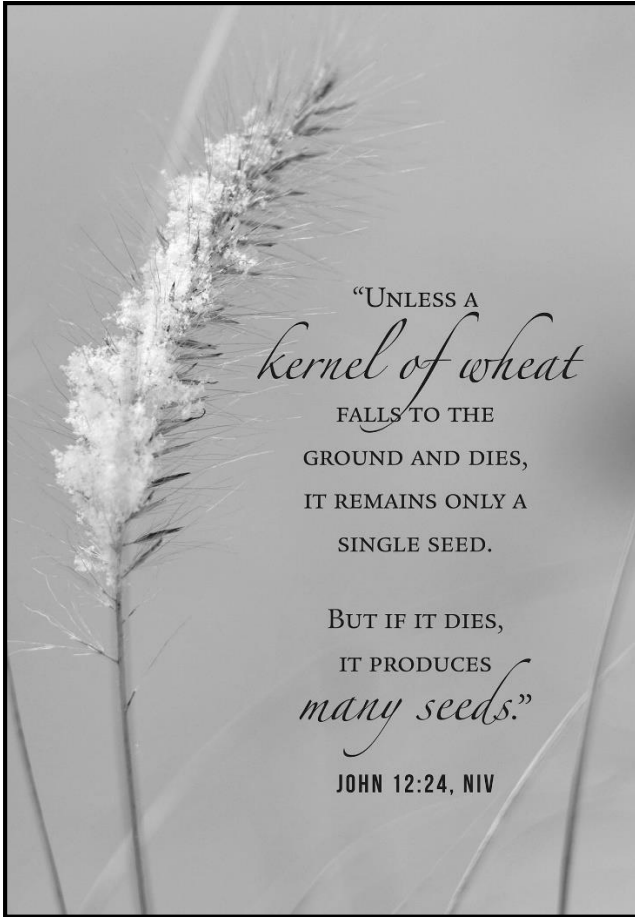


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 17, 2024

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

*God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.*



3U

**GATHERING**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who writes the law on our hearts,  
who draws all people together through Jesus.

**C:** Amen.

**P:** Held in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin  
in the presence of God and of one another.

*Kneel*

**P:** Holy God,

**C:** we confess that we are caught in snares of sin  
and cannot break free.

**We hoard resources while our neighbors  
are hungry and cold.**

**We speak in ways that silence others.**

**We are silent when we should speak up.**

**We let hurts grow into hatred.**

**For all these things and for sins only you know,  
forgive us, Lord.**

**Amen.**

**P:** God’s grace is abundant:  
Out of love for the whole world,  
God draws near to us,  
breaks every snare of sin,  
washes away our wrongs,  
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.

**C:** Amen.

Stand

**GATHERING HYMN**

*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*.....LBW 98

**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

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

**C:** And also with you.

**KYRIE**



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:      **C** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Chri - ste e - le - i - son:      **C** Christ, have mer - cy.  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:      **C** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray.

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** Amen.

Sit



**WORD****FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

*The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.*

**A:** A Reading from Jeremiah:

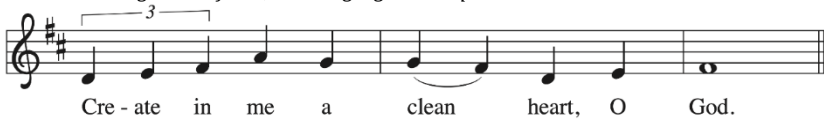
<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

**A:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 51:1-12**

*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.*



*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me | from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know | my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment. R**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

**<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

**<sup>8</sup>Let me hear | joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken | may rejoice. R**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.

