

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



**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

April 6, 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,

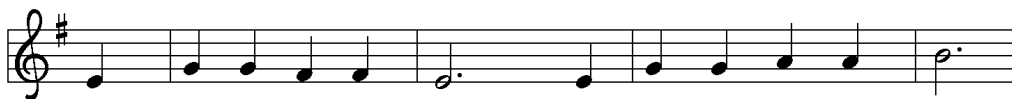
**then surely God meets us everywhere – at the water's edge, at the start of something new, after the baptism, and before the call.**

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, our faith calls us to live with both mercy and righteousness. Somewhere along the way, we have forgotten that truth. Somewhere along the way, we began arguing about who deserves mercy and whether or not they acted with enough righteousness to receive it. Fortunately, God does not act this way. No matter what mistakes we have made or wrong turns we have taken, God consistently meets us with mercy and invites us to try again. Let us lean into that good news and turn to God in prayer.

Merciful God,

**When we fail to be righteous, show us mercy. When we fail to be merciful, show us what is right. Again, and again, bring us closer to you. Again, and again, show us the way. Amen.**

Hear and believe this good news: when we fail to be righteous

**God is merciful.**

When we fail to be merciful,

**God invites us to try again.**

Again, and again,

**God moves closer to us.**

Again, and Again,

**God shows us the way.**

Thanks be to God for this unending love. **Amen.**

## GATHERING HYMN

### Day by Day

ELW #790



1 Day by day, your mer - cies, Lord, at - tend me, bring - ing com - fort  
2 Day by day, I know you will pro - vide me strength to serve and  
3 Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my bur - dens



to my anx - ious soul. Day by day, the bless - ings, Lord, you send me  
wis - dom to o - bey; I will seek your lov - ing will to guide me  
grow too great to bear; oh, what joy to know that you will hear me



draw me near - er to my heav'n - ly goal. Love di - vine, be - yond all  
o'er the paths I strug - gle day by day. I will fear no e - vil  
when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer. Day by day, no mat - ter



mor - tal mea - sure, brings to naught the bur - dens of my quest; Sav - ior,  
of the mor - row, I will trust in your en - dur - ing grace. Sav - ior,  
what be - tide me, you will hold me ev - er in your hand. Sav - ior,



lead me to the home I trea - sure, where at last I'll find e - ter - nal rest.  
help me bear life's pain and sor - row till in glo - ry I be - hold your face.  
with your pres - ence here to guide me, I will reach at last the prom - ised land.



## THE GOSPEL: The Holy Gospel according to **Luke 19:1-10**

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> He entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup> He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup> So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham." <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

#### **SERMON**

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD**

#### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

#### *Righteous Mercy*

tune ELW #392

Since our child - hood you have taught us what is wrong  
Though there's wide - ness in your mer - cy, let us not  
Far too of - ten we hold on - to an - ger dressed  
and what is right Nur - tur - ing our sense of  
a - buse that grace Called in - to this Chris - tian  
as righ - teous - ness We for - get we serve a  
jus - tice, fuel - ing us to work and fight Keep that  
jour - ney, let our lives re - flect our faith When we  
God who calls us to re - la - tion - ship So when  
fire for jus - tice burn - ing in the sha - dow  
fal - ter and fall short of our com - mit - ment  
those who caused us harm re - pent and choose a  
of our fear E - ven there your Spi - rit's stir - ring,  
to your will Hold us, wrap - ping us in your love  
bet - ter way Spi - rit move our venge - ful hearts  
light - ing us a path that's clear  
as we work toward whole - ness still  
to choose love in - stead of wrath

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

In a world that loves to cast blame and point fingers, Jesus loved by different rules. He offered mercy. He invited people to dinner. He told stories of love. He chose to see the best in others. We believe that small acts of mercy and compassion have ripple effects in our lives. We believe that small acts of righteousness and justice are integral to a life of faith. Like Christ, we believe in offering mercy, inviting people to dinner, telling stories of love, and choosing to see the best in others. With God's help, may it be so. 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

### COMMUNION RESPONSE

ACS pg. 36

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, either from your seat using 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**

COMMUNION SONG

ACS pg. 34

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.

