

MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Ascension Sunday & First Holy Communion

May 17, 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 TO WORSHIP

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who looks upon us in compassion, forgives our sin, and heals our lives. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Have mercy, O God, against you, you alone, we have sinned. In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt. Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.

As tender as parent to child, so deep is God's compassion for us. As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for us. As far as east is from west, so far God removes our sin from us, renewing our life through Jesus Christ. Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

Blessed be God forever.



1 A hymn of glo - ry let us sing! New hymns through-out the world shall
 2 The ho - ly ap - os - tol - ic band up - on the Mount of Ol - ives
 3 To whom the shin - ing an - gels cry, "Why stand and gaze up - on the
 4 "You see him now, as - cend - ing high up to the por - tals of the
 5 O ris - en Christ, as - cend - ed Lord, all praise to you let earth ac -



ring: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, by a road be - fore un -
 stand, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! and with his faith - ful fol - l'wers
 sky?" Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! "This is the Sav - ior!" thus they
 sky." Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! "Here - af - ter Je - sus you shall
 cord: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! You are, while end - less ag - es



trod, as - cends un - to the throne of God.
 see their Lord as - cend in maj - es - ty.
 say, "this is his glo - rious tri - umph day!" Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 see re - turn - ing in great maj - es - ty."
 run, with Fa - ther and with Spir - it one.



lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

GREETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

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

O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

FIRST READING: A Reading from Acts 1:1-14

¹ In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 will be read responsively

¹ Let God arise, and let God's enemies be scattered;
let those who hate God flee.

² **As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away; as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

³ But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;

let them also be merry and joyful.

4 Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who rides the clouds; I AM is that name, rejoice before God!

5 In your holy habitation, O God, you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

6 you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom; but the rebels shall live in desert places.

7 O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

8 the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God, God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 You sent a bountiful rain, O God; you restored your inheritance when it languished.

10 Your people found their home in it; in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.

32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord.

33 You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens; you send forth your voice, your mighty voice.

34 Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

35 How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel, giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!

SECOND READING: A Reading from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. **15** If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. **19** If all were a single member, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many members yet one body. **21** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I

have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect,²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member,²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW pg.151

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
 You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

THE GOSPEL: The Holy Gospel according to Luke 24: 44-53

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Christ When You Ascended Carolyn Winfrey Gillette



1. O Christ, when you as - cen - ded you took your right - ful throne;
2. We look at earth - ly ru - lers and see what they com - mand;
3. We're tempt - ed, Lord, to leave you in sto - ries nice - ly told;
4. It's of - ten quite a chal - lenge to fol - low in your way;
5. One day, O Lord, we'll know you, as we are ful - ly known;



your time on earth had end - ed, yet we weren't left a - lone.
we note their years of pow - er, the bor - ders of their land.
some - times we don't be - lieve you and say your ways are old.
we're eas - i - ly dis - tract - ed! It's hard, Lord, to o - bey.
one day, this world of sin - ners will bow be - fore your throne.



You reign o'er earth and hea - ven; your spir - it guides our way.
Yet, Lord, you are not bound - ed by things like time and space;
Some - times we feel so lone - ly and live in doubt and fear.
Some - times we give you Sun - days, an hour, may - be two.
One day, God's whole cre - a - tion will sing and praise your name;



Your prayers up - hold your peo - ple; you lead your church each day.
your reign is ne - ver - end - ing, you rule in eve - ry place.
But your as - cen - sion means, Lord, you're pre - sent with us here.
But your as - cen - sion means, Lord, all life be - longs to you.
on earth as now in hea - ven, we'll cel - e - brate your reign.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our

salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Let the Vinyards Be Fruitful

ELW #184

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more.

Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, **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.

