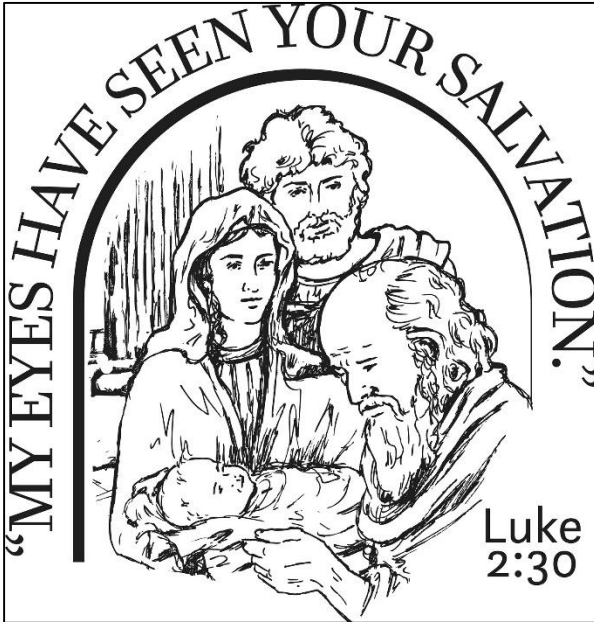


Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Presentation of Our Lord

February 2, 2025



PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

The Presentation of Our Lord is referred to in some corners of the church as Candlemas because of an ancient tradition of blessing all the candles to be used in the church in the coming year at the mass celebrated on that day. It was a way of underscoring the truth of Simeon's confession that this baby Jesus was "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" and a light for glory to Israel. Let the light of every candle in church be a little epiphany of the love of God for all people in the person of God's son, Jesus, the light of the world.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
our creator,
our protector,
our wellspring of life.

C: Amen

P: Trusting that God receives our words and the meditations of our hearts,
let us confess our sin.

Kneel

P: Merciful God,

C: **you speak blessing and compassion into the world.**

**Forgive us for the ways we act
with judgment, cruelty, or indifference.
We ignore the needs of our neighbors;
we resist your call to oppose injustice;
we give in to scarcity and fear;
we assume the worst about one another.**

**Cleanse us from our faults
and release us from their grasp.**

Show us your lovingkindness.

**Restore our hearts and repair your world,
that we may live in Christ's ways.**

Amen

P: God proclaims these words of assurance:
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name. You are mine."
In † Christ, you are forgiven.
In the Spirit, you are made free.
Refreshed by the waters of mercy,
live anew as beloved children of God.

C: Amen

Stand

The Congregation turns to follow the processional cross.

GATHERING HYMN *Let All Together Praise Our God, st. 1, 3, 6, 7*



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore his glo - rious
 2 The Fa - ther sends him from his throne to be an in - fant
 3 With - in an earth - born form he hides his all - cre - at - ing
 4 He un - der - takes a great ex - change, puts on our hu - man



throne; to - day he o - pens heav'n a - gain to
 small and lie here poor - ly man - gered now in
 light; to serve us all he hum - bly cloaks the
 frame, and in re - turn gives us his realm, his



give us his own Son, to give us his own Son.
 this cold, dis - mal stall, in this cold, dis - mal stall.
 splen - dor of his might, the splen - dor of his might.
 glo - ry, and his name, his glo - ry, and his name.

5 He is a servant, I a lord:
 how great a mystery!
 How strong the tender Christchild's love!
 No truer friend than he,
 no truer friend than he.

6 He is the key, and he the door
 to blessed paradise;
 the angel bars the way no more.
 To God our praises rise,
 to God our praises rise.

7 Your grace in lowliness revealed,
 Lord Jesus, we adore,
 and praise to God the Father yield
 and Spirit evermore;
 we praise you evermore.

