

MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
A faithful, serving community, joyfully sharing Christ's love.



Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

228 Ramapo Valley Rd, Oakland NJ 07436

www.messiahoaklandnj.org | 201-337-4900

@MessiahOaklandNJ

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

The congregation is invited to worship in a way that is comfortable and meaningful by standing, sitting, kneeling, coloring, etc. You may join in worship by reciting the responses in bold type.

SILENT MEDITATION DURING PRELUDE

WELCOME FROM THE PASTOR

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God meets us in the light

where joy abounds, where laughter is contagious, where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk, where people gather around tables.

God meets us in the night

before the sun rises, before the wound heals, before there are answers, before there is closure.

God meets us in between

at the edge of the water, at the beginning of the wilderness, at the start of something new, on the edge of faith.

If God meets us in all those places,

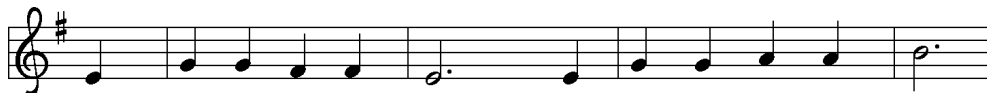
then surely God meets us everywhere – at the water's edge, at the start of something new, after the baptism, and before the call.

We are not alone. God is all around.

Let us worship the God of everything.

KYRIE

ELW pg. 203



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.

2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.

3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.

Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.

Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

CONFESSIONS AND FORGIVENESS

Siblings, in the Christian tradition many have used “lost” and “found” labels to describe people “out there” as opposed to people “in here.” Many have used this language to create a damaging contradiction that some are found and some are lost. But the truth is, from time to time, each and every one of us is a little bit lost and a little bit found. Each and every one of us needs the love of the Good Shepherd. Join me in the prayer of confession, as people who know what it means to be both lost and found.

If God is a painter,

Let us be the brush.

If God is a musician,

Let us be the song.

If God is an architect,

Let us be the tools. Let us be the hands. Let us be the builders.

If God is a shepherd, who never stops seeking,

Let us be willing to be found, no matter how lost we feel.

Our God is never far away,

Forgive us for forgetting this good news. Amen.

Even in those moments of feeling lost, we are all a little bit found. We grumble, we push back, we doubt God, we doubt ourselves. We leave the flock and lose our way. But fortunately for us, God is a shepherding God who is always by our side. Hear and believe this good news of the gospel:

No matter how far we wander, we can never wander from the bounds of God’s grace. We are loved. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Thanks be to God! Amen.



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
 2 Bless so - journ-ers and pil - grims who share this wind-ing way;
 3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
 your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus-tains the day.
 We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun-tain round,
 We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
 but wait-ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be-side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
 to - geth-er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
 Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Shepherding God, you look for us. You search for us, you turn every corner and climb every mountain. You call our name until your voice is hoarse. When we lose our way, you never stop seeking after us. We pray, find us in this moment, look for us, and then surround us with your presence, so that we might feel you near. With hope we pray, with hope we listen. **Amen.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

FIRST READING: A Reading from 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry

of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALM: Psalm 23 will be read responsively

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²**He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;**

³he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

⁴**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ACS pg. 34



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.



Noth-ing in all cre - a - tion can sep - a - rate us from the love of God.

THE GOSPEL: The Holy Gospel according to Luke 15:1-7
Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³So he told them this parable: ⁴"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

WE RESPOND TO GOD

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lost and Found

tune ELW #712



In the flock I am sur-round - ed by my sib - lings
The ho - ri - zon starts to brigh - ten as I quiet - ly
As I wan - der down the quar - ry a fa - mi - liar



and my friends Safe at home and feel - ing groun-ded with my
slip a - way I can feel my spi - rit ligh - ten with each
voice cries out It's my shep-herd search-ing for me; reck-less



shep-herd to de - fend But an ach-ing, long - ing feeling
cau - tious step I take Un - fa - mil-iar paths un - fold-ing
love has tracked me down Though I left my place of re-fuge,



as the stars shine late at night Draws me in, my dreams
as ex - cite - ment blends with fear All cre - a - tion now
he has fol - lowed all a - long But I had to lose



re - veal - ing and I know I'm not quite right
en - folds me like the flock I hold so dear
my - self to find my - self where I be - long

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a seeking God, a with-us and before-us God, a chasing-after-us God. We believe that no matter where we wander or what mountains we climb, *this* God – the God who walked the streets of Jerusalem, shook hands with lepers, patted children on the head, and told stories of love – is always close at hand. On the good days and the hard days, on the mountains and in the valleys, we believe that we are always being found. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE INTERCESSION

God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

OFFERING

Offering can be left in the plates at the back of the sanctuary or given online by scanning the QR code.



OFFERTORY

Create in Me a Clean Heart

ELW #186

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
 God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your
 glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the
 Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread. **Amen.**

COMMUNION

We invite you to commune in whatever way is comfortable to you either from your seat using the prepackaged elements or by coming forward to the altar rail. To commune at the altar rail, please proceed down the diagonal aisles and pick up a cup from the silver plates. You will be given a wafer and then offered wine (first chalice) or grape juice (second chalice). For those communing online, please join us using whatever bread/crackers and wine/grape juice you have at home. All are welcome at God's table.

