospitality
- Lutheran Men in Mission
- Meals
- Over 55 Gang

- Welcome
- Women of the ELCA
- Young Adults

### **SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Social Action Ministry Team is to support members and friends of the congregation in serving their neighbors and striving for peace and justice.

The **overall five year goal** of the Social Action Ministry Team is to broaden opportunities for adults and younger members to serve in their local community and to care for creation while also directly serving the needs of our neighborhood through the Rotterdam Community Center.

#### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Support the Rotterdam Community Center’s Bread of Life Food Pantry and Produce Pantry.
- Utilize energy audits for all buildings and take steps to implement its recommendations, within available resources, working toward renewable energy usage.
- Diversify our community service opportunities beyond current partnerships with the Concerned for the Hungry Thanksgiving Food Drive and organizing our annual Help Portrait event.
- Maintain collections throughout the year for community partners.
- Strengthen connections with local nonprofits in order to discover new giving/ service/ advocacy opportunities.
- Involve more young people in community service and awaken their concern for local neighbors in need.
- Provide opportunities for the congregation to advocate on social justice concerns in a manner supported by ELCA Social Teaching.

#### **Ministries within the Social Action Ministry Team include:**

- Community Service Ministry
- Nutrition Security Ministry
- Social Justice Ministry

### **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Stewardship Ministry Team is to engage members in fulfilling God’s purpose for the congregation through gifts of time, talent and treasure and to ensure the best use of all congregation resources.

The **overall goal** of the Stewardship Ministry Team is to, inspired by the Holy Spirit, help the congregation better steward its time, talent, treasure, and indeed all resources, in service to the renewed purpose of Messiah Lutheran Church as outlined in this document.

#### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal will include:**

- Encourage 75% of member household to make an annual financial pledge.
- Encourage 75% of active members to connect with a regular ministry of the congregation.
- Organize an annual conversation about growing the endowment and ongoing endowment health.
- Complete our Accessibility Project and pay off our mortgage.
- Make our church building more useful for both the congregation and the wider community.
- Improve our *Staff Handbook* in accordance with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New York State and federal guidelines and general church/nonprofit best practices.
- Focusing on the day-to-day financial operations of the congregation while addressing the long-term desires of a growing congregation.
- Build and maintain liquidity in our checking account to cover three months of regular expenses.
- Clearly communicate limitations if desires of the congregation do not meet current financial realities.
- Develop a sinking emergency fund available for unanticipated repairs to the church building or parsonage.
- Evaluate the need for replacement of flooring, roofs and HVAC systems.
- Fully staff our Personnel Ministry and conduct performance reviews of all staff on an annual basis.
- Create an organized and easy to access historical record of the ministries of our congregation.
- Offer at least two opportunities annually for further education on themes of creation care via book studies, adult forums, and other formats, either at Messiah or through sponsorship or partnerships with another community organization.
- Establish purchasing and facility-use policies for church and individuals and community groups using church facilities to maximize energy efficiency and sustainability and minimize waste, including, but not limited to, the areas of purchasing of goods for church use and composting and recycling.
- Incorporate creation care into worship and our members' lives through the annual celebration of the beginning of the planting season in the spring with Rogation Sunday and the fall Season of Creation, as well as monthly dissemination of useful environmental information via church communications (e.g., newsletter, bulletins).
- Develop an *Operations Manual* for Messiah's Faith Center.
- Create an *Event Planning Guide* for Messiah's Faith Center.
- Expand our Rev. Richard Rieger Memorial Harvest Garden.
- Improve understanding of our governance structure & strengthen internal communications between members of all ages.

**Ministries within the Stewardship Ministry Team include:**

- Archives
- Budget & Finance
- Creation Care
- Publicity
- Mission Support

- Personnel
- Property & Grounds

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM**

The **purpose** of the Worship & Music Ministry Team is to plan, review, and improve all aspects of worship services at Messiah Lutheran Church while also supporting all worship assistants and speaking to the sacred nature of various life passages.

The **overall goal** of the Worship & Music Ministry Team is to make worship more welcoming, relevant and more reflective of the seasons and liturgical year; make sacraments a core value of worship; have a solid group of diverse and dedicated worship assistants; and strengthen ministries related to prayer and meditation.

#### **Long-term objectives to reach that goal include:**

- Provide high quality streaming of weekly worship services.
- Strengthen the sense of welcome, hospitality and relevance in our weekly worship services.
- Develop a weekly community meditation/ prayer gathering.

#### **Ministries within the Worship & Music Ministry Team include:**

- Worship & Music

***Adopted on Sunday, December 15th, 2024 at the Annual Budget Meeting of the Congregation.***