

# MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A faithful, serving community, joyfully sharing Christ's love*



## First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

228 Ramapo Valley Rd, Oakland NJ 07436

www.messiahoaklandnj.org | 201-337-4900

@MessiahOaklandNJ

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

*The congregation is invited to worship in any way that is comfortable and meaningful such as standing, sitting, kneeling, coloring, etc. You may join in worship by speaking the responses in bold type.*

## SILENT MEDITATION DURING PRELUDE

### WELCOME

### GATHERING WORDS

On this first Sunday in Lent, we journey again toward the cross. We feel the weight of all that lies ahead. We wrestle with coming sorrow. We balance our growing needs. God, we come here today braced for the hazards of this journey.

**Instead, you pour out grace.**

**Instead, you anoint us with oil.**

**Instead, you fill our cups to overflowing.**

We find beauty in dry places, abundance in want,  
and welcome in despair.

**You call us to the waters of life, and we respond,  
our longings now fulfilled.**

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.*

We know the pull of all that separates us from God. We long for the cleansing water poured out over us again. We seek anointing, the oil running its healing course. We feel this call to reconnect, so we confess our sins.

**God, we have forgotten your call, insistent though it is. We stay back though the waters of baptism call us forward. We separate ourselves though the bread and cup beckon us to community. We hide our wounds though the oil of anointing waits at the ready.**

God knows us better than we know ourselves. Yet God does not withhold any good gift from us. Like Naaman at the river, we are surprised at how easy it is to experience God's outpouring of grace. Like the woman at the well, we share living water and watch impenetrable barriers break. Like Mary at the feet of Jesus, we empty ourselves of all we have, only to be filled again. Beloved, you are forgiven. Receive now, for yourself, the abundant grace that opens your soul to love.

**May grace flow free through us once again!**

**GATHERING HYMN**

Build Up

Dakota Road

Chorus: Build Up, Prepare the way.

Remove the obstructions from my people's way.

Build Up, Prepare the way. God is near, God is here today.

<sup>1</sup>Break the chains of injustice. Let the oppressed go free.

Share our homes with the homeless and our bread with the hungry.

(Chorus)

<sup>2</sup> God sees all our destruction; how we get in love's way.

Still God comes and meets us with a steady healing embrace.

(Chorus)

*Bridge:* Then your light will break forth, like the dawn,  
and your healing, will break into song. (Chorus)

**BODY PRAYER**

**FIRST READING: A Reading from Romans 5:12-19**

<sup>12</sup> Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned<sup>13</sup> for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law.<sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.<sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification.<sup>17</sup> If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the

abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup> Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**THE PSALM: Psalm 32** will be read responsively

<sup>1</sup> Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup> **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

<sup>3</sup> While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my  
groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup> **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you  
forgave me the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of  
trouble; when the great waters overflow,  
they shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

<sup>8</sup> **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;  
I will guide you with my eye.**

<sup>9</sup> Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay  
near you."

<sup>10</sup> **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup> Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all  
who are true of heart.



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 **Matthew 4:1-11**  
**Glory to you, O Lord.****

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil.<sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished.<sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”<sup>4</sup> But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,<sup>9</sup> and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S SERMON**

**SERMON**

<sup>1</sup> You are not alone if you are lonely  
When you're feeling frail, you're not the only  
We are all the same in need of mercy  
To be forgiven and be free  
It's all you got to lean on, but thank God, it's all you need

Chorus: And all the people said Amen, whoa, oh-oh  
And all the people said Amen  
Give thanks to the Lord, for his love never ends,  
and all the people said Amen

<sup>2</sup> If you're rich or poor, well, it don't matter  
Weak or strong, we know love is what we're after  
We're all broken, but we're all in this together  
God knows we stumble and fall  
And he so loved the world he sent his son to save us all (Chorus)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed are the poor spirits who are torn apart  
Blessed are the prosecuted and the pure in heart  
Blessed are the people lonely for another start  
For this is a kingdom, the kingdom of God (Chorus x2)

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was  
conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered  
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he  
descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he  
ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the  
Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the  
communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of  
the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

God of all things, you pour out your grace upon us through living  
water, healing oil, and cups running over. We come to you this day  
asking again for you to give your grace anew. We lift our joys to you  
and seek your presence among our sorrows.