Text: Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561; tr. F. Samuel Janzow, b. 1913
 Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY**P:** Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Sit

WORD**FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4**

This reading concludes a larger section (2:17—3:5) in which the prophet speaks of the coming of the God of justice. Malachi looks for that day when the wondrous power of God will purify the priestly descendents of Levi who minister in the temple at Jerusalem.

A: A Reading from Malachi:

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

A: The word of the Lord.**C:** Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 84

The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.



How dear to me is your dwell - ing, O LORD.

Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.



¹ How dear to me | is your dwelling,
O | LORD of hosts!

² **My soul has a desire and longing for the courts | of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the | living God.**

³ Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she
may | lay her young,
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king | and my God.

⁴ **Happy are they who dwell | in your house!
They will always be | praising you. R**

⁵ Happy are the people whose strength | is in you,
whose hearts are set on the | pilgrims' way.

⁶ **Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a | place of
springs,
for the early rains have covered it with | pools of water.**

⁷ They will climb from | height to height,
and the God of gods will be | seen in Zion.

⁸ **LORD God of hosts, | hear my prayer;
give ear, O | God of Jacob. R**

⁹ Behold our defend- | er, O God;
and look upon the face of | your anointed.

¹⁰ **For one day in your courts is better than a | thousand elsewhere.
I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than
dwell in the tents | of the wicked.**

¹¹ For the LORD God is both sun and shield, bestowing | grace and glory;
no good thing will the LORD withhold from those who walk | with
integrity.

¹² **O | LORD of hosts,
happy are they who put their | trust in you! R**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:14-18

Jesus shared human nature fully so that his death might be for all humans a liberation from slavery to death's power. Here the writer uses the image of priestly service in the temple as a way of describing the life and saving death of the Lord Jesus. He is the high priest who offers his life on behalf of his brothers and sisters.

A: A Reading from Hebrews:

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

The Gospel is carried into the midst of the people as a reminder that Christ is present among us. Please face the processional cross.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

CANTOR: My eyes have seen | your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence | of all peoples.

C: Repeat the Alleluias

GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40

This story is a study in contrasts: the infant Jesus with the aged prophets; the joy of birth with the ominous words of Simeon to Mary; the faithful fulfilling of the law with the presentation of the one who will release its hold over us. Through it all, we see the light of God's salvation revealed to the world.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the second chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male

shall be designated as holy to the Lord”),²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON..... Pastor Amme

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with



trem - bling stand; pon - der noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,
 earth he stood, Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture,
 on the way; as the Light of light, de - scend - ing
 sleep - less eye, veil their fac - es to the pres - ence,



for with bless - ing in his hand Christ our God to earth de -
 in the bod - y and the blood, he will give to all the
 from the realms of end - less day, comes, the pow'rs of hell to
 as with cease - less voice they cry: "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -



scend - ing comes our hom - age to de - mand.
 faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.
 van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.
 lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829–1885, alt.
 Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

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

A brief silence is held after the introduction.

P: With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

After each petition:

P: God of grace,

C: **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P: We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people.

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

He Must Be Love Craig Curry

Stand

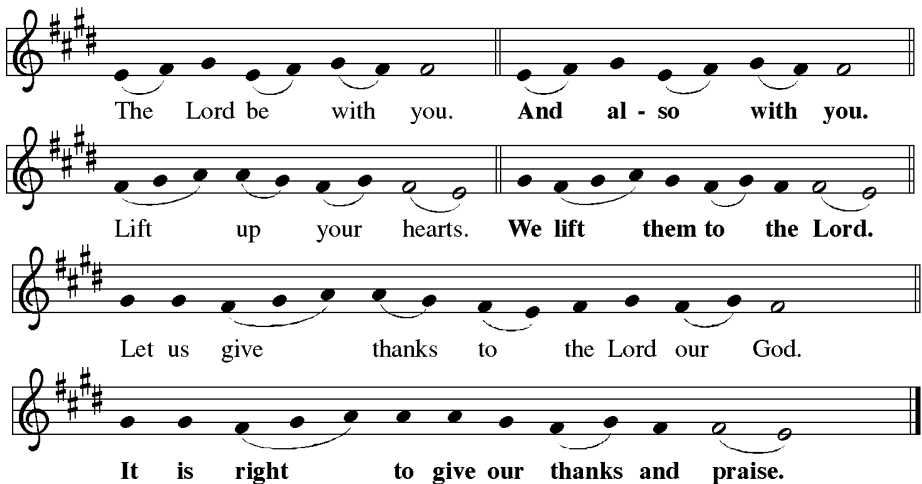
OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung

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**A:** Let us pray.

