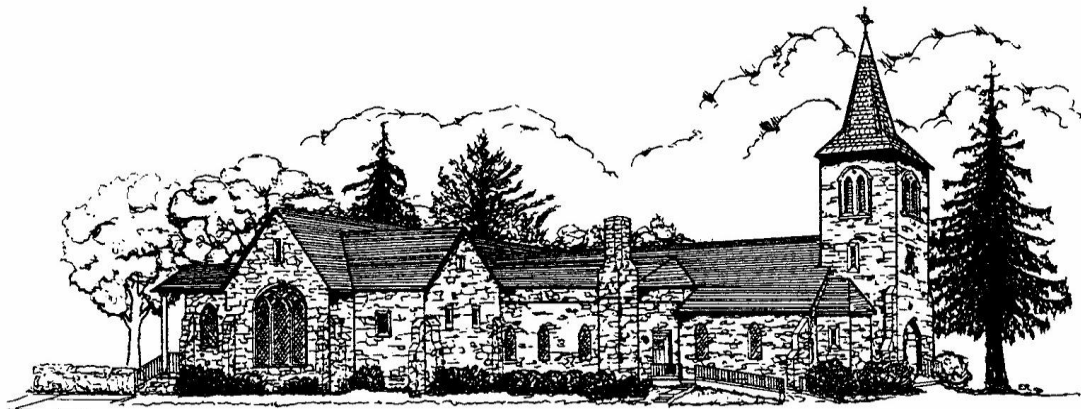


Church of the Messiah seeks to be an inviting, welcoming and compassionate Christian community which encourages spiritual growth by inspiring and uniting people to be examples of Christ's love and celebrating the glory of God.

# CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH

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Opportunities for Ministry  
2019

## Lay Readers, Intercessors & Chalice Bearers

Members of the congregation are important participants during Church of the Messiah's worship services, serving as Lay Readers, Intercessors and Chalice Bearers. Volunteers for both the 8:00 and 9:30 services are assigned on a rotating basis; as well as serving for holidays and other special services throughout the year. Training is available, and the ministry offers a rewarding experience to serve others and enhance the worship experience of the congregation.

## Outreach

The objective of the Outreach Program is to provide financial aid and assistance to those in need within our parish, as well as in our community, diocese, and internationally. Messiah's outreach projects are primarily funded through the allocation of all income generated by Belfry Bargains, the thrift store located in the old rectory, usually more than \$3,000 annually.

In addition, meals for shut-ins and the elderly are prepared on a regular basis and distributed through agencies in the community.

Recently, a Pack-A-Thon event for the organization *Rise Against Hunger*, engaged over 125 individuals of all ages, from the congregation as well as friends and neighbors, in packing 10,000 meals. These meals will be shipped around the world and distributed to those suffering from the effects of drought and other natural disasters. It is anticipated that this will become an annual parish event and next year's date has already been scheduled for Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> of 2020.

Each week, parishioners are encouraged to bring donations of canned and packaged food items, as well as toiletries and cleaning supplies, and leave them in the bins located at the back of the church. These items are taken to Manna on Main Street, a local food pantry, for distribution to local clients. And throughout the year, often in coordination with local service agencies, other collections are given to assist those in need: Christmas gifts for children and adults, toiletry bags for nursing home residents, winter coats for the homeless, backpack and school supplies, cleaning supplies, etc.

*And please note:* A new venture – a week-long mission trip for adults to work and witness in Guatemala in early 2020 is currently in the planning stages. Stay tuned for more information to be released soon!

## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild assists the Rector in preparing for weekly, as well as holiday and special worship services. In addition to setting up and cleaning up after Communion services, as well as for weddings, funerals and special services, the participants care for the altar linens and vessels. There are four teams of dedicated parishioners who rotate throughout the year, each serving approximately once a month.

## Flower Guild

The Flower Guild is responsible for arranging floral and seasonal decorations that grace the altar and the sanctuary throughout the year. They are especially busy during the Christmas and Easter season, when additional volunteers assist in their efforts.

## Lay Eucharistic Visitors

Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV) are parishioners who take Communion to parishioners who are home bound, in nursing homes, or who are unable to attend church, temporarily or permanently. Visiting them and bringing Communion is a special way for them to receive the Eucharist, as well as make them feel they are still part of and remembered by Church of Messiah. Our ministry is growing, and we can always use more help. Being a LEV is an excellent means to serve and minister to others, as well as meet new people.

## Ushers & Greeters

Many visitors and newcomers comment on the fact that Church of the Messiah is a warm and welcoming faith community. This generous embrace of all who enter our doors starts as soon as a person enters. Often, the first person a visitor encounters is a member of our Greeter Corps who offers a smile, a handshake, and an offer to assist the person or family in any way that may be helpful. Ushers are available before each service to hand out bulletins, answer questions, collect the offering, and assist with traffic flow at Communion.