**<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean | heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away | from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of | your salvation  
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit. R**

### **SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10**

*Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.*

**A:** A Reading from Hebrews:

<sup>5</sup>Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

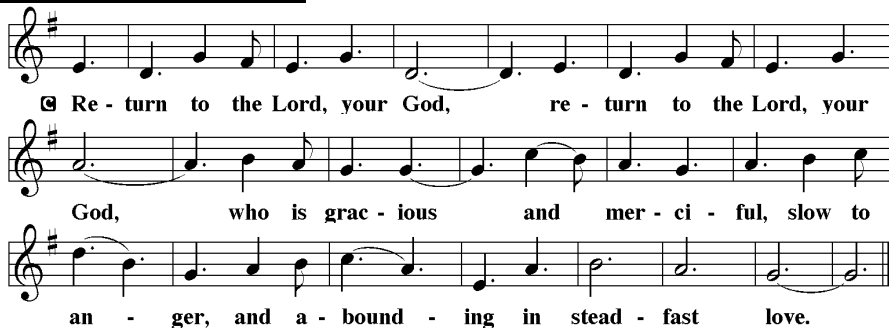
“You are a priest forever,  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

**A:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**


Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your  
 God, who is grac - ious and mer - ci - ful, slow to  
 an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**GOSPEL: John 12:20-33**

*Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to John, the twelfth chapter.

**C:** Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup>"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

**P:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**C:** Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

**SERMON**.....Janet Stroble, ALWL

Stand

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Now the Green Blade Rises* ..... LBW 148

**APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again 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 INTERCESSION**

*A brief silence is held after the introduction.*

**P**: Trusting in God’s promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

*After each petition:*

**P**: Hear us, O God.

**C**: Your mercy is great.

*The prayers conclude:*

**P**: Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C**: Amen

**PEACE**

**P:** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C:** **And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you.

Sit

***MEAL***

**OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

**ANTHEM**

***Gift of Finest Wheat* ..... **R. Kreutz****

Stand

**OFFERTORY**

*As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

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**

**A:** Let us pray:

**C:** **Jesus, you are the bread of life  
and the host of this meal.**

**Bless these gifts that we have gathered  
that all people may know your goodness.**

**Feed us not only with this holy food  
but with hunger for justice and peace.**

**We pray this in your name.**

**Amen.**



**GREAT THANKSGIVING****P:** The Lord be with you.**C:** And also with you.**P:** Lift up your hearts.**C:** We lift them to the Lord.**P:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**C:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.**PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and  
 might, heav - en 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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**P**: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus,  
your Son, who reached out  
to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross,  
opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread,  
and gave thanks; broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples,  
saying: Take and eat;  
this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper,  
he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink,  
saying: This cup is  
the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people  
for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,  
his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us  
the Spirit of your love, O Lord,  
and unite the wills  
of all who share this heavenly food,  
the body and blood  
of Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
to whom, with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory,  
now and forever.

**C**: Amen.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name,  
 thy kingdom come,  
 thy will be done,  
 on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
 and forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those  
 who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
 and the power, and the glory,  
 forever and ever. Amen.

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P**: Bread for the journey.  
 A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

**C**: Thanks be to God.



**C** 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**

*All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.**

*The communicant may say: Amen*

**COMMUNION HYMN**

***My Faith Looks Up to Thee* ..... LBW 479**

*Stand*

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C:** Amen.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**A:** Let us pray:

**A:** Generous God,  
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.  
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,  
now make us one loaf to feed the world;  
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

**C:** Amen

***SENDING***

**SENDING OF THE EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

**P:** Gracious God,  
loving all your family with a mother’s tender care:  
As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread,  
assist us in this ministry on which we are sent forth.  
In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those to whom  
we bring this sacrament, that through the body and blood of  
your Son we may all know the comfort of your abiding  
presence.

**C:** Amen

**BLESSING**

**P:** Beloved,  
we are God’s own people,  
holy, washed, renewed.  
God bless you and keep you,  
shower you with mercy,  
fill you with courage,  
and † give you peace.

**C:** Amen

**SENDING HYMN**

*Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*..... LBW 259

**DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. Share your bread.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**



**SERVICE ASSISTANTS**

**Ushers:** Fred Harbaugh, Susan Christ, AnnMarie Hohman, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker; **Lay Assistant:** Anita Bair; **Communion Assistant:** Rhonda Koch; **Acolyte:** Owen Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Jody Fullmer, Jean Bower; **Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Dan and Kathy Rasdorf; **Cantor:** Dave Bausinger; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fullmer

**IN BLESSED MEMORY**

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Nelson Silverstrim and Doris Webb Silverstrim, on the 79th anniversary of their wedding, March 17, 1945 by their sons and families.

