



SCHENECTADY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

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Relating the *resources* of the congregations to the needs of the community.

April 5, 2021

Assembly Delegates
Schenectady Community Ministries
Via Email

Most esteemed delegates,

It is with great enthusiasm that I remember my meeting with the Assembly in early February to be confirmed as the executive director. As part of my vocational process and our shared discernment of the way forward, meeting you, getting your questions, and being confirmed was an important moment for me. I also want to thank you, the staff, our steering committee and multiple community colleagues for their intentional and warm welcome. **“Hitting the ground running” might understate my experience for the past three weeks on board. The work ahead is manifold. The possibilities of deepening our connection and work with and on behalf of Schenectady are great.** I ask for your thoughts and prayers. I will need wisdom for the work that lies ahead – the wisdom that comes from you and the wisdom that comes from the Divine.

We are managing multiple processes, for which reason we **will not be meeting as Assembly this month.** I am still in the process of onboarding. Aside from the regular administrative onboards and handoffs, we are also in the midst of a **structures and procedures revision** which will include a **staff flowchart overhaul**, a **revision of the employee manual**, the **putting together of a manual of operations**, and the **development of a governance flowchart.** I am hoping we may have most of these ready for your information and comment (and assent, where appropriate) for a meeting in May.

After this revision stage is done, we will be working on bringing you, for your consideration, comment and assent, **an interim amendment proposal of our constitution.** For the past few years, members of the assembly, steering committee and staff have been working on revising some of our governance documents. It is appropriate to consider some of the changes suggested as a way to further update our structures and processes.

The upcoming revisions and overhauls will allow us to open space to allow for two essentials in this moment for SiCM:

1. It will **provide clarity (and I hope greater transparency) around the work** and presence we are ordinarily engaged in, and

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2. **Open up space for us all to engage in what I am expecting will be an industrious and fruitful strategic planning process**

On the Current Work

- **837-839 Albany St. Campus** – Construction continues in earnest. The new community center is looking much more like what was planned and dreamt.
 - The temporary covering in front of 837 Albany St. is down!
 - St. Joe's and Patty's Place have continued to serve the community as a welcoming and safe space
 - Community learning kitchen
 - Just today we got news that appliances are being delivered
 - Cabinets and countertops are being put up
 - Details here and there
 - We continue to work diligently with our contractors in what seems to be the final stage(s) of construction on both 837 and 839 Albany St.

- **Food Pantry**
 - Open now four days a week
 - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30am-11:30am
 - Specialized deliveries for seniors will continue
 - Pop-up Pantry in Vale Park
 - In partnership with Street Soldiers
 - two Sundays a month out of Zion Lutheran Church
 - **Volunteers are back!**
 - Please, share among your congregations the need and opportunity to serve in the food pantry. For more information, please call *Thomas Schofield at 518-346-4445 x2*

- **Summer Meals**
 - We recently received local and state government guidance around meal deliveries to school-aged children and youth. The process will look most like it did last summer
 - We are gearing up to deliver upwards of **60,000 meals, in over 30 sites** in Schenectady, Rotterdam, Scotia and Niskayuna
 - We will soon share details of the planning and opportunities to volunteer!

- **Schenectady Urban Farms**
 - The farms are currently in the early spring preparation processes

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- We continue to farm **upwards of an acre of urban land for the benefit and health of Schenectady**
- Memberships for this season are open and still available! For [more information, and to join](https://www.sicm.us/about-us/schenectady-urban-farms/) - <https://www.sicm.us/about-us/schenectady-urban-farms/>


On the Work Ahead

Preparing an **unencumbered space to engage in a strategic planning process** is the top priority for us. In the last few years, SiCM has taken the **bold step to aspire to be an interfaith, social justice, and racial reconciliation focused community organization**. These are not simply statements. These are a call to rethink the identity of who we are as an almost 55 year-old organization in Schenectady.

What drew me to join you as executive director is the call of these aspirations to an identity shift. It calls us to **examine our presence in Schenectady with, for and alongside the people of this city and county – especially those who continue to suffer marginalization and disenfranchisement**. I am hoping we can begin a strategic planning process in earnest this summer. This process will seek to intentionally engage and listen to the leaders of our partner congregations, to our guests, and to other community partners **to curate the wisdom, power and guidance** that already exists in our midst **to grow into this new moment in the history of Schenectady and of SiCM**. The strategic planning process will provide all of us the information needed to articulate what we are already becoming.

Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please, feel free to email. I do look forward to the opportunity to host you more freely on campus. I also look forward to visiting with the congregations. **I want to also ask for your support**. Share with others about our **opportunities to volunteer**. I also invite you **to financially support SiCM**, and to invite others to do so as well. You can **donate online at [simc.us/donate](https://www.sicm.us/donate)**, or send **us your contribution by mail**. We truly appreciate your support!

Peace!



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