We pray for creation, for the land, the water, the skies, and the air. We thank you for its beauty and abundance, astonishing each day. I invite you to name out loud or silently moments of abundance you have seen, experienced, or received this week.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

Send your Spirit among us as we tend to this world, seeking to promote wholeness in places that have experienced disaster. I invite you to name out loud or silently local places and locations around the world impacted by natural or human-made disasters.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

We pray for our community, for family, friends, neighbors, and strangers. We thank you for the joy shared between us all. I invite you to name out loud or silently moments of joy and connection you witnessed, received or experienced this week.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

Send your accompanying presence to those who are unable to be among community this week, whether because of travel, illness, or vulnerability. Anoint those who need healing, wholeness, and companionship with your reviving Spirit. I invite you to name out loud or silently those individuals or groups you want to lift up prayers for this day.

We pray especially for those who are ill or injured, those in need of mental health support, those who are seeking recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, those who are lonely, and those who mourn. God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

We pray for the church around the world, doing the slow but persistent work of ministry. We thank you for the grace that we have witnessed pouring out of your church. I invite you to name out loud or silently ministries, programs, and groups working locally, regionally, and around the world.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

Send your patience and wisdom among us when we try to rush through work that will take time. Encourage us to see our ministry efforts through. Stir our hearts when opportunities arise and remove barriers that discourage and distract us. Help us to prepare and share the feast of your love with all whom we encounter.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

We pray for the nations and their leaders all throughout the earth. We thank you for bright moments of peacemaking and cooperation. Send your Spirit of justice and peace to those who experience strife and discord, violence and heartbreaking need. Pour out your courage and wisdom on us and on all who serve, that all people may experience love, care, and all that they need.

God, in your grace, **tend to our prayers.**

God, we trust in your abundance, whether we sense it or not. Even in days of sorrow or seasons of grief, remind us of your unyielding grace. **Amen.**

## 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, such as a handshake, hug, or peace sign and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.*

## OFFERING

*Offering can be left in the plates at the back of the sanctuary, sent to the church office, or given online by using the QR code to the right.*



## OFFERTORY

Create in Me a Clean Heart

W&P #34

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me. (2x)  
Cast me not away from your presence, O Lord  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,  
and renew a right Spirit within me.

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of grace, you give us all that we have and all that we need. Teach us to recognize your gifts and to share with you all that we have. Though we don't yet know what you have in store for us, we pray that you bring overflowing abundance out of what we offer. **Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

God is with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to our God.**

Let us give thanks to God, our saving grace.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **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.**

## **PREFACE**

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

One loaf, broken yet abundant. One cup, poured out yet more than enough. Come, share in the feast.

## **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**

## **COMMUNION SONG** The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing ELW #531

<sup>1</sup> The trumpets sound, the angels sing, the feast is ready to begin;  
the gates of heaven are open wide and Jesus welcomes you inside.

Refrain: Sing with thankfulness songs of pure delight,  
come and revel in heaven's love and light;  
take your place at the table of the King,  
the feast is ready to begin, the feast is ready to begin.

<sup>2</sup> Tables are laden with good things,  
O taste the peace and joy he brings;  
he'll fill you up with love divine, he'll turn your water into wine. Refrain

<sup>3</sup> The hungry heart he satisfies, offers the poor his paradise;  
now hear all heaven and earth applaud the amazing goodness of the  
Lord. Refrain

## COMMUNION HYMN

Come As You Are Glover/Crowder/Maher

<sup>1</sup>Come out of sadness from wherever you've been.

Come broken hearted let rescue begin.

Come find your mercy O sinner Come kneel.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.

Chorus <sup>1</sup>Lay down your burdens. Lay down your shame.

All who are broken, lift up your face.

Oh wanderer come home, you're not too far.

So lay down you hurt. Lay down your heart. Come as you are.

<sup>2</sup>There's hope for the hopeless and all those who've strayed.

Come sit at the table. Come taste the grace.

There's rest for the weary. A rest that endures. Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't cure.

Chorus <sup>2</sup>Lay down your burdens. Lay down your shame.

All who are broken. Lift up your face.

Oh wanderer come home. You're not too far.

So lay down your hurt. Lay down your heart.

Come as you are. Come as you are. Fall in his arms. Come as you are.

<sup>3</sup>There's joy for the morning. Sinner be still.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.

Chorus <sup>3</sup>Lay down your burdens. Lay down your shame.

