

For Immediate Release
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SEC Threatens to Close Local Church

Messiah Lutheran Church has served the community for over 120 years

Joliet, IL – September 1, 2023 – Messiah Lutheran Church of Joliet finds itself caught in the middle between the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) and a local business that was accused of fraudulent financial dealings. The receiver for the SEC has obtained a judgement against Messiah in the amount of \$487,000. The SEC receiver has demanded Messiah pay \$187,000 now and the remaining \$300,000 by November 15, 2023. “To raise that kind of money in three months is an almost impossible task” said Kurt Hoover, Senior Pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church.

Messiah has done nothing wrong

In 2019, the Federal Government through the SEC filed a lawsuit against a local business claiming that the business had defrauded numerous investors. As part of that lawsuit, the SEC had a Receiver appointed to recoup monies the business had paid others. This included over \$780,000.00 in donations the business made to Messiah Lutheran over a 10-year period. Unsurprisingly, Messiah no longer had the money; it had been spent it on salaries, ministry to the community, and other day to day items necessary for the running of a church.

“Messiah has done nothing wrong and is not accused of any wrongdoing.” stated attorney James Murphy, from Mahoney, Silverman & Cross. “Unfortunately, Illinois law, under which the SEC Receiver’s lawsuit is brought, allows for the claw back of donations to charities based on the misdeeds of the donor. This type of lawsuit can be brought against any non-profit organization in Illinois” stated Murphy.

Modern day David versus Goliath

The SEC Receiver was unrelenting in demanding a large payback from Messiah Lutheran. Ultimately, the Receiver required a payment of \$487,000 by November 15, 2023. However, if that amount is not paid by that date, the amount will increase to \$587,000, and that judgment amount will be enforced against Messiah. This will likely lead to Messiah’s bank accounts being frozen and will lead to a forced sale of Messiah, at the corner of Jefferson and Houbolt road. “The SEC Receiver has made it clear that she does not care if Messiah loses its home and She does not care if Messiah’s congregation is left without a place to worship. It’s a true David versus Goliath story” Stated Brian Wielbik, President of Messiah’s Church Council.

Savemessiah.org

Messiah not only has a vibrant congregation, but it also serves many outside the church. The YMCA, local homeschool groups, Lil Loves which serves underserved mothers and babies, Daybreak, Morning Star Mission and Living Alternatives as well as

many others are all supported by Messiah. “If the SEC has their way, all of the support for these organizations will cease after November 15th” said Beth Hohisel, leader of Messiah’s Litigation Committee. “The website, SaveMessiah.org, is available so anyone can go and learn in more detail about the injustice against Messiah and hopefully make a donation to help our cause” stated Hohisel.

For further information, contact

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