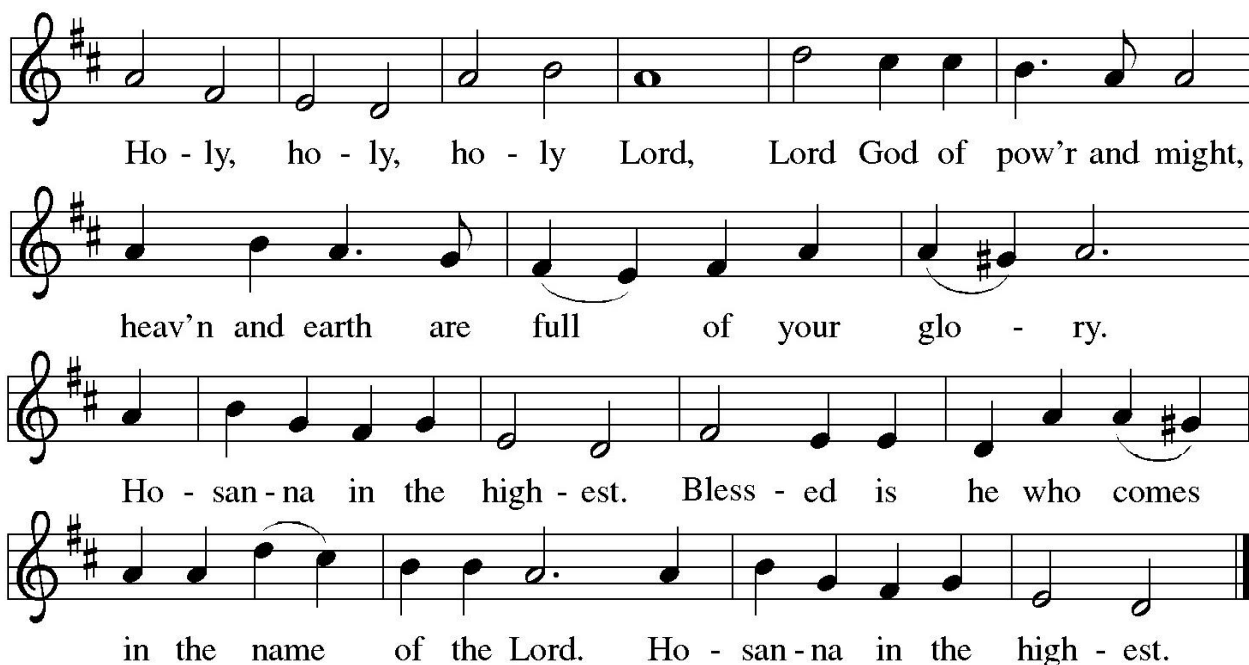
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

COMMUNION RESPONSE

Holy Holy Holy

ELW pg.153



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

Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

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

Lamb of God

ELW pg.154

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

One Bread, One Body

ELW #496

Refrain
One bread, one bod-y, one Lord of all; one cup of bless-ing which we bless, and we, though man-y through-out the earth, we are one bod - y in this one Lord.
Refrain
wom - an or man, no more.
one in the Lord of all.
gath - ered to one for all.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ETHAN, NATALIE, AND HUDSON
ON THEIR FIRST COMMUNION!**

TABLE BLESSING

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy One, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

BLESSING

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, and the Spirit, our advocate and peace, † bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

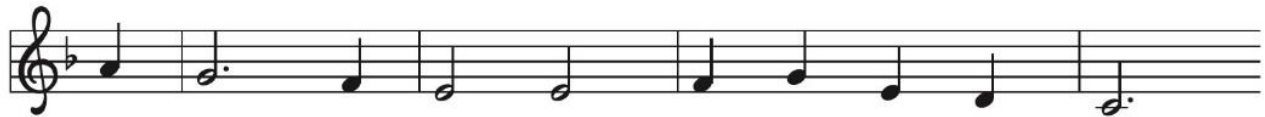
SENDING HYMN

Go to the World

ACS #991



1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.
2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.
3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;
4 "Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,



Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,
Go live the word of God's re - deem - ing grace.
the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.
for I am with you till the age shall end,



bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.
Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.
As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.
when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!"



Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

THANKSGIVING AT THE CONCLUSION OF A CALL

Council President: Pastor Courtney Smith Westerlund on August 29, 2021, we of Messiah Lutheran Church in Oakland New Jersey called you to be pastor in this place:

to proclaim God's word, to baptize and teach,

to announce God's forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord's table.

With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you and your family have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.

