Small Messenger Bag

Supplies:

- main fabric: 3/4 yard
- lining fabric: 1/3 yard (more if not using contrast for inner pockets)
- contrast fabric for inner pockets (optional): approx 1/2 yard, depending on pocket size/style
- fusible interfacing: 1 1/4 yard heavier weight for exterior and strap and 1 yard lighter weight for lining (I used Pellon Featherweight Fusible for medium and lightweight fabrics respectively, which makes a moderately floppy bag but with a fairly sturdy flap)
- two 2 inch metal loops and one 2 inch metal slide for strap (l ordered mine from here)
- one 7-9 inch zipper for interior pocket (optional)
Start by cutting out your pieces.

From the main fabric, cut:

- one 15 by 10.5 inch rectangle for the back of the bag
- two 5.5 by 10.5 inch rectangles and one 6 by 20 inch rectangle (these three narrow pieces will combine to make the three panel bag front, so make sure that if you have a directional fabric that the short sides are at the top and bottom)
- one 12 by 10 inch rectangle for the front flap (the longer side is the top/bottom)
- one 5 by 40 inch strip for the strap
- two 5 by 4 inch rectangles for the strap tabs (to attach the strap to the bag)

From the lining fabric, cut:

- two 15 by 10.5 inch rectangles for the body
- one 12 by 10 inch rectangle for the front flap

From the contrast fabric (or the lining or main fabric, if you prefer), cut:

- two 10 by 7.5 inch rectangles for the inside front pocket
- four 4 by 5 inch rectangles for the patch pockets on the inside front pocket (optional)
- one 10 by 12 inch rectangle for the interior zipper pocket (optional)
- or any interior pockets you want instead of or in addition to these

From the heavier weight interfacing, cut:

- two 15 by 10.5 inch rectangles
- one 12 by 10 inch rectangle
- one 4 by 40 inch strip (yes, it is one inch narrower than the strap piece, it’s so there’s no interfacing in the seam allowance)
- two 4 by 4 inch squares

And from the lighter weight interfacing, cut:

- two 15 by 10.5 inch rectangles
- one 12 by 10 inch rectangle

(All seam allowances are 1/2 inch)

Assemble the front panel:

Take the 6 by 20 inch piece and make a fold 8 inches from the bottom (wrong sides facing). Make a double row of topstitching along the fold. Then fold the longer, underneath piece back up so the top edge of the fabric is 2 inches above the fold, creating a pocket (which my chopstick is indicating). If you looked at the fabric from the side, it would be a sort of “Z” shape. The total length of the pocket panel
should now be 10.5 inches.

Lay one of the 5.5 by 10.5 inch rectangles on the pocket panel, right sides facing, and stitch one side. Press open. Repeat with the other panel piece on the other side. Topstitch along the side panels close to the pocket panel seam.

Now fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of all your pieces: back panel, your just-constructed front panel, flap and strap/tabs (centering the interfacing on the strap pieces so there’s a half inch of fabric on each side that’s not interfaced), as well as the front, back and flap of the lining.

Make the interior pockets (this is what I did, you can make any assortment of pockets you want):

Put your patch pocket pieces together right sides facing and stitch around them, leaving a gap in the bottom for turning. Clip the corners and turn right side out (poke out the corners with a chopstick or something) and press.
Place the small patch pockets on the large pocket and topstitch around the sides and bottom (closing the turning holes as well).

Then place the pocket piece on one of the lining pieces, 1 1/2 inches from the top, and topstitch around the sides and bottom as well as down the center to create two pockets.

For the internal zipper pocket (if this terrifies you, skip it, or add another patch pocket):
Measure your zipper from stop to stop. Then draw a rectangle on the back of your single pocket piece one inch from the top that is the length of your zipper + a 1/2 inch long by a 1/2 inch tall (my zipper measured 7 inches, so my rectangle was 7 1/2 inches by a 1/2 inch). Pin the pocket piece to your other lining piece 1 1/4 inches from the top.

Sew along your line through both layers, using a very short stitch around the corners. Make a slit down the middle of the rectangle, clipping in a Y shape toward the corners as close to the stitching as possible.

Turn the pocket to the inside, fanangling it as best you can to get the pocket fabric to not show on the right side, and press.
Place the zipper behind the hole you just made, pin, and carefully topstitch all around the zipper close to the edge. Be careful not to catch the edges of the pocket fabric in the zipper stitching (ask me how I know that’s possible…)

Now flip it over and fold the pocket piece up, matching the edges, and stitch around the three sides, keeping the lining piece clear. (If you’re using a directional fabric, you may want to make the pocket with the fabric facing upside down, so when you fold it up to make the pocket the back of it is facing right side up. I obviously didn’t think of this until I had completed the pocket.)

Sew the body of the bag:

Place the two exterior panels right sides together and sew around the sides and bottom. Flatten one of the bottom corners out into a triangle, measure 1 3/4 inch down from the point and draw a line across (the line should be 3 inches long).
Sew along the line to square off the corner of the bag. Repeat for the other corner. You can trim off the triangle if you like, or leave it for extra bottom stability (which is what I do).

Turn the exterior right side out and press if necessary.

Repeat for the lining panels, but leave a 4 inch gap in stitching in the bottom for turning the bag right side out later. Leave the lining with the wrong side out.

Make the bag flap:

Stack your flap piece on your flap lining piece. Use a glass or other round object as a template to round off the bottom corners.
Place your flap pieces together right sides facing and stitch around the sides and bottom. Trim and notch corners and turn right sides out.

Press and topstitch around the three sides (I imagine your topstitching will be more even than mine!).

Baste the flap to the back of the bag body using a wide zigzag stitch, centering it between the side seams (it should be 1 1/2 inches from either seam), with right sides facing.

Make the strap:
Press the uninterfaced seam allowances on both sides of the strap and strap tabs in toward center along the edge of the interfacing. Then fold the strips in half lengthwise and topstitch along both sides. (This is my way of avoiding the dreaded long-tube-turn. You can of course fold it right sides together, stitch, turn and press before topstitching instead if you’d like.) Slide one of the metal loops onto one of the strap tabs, fold the tab in half raw edges together and baste along the raw edge. Repeat with the other tab and loop.

Thread the strap through the metal slide, fold the end over and topstitch in place. Thread one of the loop-tabs onto the strap from the other end, with the tab on the same side of the strap as the folded over end.

Now take the still-loose end and thread it through the slide, so the tab is on the outside of the loop made by the strap.
Flatten out the strap and sew the second loop/tab to the free end, folding under the raw edges and topstitching as before. I did three lines of stitching, one close to the loop and two at the folded under raw edge, but a box with an x in it also works. Do whatever you like and seems sturdy.

Baste the strap tabs to the sides of the bag, right sides facing and centered over the side seams.

Now place the whole bag exterior inside the bag lining. Tuck the strap and the flap down inside. Line up the side seams and the raw edges and pin.
Stitch all the way around the top of the bag.

Now pull the bag right side out through the hole you left in the lining. Press as best you can, and tuck the lining inside the bag.

Topstitch all around the top of the bag.
Slipstitch the hole in the lining closed, and you're finished! Enjoy your messenger bag!