COMMUNION

*Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus*

ELW #802

1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,  
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.  
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death he con - quered death,  
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en from the dead  
 through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.  
 Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss.  
 he will free us from de - struc - tion, give to us im - mor - tal breath.  
 that to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus, you are now our head,  
 On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,  
 Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy:  
 Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion that would lead us in - to sin;  
 we are your own liv - ing mem - bers; where you live, there we shall be  
 full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding.  
 all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.  
 and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heav - en.  
 in your pres - ence con - stant - ly, liv - ing there with you for - ev - er.  
 Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where you guide.  
 Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.  
 Je - sus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.  
 Je - sus, let me faith - ful be; life e - ter - nal grant to me.



## 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

### *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross*

ELW #335



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;  
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;  
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;  
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.  
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.  
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.  
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



*Refrain*  
In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 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 9, 2025  
7:30 pm on Zoom

### PALM SUNDAY

Sunday, April 13, 2025  
10:00am Worship Service

### THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

MONDAY: 6:00 pm Community Table at Ponds  
TUESDAY: 6:30 pm AA Meeting  
7:30 Council Meeting on Zoom  
WEDNESDAY: 7:30 pm Lent Worship on Zoom  
THURSDAY: 7:30 pm Band practice  
SUNDAY: 9:00 am Choir practice  
10:00 am Worship

### APRIL BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH ELCA World Hunger

### TODAY'S MINISTERS

<b>PASTOR:</b> Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund	<b>GREETER:</b> Linda Axtell
<b>MUSIC DIRECTOR:</b> Bob Luderer	<b>ALTAR GUILD:</b> Marilyn Rubner & Susanne Herbst
<b>ASSISTING MINISTER:</b> Valerie Nicolosi	<b>COUNTERS:</b> Alex Boyce & Tony Baglieri
<b>LAY READER:</b> Brigette Albrecht	<b>COORDINATING COUNCILOR:</b> Michele Weintraub
<b>COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:</b> Brigette Albrecht & Arnold Ludke	<b>COFFEE HOUR:</b> Brigette Albrecht
<b>VIDEO TECH:</b> Alex Boyce	
<b>USHER:</b> Tony Baglieri	

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Palm Sunday: April 13<sup>th</sup>, Next Week!

Weather permitting, we will process from outside the entrance doors! Please join us!

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. If you have any questions about how to get connected or engage with the service, please talk to Pastor Courtney.

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 animals and costs in the Narthex and banks for home are also available.

### 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 join in on some wonderful food and fellowship with a continental breakfast on Sunday, April 20th at **9:15 a.m.** There will be lots of goodies to choose from **before** services. If warranted, we will put another coffee pot on and continue after services with eating and enjoying conversation and watching the Sunday School children's egg hunt. Please see the sign-up sheet in the narthex. Should you have any questions, please contact Valerie Nicolosi. This is always a fun event!!

### Book Club:

We are moving forward with plans for Book Club for the following months. We will be meeting via Zoom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month:

April 21<sup>st</sup>: Beloved, Toni Morrison

May 19<sup>th</sup>: Remarkably Beautiful Creatures, Shelby Van Pelt

June 16: The Color Purple, Alice Walker

Please contact Valerie Nicolosi with any questions and/or suggestions for books to read! Our discussions have been very enlightening and enthusiastic.

### Wash Away Hunger Car Wash Fundraiser: May 3<sup>rd</sup>

We will partner with Ponds and St. Albans and split the money raised for each of our hunger-based ministries. Bring your car and get it squeaky clean while supporting the hunger ministries!



**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

Kim, friend of Sue

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

Marilyn & Vincent, Lisa's parents

Ron & June, Karen's parents

Melinda & Paul, Eleanore's sister & nephew

Thomas Caraglia, friend of Tony & Edie

The Smith family, grieving the death of Ted