

The Rev. Tom Rutherford
Candidate for Standing Committee
Clerical Order



The Rev. Tom Rutherford has been rector of Church of the Messiah, Winter Garden, since 1996, which he says is “not long enough!” His priorities include loving God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength; his neighbors as himself; his fellow believers as Jesus loves us; and his wife as Christ loves the church and gave himself for her.

Rutherford is committed to developing and equipping the saints for the work of ministry and then giving them opportunities to change the world with Jesus.

He is married to Debbie, and between them, the Rutherfords have five grown children and six grandchildren.

His accomplishments over the 24 years at Messiah include:

- Average Sunday attendance grew from 107 to 328 (before COVID).
- Messiah offers five worship opportunities every Sunday, ranging from traditional Rite One with choir to all-contemporary Rite Three with a worship band, plus Communion in French and Creole for the church’s Haitian congregation.
- Messiah livestreams two of those liturgies: one in English and one in French. Combined, they attract 600-2,000 viewers per week.
- Messiah remodeled a classroom building and launched Children of the Messiah Preschool in 2000 and the Messiah School for the Arts in 2018.
- Messiah built a parish hall in 2008, doubling its space and adding a nursery, restrooms, offices, kitchen, library and multi-use space.
- Messiah has helped prepare six deacons and five priests, with a deacon and a priest currently in the pipeline.

Commission on Ministry: 2004-Present

Standing Committee: 2008-2010 and 2012

Convener of the West Orange Ministerial Association: 1998-Present