**The Basket of Flowers** is given to the Glory of God and in honor of Carol Hessert and in loving memory of what would have been Sam and Carol’s 62nd Wedding Anniversary on March 16th, with love from

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to Messiah Church!** It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

**This morning we welcome Janet Stroble**, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Janet has received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist.

**Eucharistic Ministers** will be sent out this morning.

**Easter flower** order forms are due today.

**The Lenten self-denial folders** are due by Palm Sunday, March 24. You may place them in the offering plate or bring in to the church office. Thank you!

**Please join us on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.** during Lent for Lenten Vespers held in the Chapel followed by a brief Bible Study.

**Messiah Lutheran Preschool** is now accepting registrations for the 2024-2025 school year. Registration forms are also available in the church office. *Since space is limited early registration is encouraged. Thank you*

**Sewing is underway for our “School Kits for Lutheran World Relief” project.** It’s time to get sewing so that they are ready in time for the older class of kids to add the cords during Bible School week. Fabric pieces along with instructions on how to sew the backpacks - are now available at the church office or in the narthex, and new colors will be coming soon! ***And ... for those of you who do not sew but would like to help, we have plenty of jobs for you, too!*** Call Sally Congdon at 570-547-6193 or Kathy Wither at 570-651-2802 for more information.

**Lutheran World Relief School Kits “Sew-A-Sack” Event**, will be **Wednesday, April 3, 9 a.m.-???** You may still sew at home, but we thought it would be fun to host a “sew-a-thon” during which we will enjoy a morning of fellowship with one another as we work together to sew the backpacks needed for the school kits. ***Can’t sew, or don’t have a machine? No problem!*** We can put you to work marking fabric, cutting, pinning, and ironing hems (it’s easy and we’ll show you how). At noon, we will share conversation over a light lunch. We will need the use of some sewing tools if you’ve any to share (or to bring for your own use). A sign-up sheet has been placed in the narthex. If you can attend, please sign up and indicate whether or not you will join us for lunch along with which items you can bring.

*Join us for a fun time ... we guarantee “we will keep you in stitches!”*

**Call Sally Congdon at 570-547-6193 or Kathy Wither at 570-651-2802 for more information.**

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**REV. A. BRUCE AMME, PRESIDING AND PREACHING**  
**JARED GIST, ORGANIST**

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702  
(570) 326-9171 | [www.messiahsouth.org](http://www.messiahsouth.org)

### **Called Where Jesus Goes**

It isn't only the first disciples who become uncomfortable when Jesus talked about his approaching death. We often do as well. Perhaps focusing on the crucifixion seems gruesome. Perhaps it conjures in us the (false) story of a divine parent who cannot forgive without punishing someone, with Jesus standing in as that one. Maybe it feels like a morbid emphasis on sin.

Jesus did not understand himself as the victim of divine punishment. He entered into suffering as a part of his glorification, working with—not against—his Father. He knows that human life has become twisted under the powers of sin and death so that if we grasp onto our “life in this world,” we will miss God’s gracious intention for us. Christ’s judgment of sin is not for our exclusion. Jesus never seeks to shame us, but condemns sin in order to deliver us from its power.

Perhaps, however, we shy away from talk of Christ’s death because we sense, on some level, that if our Lord must go to the cross, then so too must we. Jesus declares, “Whoever serves me must follow me.” Discipleship is a summons to die to ourselves and lose our life on this world’s terms. Paradoxically, this cruciform journey is the road to true fruitfulness and flourishing. It begins in our baptism and is nourished at the Lord’s table. It is sustained by the fellowship of faith, where together we hear the life-giving word of Jesus. It will find completion on the day of resurrection.

Our souls long for this way of salvation. Deep within us all, a voice whispers, “We wish to see Jesus.” God knows this need, so Jesus is lifted up to drive out the powers of sin and death. God’s unending mercy is displayed. For the same reason, we come together so that in hearing the word and sharing the Eucharistic meal, and in our prayers, laments, and praises, Jesus may be lifted up to draw us, and all people, to salvation.

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