## Church School, Nursery & Vacation Bible School

On Sunday mornings throughout the school year, children ages three through sixth grade, attend classes to learn about Jesus and the Church in an age-appropriate setting. Adults are invited to assist as teachers and assistants.

For a week each summer, Vacation Bible School is held in the evening. These gatherings usually have a theme-based curriculum and explore our Christian faith through story, song, crafts and play.

Children are always welcome in church and a special area located at the rear of the church is provided to occupy our younger parishioners during the service. Additionally, during the 9:30 service a nursery is provided for parents who wish to use such a service. Parishioners are encouraged to take a turn caring for the children.

## Music

An integral part of Messiah's worship experience involves music and a variety of music ministries are available here at Messiah. We are blessed with a beautiful set of chiming bells and a team of Chimers takes turns welcoming us on Sunday mornings with tunes that ring out from the bell tower. The Bell Choir practices on Wednesday evenings and participates in Sunday morning services at various times throughout the year. The Chancel Choir practices on Thursday evenings and leads the congregation in singing, as well as presenting anthems, introits and other musical offerings on Sunday mornings at the 9:30 service and holiday and special services. If you play a musical instrument or have musical talents of any type to share, we would love to have you join us as we make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

## Messiah Prayer Chain Ministry

The Prayer Chain Ministry includes five chains, comprised of both men and women from the parish, who pray daily by name for those who have been entrusted to us for prayer and promise to keep confidential the information which has been given to us concerning those prayer needs. Prayer requests can be made to the rector The Rev. Keith Marsh, to the Parish Administrator Sue Phillips, or Ciara Prezuhy, the Prayer Chain Coordinator. Since the needs of those for whom we pray change over time, it is very helpful for those who have requested our prayers to keep us informed of any significant changes that take place in the lives of those for whom we are praying.

Though the Prayer Chains include many of those listed in the bulletin, the bulletin Prayer List and the Prayer Chains are not the same and some people ask to be on one list and not the other, or on both lists. It is therefore important to let us know your preference when you ask for prayers on behalf of yourself or for someone else.

## Messiah Prayer Shawl Ministry

*"Everyone has to knit when they're here. But not everyone has to use yarn."*

This quote from Kate Jacobs's book - *The Friday Night Knitting Club* - could serve as an apt description for the Messiah Prayer Shawl Ministry. Our primary mission is to share God's love, strength, warmth and compassion to anyone undergoing a challenge or transition through prayerfully made shawls. The entire parish is knitted together as a community in this mission as we pray together every Sunday for recipients and makers during the shawl blessing at the close of the service.

These shawls have been given to provide comfort and support to those in need, to celebrate high school graduations, and as a first gift from the parish to the newly baptized. Shawls have been given to parishioners as well as friends of the parish both near and far. Members of the parish have supported the ministry through generous donations to cover the costs involved in making and packaging the shawls.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the third Thursday of each month from 6:00-7:30pm. We are humbled to see how prayer and God's grace in the form of a simple shawl can provide such comfort and support

Requests for Prayer Shawls, for which there is never a charge, can be made to the Rector, through the Church Office, or to Nancy Alpert-Sisson.

## Acolytes

At both the 8:00 and 9:30 Sunday services, acolytes assist the priest at the altar. Both adults and youth are welcome to participate in this ministry.

## Monday Morning Counters

Each week, small teams of volunteers count the Sunday plate offering and pledges received, complete the appropriate forms, then prepare and make the weekly bank deposit for the parish.

## Youth of Messiah

The Youth of Messiah (YOM) program ministers to those members of the parish in 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Sunday evening gatherings usually include a faith discussion as it relates to current events, as well as pizza and games. Other social events are also scheduled.

Each summer, a week-long mission trip is offered. Activities have been varied: painting and repairing homes, assisting in Bible Schools for children and sports camps for youth, preparing and delivering meals to shut-ins, volunteering at social service agencies, and community building projects. Destinations have included Native American communities in Arizona and Minnesota, work in the inner-cities of NYC, Philadelphia and Houston, and ministering to those in need in Guatemala and Puerto Rico.

## Vestry

Each year, at the Annual Parish Meeting held on the first Sunday in May, four members of the parish are selected to serve a three-year term on the vestry. Along with the Wardens, these leaders of the parish are charged with the fiduciary responsibilities of the parish, as well as advising the Rector and setting various policies for the efficient running of the parish to advance the mission and ministry of Messiah and ensure compliance with national and diocesan canons and the parish by-laws.

## Fellowship

An important facet of church life is providing opportunities for parishioners to meet and talk and learn about one another in social settings. The Fellowship Team plans and prepares these opportunities in a variety of settings throughout the year. Following services on Sundays, during Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall, or Tea on the Terrace through the summer months, light refreshments are served. Progressive dinners, Newcomer gatherings, and the spring and fall Parish Picnic are other occasions for socializing over food and drink.

*To volunteer or learn more about any of these ministries,  
simply go to the parish website for a list of current chairpersons  
or contact the Parish Administrator in the parish office.*

## CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH

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