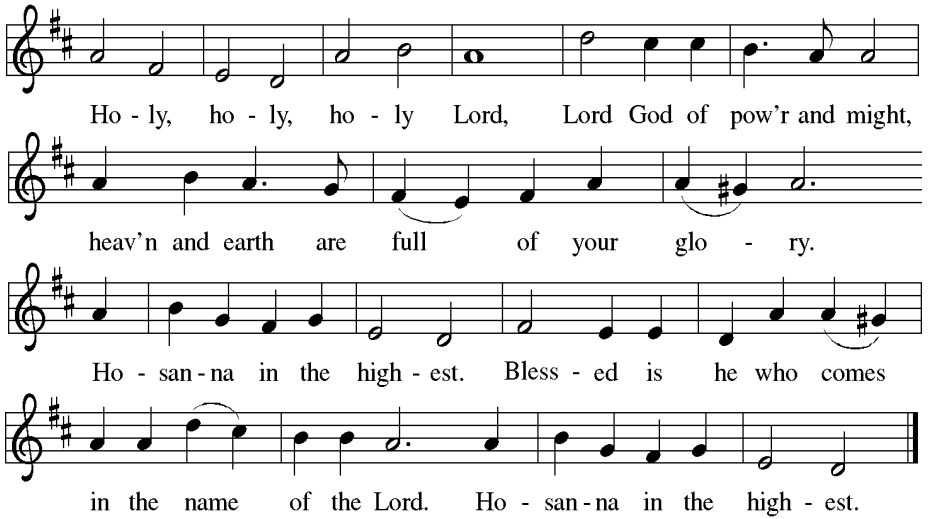
C: God of grace, your love reaches to the heavens,
 and your abundance to the depths of the seas.
 Bless what we offer to your service:
 our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts.
 Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity,
 now and always.
 Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING


The Lord be with you. And al - so 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

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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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, 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,
 that all those who believe in him should not perish,
 but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you

for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,

that we may receive our Lord with a living faith
 as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: 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.

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: The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Come, eat this meal of gladness.

C: Thanks be to God.

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.

Sit

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:

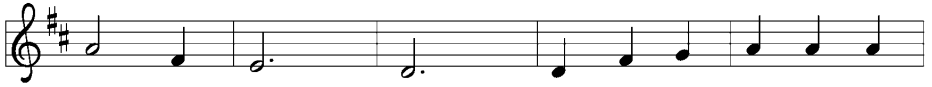
The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen

COMMUNION HYMN *I Want to Walk as a Child of Light*



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to
 2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to
 3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to



fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,
 be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with



light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain



In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the



cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934
 Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson
 Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration

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.

Nourishing God,
at this table you have refreshed us
with holy gifts of food and drink.
Strengthen us for service,
and send us out to embody your good news
of liberation and healing for the sake of the world.
In the name of Christ, we pray,

C: Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P: The Spirit of the triune God
✠ bless you with joy,
anoint you with compassion,
and send you in love.

C: Amen

The congregation turns to face the processional cross.

SENDING HYMN *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless-ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's joy - ful sound.
3 Sav - ior, when your love shall call us from our strug - gling pil - grim way,



let us each, your love pos - sess - ing, tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace.
 May the fruits of your sal - va - tion in our hearts and lives a - bound.
 let no fear of death ap - pall us, glad your sum - mons to o - bey.



