

# MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



## Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 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 fifth 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**                      Come and See                      Dakota Road

<sup>1</sup>The song of a wren, the flight of a hawk,  
a baby's first bond with her mother  
first flowers of spring arise and sing the world is filled with wonder

Chorus: Come and see what God has done  
The earth is alive; thanks to the sun every plant that grows  
every river that flows what a miracle gift of creation

<sup>2</sup>Ponder the vastness of the night sky,  
the distance you see is amazing  
The light travels over thousands of years  
before you see it stargazing (Chorus)

<sup>3</sup>Look at a seed it knows what to do,  
new life will spring forth from its falling  
And we as people of the Divine  
can listen as we know our calling (Chorus)

<sup>4</sup>People of Faith, Grace beckons you home  
to Eden in all of its splendor  
Do you hear the call? Renew the earth  
with care now garden and tend her (Chorus)

## **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.**

## **BODY PRAYER**

**FIRST READING:** A Reading from **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.<sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.<sup>3</sup> He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."<sup>4</sup> Then he said to

me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.<sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.<sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.<sup>8</sup> I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them.<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."<sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.'<sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.<sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people.<sup>14</sup> I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**THE PSALM: Psalm 130** will be read responsively

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

<sup>2</sup> **O LORD, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.**

<sup>3</sup> If you were to keep watch over sins, O LORD, who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> **Yet with you is forgiveness, in order that you may be feared.**

<sup>5</sup> I wait for you, O LORD; my soul waits; in your word is my hope.

<sup>6</sup> **My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning, more than those who keep watch for the morning.**

<sup>7</sup> O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love; with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

<sup>8</sup> **For the LORD shall redeem Israel from all their sins.**

## **SECOND READING: A Reading from Romans 8:6-11**

<sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.<sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot,<sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.<sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.<sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Nothing in All Creation

ACS pg.34

Nothing in all creation can separate is from the love of God.

Nothing in all creation can separate is from the love of God.

**THE GOSPEL: The Holy Gospel according to John 11:1-45**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." <sup>11</sup> After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." <sup>13</sup> Jesus,

however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup> Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already

there is a stench because he has been dead four days.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me.<sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.”<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”<sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **CHILDREN’S SERMON**

### **SERMON**

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

Days of Elijah

Robin Mark

<sup>1</sup>These are the days of Elijah, declaring the word of the Lord:  
And these are the days of Your servant Moses,  
righteousness being restored.  
And though these are days of great trial,  
Of famine and darkness and sword,  
Still, we are the voice in the desert crying  
‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord!’

*Chorus:* Behold God comes, riding on the clouds, shining like the sun,  
at the trumpet call! Lift your voice, it’s the year of jubilee  
And out of Zion’s hill salvation comes!

<sup>2</sup>These are the days of Ezekiel, the dry bones becoming as flesh.  
And these are the days of Your servant David,  
rebuilding a temple of praise. These are the days of the harvest,  
the fields are as white in Your world!  
And we are the laborers in Your vineyard,  
Declaring the word of the Lord! Chorus

Bridge x4

There is no God like Jehovah.  
There is no God like Jehovah!

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

## **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.**

## **PREFACE**

## 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

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                      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.

    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.

    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.  
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.

**COMMUNION HYMN**                      That We May Be Filled                      W&P #134

Not as we ought but as we are able,  
we offer our thanks as we come to your table.  
Through Word and Spirit bless us; through bread and wine refresh us  
that we may be filled, that we may be filled with love.

**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**                      Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord                      Godspell  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BENEDICTION**

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

### **POSTLUDE**

### **UPCOMING WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Sixth Sunday in Lent, March 29, 2026 | 10:00am Worship Service

### **MARCH BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH**

ELCA World Hunger

### **THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH**

**TUESDAY:** 6:30 pm AA Meeting  
7:00 pm Council Meeting on Zoom

**WEDNESDAY:** 6:30 pm Thrivent Dinner Event

**THURSDAY:** 11:00 am Folding and Fellowship  
7:30 pm Band practice

**SUNDAY:** 9:00 am Choir Practice  
10:00 am Worship

### **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:** Joan Ludke

**USHER:** Tony Baglieri

**GREETER:** Michele Weintraub

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:** Michele Weintraub & Arnold Ludke

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

**VIDEO TECH:** Alex Boyce

**COUNTERS:** Nancy Krause & Tony Baglieri

**COORDINATING COUNCILOR:** Nancy Krause

**COFFEE HOUR:** Linda Axtell

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thrivent Dinner: March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at Messiah Lutheran Church. Learn about Thrivent's *Savvy Tax Strategies* at dinner hosted by Thrivent's Pater Manke, FIC, RICP. Please sign up in the narthex.

Easter Sign Ups: 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

Easter Breakfast: April 5th at **9:15 a.m.** Please join in on some wonderful food and fellowship with a continental breakfast **before** services. If warranted, we will put another coffee pot on and continue after services with eating, enjoying conversation, and watching the Sunday School egg hunt. Please see the sign-up in the narthex. Should you have any questions, please contact Valerie Nicolosi. This is always a fun event!!

ELCA Good Gifts: March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 29<sup>th</sup>, Palm Sunday. We are working toward donations of animals or items such as bibles and feeding those in need. Last year an amazing \$700 was raised! Any and all donations are welcome. You can find the animals/costs and banks in the Narthex. Please return your barns or envelopes by March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Book Club on Zoom: April 13<sup>th</sup>: "The Correspondent" by Virginia Evans.



**Please keep in prayer the following people in our Messiah family: Bob, Helen, 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

Paula, friend of Nancy

Janice, food pantry volunteer

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