People of God, members of Messiah Lutheran Church, do you release Pastor Courtney from service as your pastor?

We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.

Pastor Courtney, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with Messiah Lutheran Church?

Pastor Courtney: I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together.

Let us pray. Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them, and you call them to various avenues of service. We give you thanks for the ministry of Pastor Courtney among the people of God in this place. You watch over our going out and our coming in: bless this time of ending and beginning. You surround your people in every time and place: keep us close in your love.

You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial: prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.

Help Pastor Courtney, Jonathan, Oliver, and all of us to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us. As they have been a blessing to us, so now send them forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

**PLEASE JOIN US AS WE GATHER OUTSIDE AFTER WORSHIP
FOR PASTOR COURTNEY'S FAREWELL CELEBRATION AND GAMES!**

UPCOMING WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Day of Pentecost, May 24, 2026 | 10:00am Worship Service

Don't Forget to wear red for church!

MAY BENEVOLENCE OF THE MONTH

Cross Roads Camp and Retreat

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

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

THURSDAY: 12:00 pm Bible Study
7:30 pm Band practice

SATURDAY: Building and Grounds Use

SUNDAY: 9:00 am Choir Practice
10:00 am Worship
Farewell Celebration for Bob Luderer following worship!

TODAY'S MINISTERS

PASTOR: Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Bob Luderer

LAY READER: Brigitte Albrecht

USHER: Cesar Rios

GREETER: Amy Ludke

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Arnold Ludke & Brigitte Albrecht

ALTAR GUILD: Amy Ludke & Karen Bell

VIDEO TECH: Nick DeRoda/ Don Brown

COUNTERS: Cesar Rios & Arnold Ludke

COORDINATING COUNCILOR: Nancy Krause

COFFEE HOUR: Pastor Courtney's Farwell Celebration

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ponds Food Pantry: Spring Stock Up! Help fill the shelves with shelf stable milk, cereal (no cheerios), spaghetti sauce, peanut butter and jelly, size 5,6,7 diapers; mayo. Ketchup, mustard, canned chicken, salmon, tuna, pancake syrup, white rice, snacks, chicken/ beef ramen, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper. Drop off at hrs: Tuesday 10-1, Thursday 3-7 and Saturday 10-1. Please see QR code on the right to see their Amazon Wish List.



Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center: Register for both opening day on May 16th and camp for this summer! For more information visit: <https://www.crossroadsretreat.com/>

Ray Cordell Concert to Benefit Ponds Food Pantry

Saturday, May 30th, 2026 from 7 to 9 pm at Ponds Reformed Church
Enjoy a magical evening of music featuring international recording artist and singer Ray Cordell, aka "Ray from the UK" performing popular jazz, light rock and rock-n-roll from the 70s to today. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased using the QR code to the right. In addition to the concert, there will be a trick tray and refreshments. Messiah Lutheran will contribute a "Coffee Hour" basket to the tricky tray. Please see the sign-up sheet in the narthex listing items to donate to the tricky tray and talk to Michele Weintraub with questions.





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

And the following friends and family:

All affected by seasonal illnesses

All those in the armed forces, especially

those connected to our congregation including Evan and Joseph

Erika, Kristen's sister

June, Lee's mother

Keith, Karen & Clyde, Valerie's brother & friends

Marilyn & Vincent, Lisa's parents

Melinda & Paul, Eleanore's sister & nephew

Miro, Vesna's father

Ron & June, Karen's parents

Alexa and Hank friends of Nancy

Gayle, friend of Joan & Eleanore

Janice, food pantry volunteer

Jennifer, friend of Sue & Eleanore

Joan, friend of Ron and Marilyn

John, Joan, Herb, Todd, Gus, Peggy, Jim, Kathy, and Carol, Ron and

Marilyn's friends

Karol & Barbara, Eleanore's friends

Kim, friend of Sue

Mark and Keith, Susanne's friends

Michele H., friend of Weintraub's

Nancy, friend of Kim

Paula, friend of Nancy

Peggy & Christine, Alex's aunts

Peter, Terri's father; Julie, family friend of Nancy

Thomas, friend of Tony & Edie

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