Oh, re - fresh us; oh, re - fresh us, trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
 Ev - er faith - ful, ev - er faith - ful to your truth may we be found.
 May we ev - er, may we ev - er reign with you in end - less day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt.
 Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Live in hope.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Carl Gee, Jody Fullmer, Jimmy Gardner, Rita & Dave Strickler
Lay Assistant: Susan Bryan; **Communion Assistant:** Fred Harbaugh
Acolyte/Crucifer: Weston Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Vicki Bair, Doris Butt
Greeters/Communion Presenters: Oakley Haefner, Regina Haefner
Cantor: Janet Stroble; **Flower Delivery:** Cindy Bennett

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in honor of Shirley and Donald Fullmer's Wedding Anniversary, on February 7th, by their family.

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.*

Join us for Bible Study and Fellowship on Wednesdays at 6:30. *All are Welcome!*

It is time that we cover more flower cans. I have the wallpaper cut; all I need are several volunteers. If you are interested, please contact the church office with days of the week and times that you would be available. Then we can set one or two days that fit the greatest number of individual's schedules. Thank you, Chuck Luppert

Help Wanted: Snow Removal ~ Help is needed to clear the walks around the church property after it snows. Position requires dependability and the flexibility to be available within a reasonable period of time following a snow/ice event. This is a paid position - **\$20/hour**. If you or someone you know is able to help, please contact the church office.

February 9 - Souper Bowl of Caring

This marks the 35th Year of the Souper Bowl of Caring - As has been our tradition, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items to stock our food pantry for the rest of the winter. Until Sunday, February 9, you may place your donations in the bin marked with the team you are rooting for in the Super Bowl. Whose team will win? This is a fun way to help us win the fight against hunger in our community. *Look at the insert from the Messenger for the listing of the food items we collect*, or visit our web site to download the list:

<https://messiahsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Food-Pantry-List-of-Needed-Items-1.pdf>

Friendship Sunday, February 16, 2025 Invite your friends and family to join us for Worship on this Sunday and immediately following the service we will go down to Shaheen Hall for a Soup and Sandwich luncheon along with some great conversation and getting to know our neighbors. This is hosted by the Fellowship Committee. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex so we know how many to set up for.

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

A Falling and a Rising

Simeon was “righteous and devout” (Luke 2:25). Anna “never left the temple” (v. 37). Perhaps you can imagine her singing today’s psalm: “How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!” (Psalm 84:1). Even so, Luke hints at a sadness in these elder saints, a widow and a man “looking forward to the consolation of Israel” (v. 25). The joy both prophets show upon seeing Jesus reveals the deep longing they have been carrying in their hearts.

Perhaps we understand them. We rejoice as we gather in the Lord’s house. But even so, we long for Christ’s beauty to shine more brightly. We might bear grief over a dream long hoped-for but unfulfilled. We might yearn to see the world’s injustice, greed, and rage give way to compassion, generosity, and restoration. We might wonder why so many people reject the faith that has deeply nourished us, and long for the consolation of Christ’s salvation for ourselves, our neighbors, our communities, and the world.

Amid hope, longing, and promise, Simeon offers a warning: This child will not just lift up but will also cause to fall. He will be opposed. His mother will grieve with a sword-pierced soul. Simeon sees that Christ’s divine illumination will reveal sin. In that light, we must consider how we in our own lives have been signs opposing Christ. Have we let nostalgia cloud our perceptions of the past and present? Do we resent those who do not share our faith instead of extending a graceful witness for Jesus? Have we let our political leanings dictate how we understand the Savior’s reign of grace and truth? If we are honest, we all have parts of us that need to “fall.”

And yet, we may take heart. Yes, Jesus reveals the whole truth about us—but to bring salvation, not condemnation. He reveals our inner thoughts so they can be healed. He brings us low in humility to be raised up again by mercy. By Christ’s grace, the Holy Spirit rests on us and, in the life-giving word and soul-sustaining supper, withholds “no good thing” (Psalm 84:11) from us.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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