All who are broken lift up your face.

Oh wanderer come home, you're not too far. So lay down you hurt.

Lay down your heart. Come as you are. Come as you are.

Come as you are. Come as you are. Come as you are.

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

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. O Jesus, you have shared a feast more gracious than we could ever ask, the outpouring of your own self with us. Send us out into the world to be conduits for your goodness, channels of your grace, anointing this world with the new life you have given us. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

Beloved, receive now this blessing: Life and life abundant is yours, today. As you leave this place, embrace the transformation you have found here. Like water changed to wine, we can share delight beyond measure. Like new wineskins for new wine, we can stretch and change, new vessels for God's goodness. Like the wine and oil of the Samaritan on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, we can offer blessing, even as we seek healing. God blesses you with abundance. Christ blesses you with grace. The Spirit blesses you with love overflowing. Trust this blessing as you go, and pour yourself out to a world in need. **Amen.**

## **SENDING HYMN**

Your Love is Everlasting

Dakota Road

<sup>1</sup> Since time began, through centuries God's love is everlasting  
To distant unknown galaxies God's love is everlasting  
Splendor springs forth 'cross the land God's love is everlasting  
Abundance, sharing hand in hand God's love is everlasting

Chorus: Your love (your love) is lasting

Your love is everlasting

Your love (your love) is lasting

Your love is everlasting

<sup>2</sup> A mother's womb, a brand new life God's love is everlasting  
An empty tomb, the risen Christ God's love is everlasting  
Weeping may last for the night God's love is everlasting  
But joy breaks forth with morning light God's love is everlasting  
(Chorus)

<sup>3</sup> Signs of hope, a voice of peace God's love is everlasting  
The prophet's cry for war to cease God's love is everlasting  
For the down and out, for the high and proud God's love is  
everlasting

Come all you people shout out loud God's love is everlasting (Chorus)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BENEDICTION**

Go in peace. Believe the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

## UPCOMING WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Second Sunday in Lent, March 1, 2026 | 10:00am Worship Service

### FEBRUARY BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

Saint Paul's Community Development Center

### TODAY'S MINISTERS

**PASTOR:** Rev. Courtney Smith  
Westerlund

**MUSIC DIRECTOR:** Bob Luderer

**BAND MEMBERS:** Jerri

Angermueller, Klaus  
Angermueller, Nick DeRoda,  
Nancy Krause, Steve Krause,  
and Jack

**LAY READER:** Michele Weintraub

**USHER:** Ron Rubner

**GREETER:** Lee Haymon

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:** Brigitte  
Albrecht & Susanne Herbst

**ALTAR GUILD:** Amy Ludke &  
Karen Bell

**VIDEO TECH:** Alex Boyce

**COUNTERS:** Cesar Rios &  
Linda Axtell

**COORDINATING COUNCILOR:**  
Alex Boyce

**COFFEE HOUR:** Boyce

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Book Club:

March 9<sup>th</sup>: "The Book of Longings" by Sue Monk Kidd.

#### ELCA Good Gifts: March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 29<sup>th</sup>, Palm Sunday.

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 \$700.00 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. Please return your barns or envelopes by March 29<sup>th</sup>

#### Mar10 Day Observed:

Please join us on March 8th, after church for some Mario Kart fun and a special Mario Bros coffee hour!



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

**And the following friends and family:**

All affected by seasonal illnesses

All those in the armed forces, especially those connected to our congregation, Evan and Joseph

Jeff

David

Kurt

Peter & Joyce

Mark and Keith, Susanne's friends

Gayle, friend of Joan & Eleanore

June, Lee's mother

Miro, Vesna's father

Erika, Kristen's sister

Thomas, friend of Tony & Edie

John, Joan, Herb, Todd, Gus, Peggy, Jim, Kathy, and Carol, Ron and Marilyn's friends

The family and friends of Ethel, Brigitte's sister-in-law

Kim, friend of Sue

Marilyn & Vincent, Lisa's parents

Ron & June, Karen's parents

Melinda & Paul, Eleanore's sister & nephew

Jennifer, friend of Sue & Eleanore

Nancy, friend of Kim

Peggy & Christine, Alex's aunts

Karol & Barbara, Eleanore's friends

Alexa and Hank friends of Nancy

Peter, Terri's father

Julie, family friend of Nancy

\*Please let us know if you have changes we should make to our prayer list\*