The body and blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen**

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Refrain
All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be - yond my fears, from

death in - to life. life.

Leader or All

1 God is my shep-herd, so noth - ing shall I want, I
2 Gent - ly you raise me and heal my wea - ry soul, you
3 Though I should wan - der the val - ley of death, I

rest in the mead-ows of faith - ful - ness and love, I
lead me by path-ways of righ - teous-ness and truth, my
fear no e - vil, for you are at my side, your

Refrain

walk by the qui - et wa - ters of peace.
spir - it shall sing the mu - sic of your name.
rod and your staff, my com - fort and my hope.

Leader or All

4 You have set me a ban-quet of love in the face of

Refrain

ha-tred, crown-ing me with love be-yond my pow'r to hold.

Leader or All

5 Sure-ly your kind-ness and mer-cy fol-low me all the days of my life;

I will dwell in the house of my God for-ev - er - more.

Final refrain
All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be -

yond my fears, from death in - to life.

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

ELW #763



1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam-en - ta - tion,
2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu - sic ring - ing.
3 What though my joys and com-forts die? The Lord my Sav-ior liv - eth.
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring-ing!



I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
What though the dark - ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

Refrain



No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav-en and earth,how can I keep from sing-ing?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOM Presentation

DISMISSAL

As you leave this place, may you find God in every messy middle. May you know that the world is bigger than two sides. May you trust that you are made in the image of God, and therefore, you contain multitudes. May you move through this world with an open heart, with a curious mind, and with the confidence that you do not go alone. God is with you in the mountains, in the valleys, and everywhere in between. Believe that good news, and go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
7:30 pm on Zoom

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sunday, April 6, 2025
10:00am Worship Service

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

MONDAY: 7:00 pm Book Discussion on Zoom
TUESDAY: 6:30 pm AA Meeting
WEDNESDAY: 7:30 pm Lent Worship on Zoom
THURSDAY: 12:00 pm Bible Study
7:30 pm Band practice
SATURDAY: Property Work Day
SUNDAY: 9:00 am Choir practice
10:00 am Worship

MARCH BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

His Helping Hands, Inc

TODAY'S MINISTERS

Pastor: Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund	GREETER: Len Nicolosi
MUSIC DIRECTOR: Bob Luderer	ALTAR GUILD: Amy Ludke & Susanne Herbst
ASSISTING MINISTER: Michele Weintraub	COUNTERS: Ron Rubner & Linda Axtell
LAY READER: Megan Rotella	COORDINATING COUNCILOR: Sue Boyce
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Michele Weintraub & Jerri Angermuller	COFFEE HOUR: LINDA Axtell & Sunday School
VIDEO TECH: Alex Boyce/ Nick DeRoda	
USHER: Sue Boyce	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mid-Week Lenten Worship

Join us on Wednesdays in Lent for worship on Zoom and YouTube at 7:30 pm. Each week we will use the meditative prayer practice of Visio DiVina which combines prayer, reflection, and artwork. There will also be an opportunity during the service to pray with candles – if you would like, there are purple votive candles in the Narthex (with the Lent in a Bag stuff) for you to take home and use. If you have any questions about how to get connected or engage with the service, please talk to Pastor Courtney.

Book Discussion: March 31st at 7:00 pm

“Lula Dean’s Little Library of Banned Books” by Kirsten Miller. Grab yourself a copy and join the discussion on Monday, March 31st via Zoom at 7:00 pm. Any questions, ask Valerie Nicolosi

Thursday Bible Study: April 3rd

We will be using the chapter A is for Alabaster in the A is for Alabaster book. You are welcome to read ahead or come to the discussion.

April BOM is listed as ELCA Good Gifts/ God's Global Barnyard:

This coming month we will be working toward donations of animals or items such as bibles and feeding those in need. Last year there was an amazing amount of over \$1000 raised for this charity. I know we are all hurting a little more this year, but any and all donations are welcome. You can find the animal and costs in the Narthex and banks for home are also available.

Pond's Food Pantry:

Pond's Food Pantry is looking to put together Easter Dinner Baskets for the community. There is a list of items needed on the bulletin Board. If you can donate your free ham, please let Michele know as she is looking to make up 75 baskets. Financial support is also appreciated.

Easter Sign Ups:

Flowers: Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex to dedicate the flowers that decorate our altar for Easter. We ask for a donation of \$10.00 per plant

Breakfast: Please sign up to bring something for our Easter Breakfast. If you have any questions, please talk to Valerie Nicolosi



Please keep in prayer the following people in our Messiah family: Joan B, Helen, Mike, Kim, Len, and Jonny & Natalie.
And the following friends and family:

All affected by seasonal illnesses
Jeff Cresci
David
Kurt
Peter
Mark and Keith, Susanne's friends
Gayle, friend of Joan & Eleanore
June, Lee's mother
Miro, Vesna's father
Erika, Kristen's sister
John, Joan, Herb, Todd, Gus, Peggy,
Jim, Kathy W. and Carol, Ron and
Marilyn's friends

Ethel and Mickey, Brigitte's sister-in-law and friend
Kim, friend of Sue
Marilyn & Vincent, Lisa's parents
Ron & June, Karen's parents
Melinda & Paul, Eleanore's sister & nephew
Thomas Caraglia, friend of Tony & Edie
Ted

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