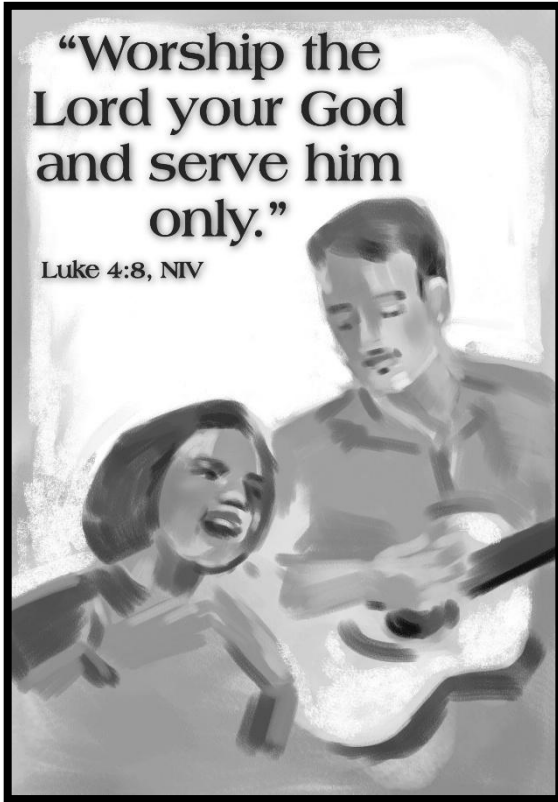


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✝ Holy Communion ✝

First Sunday in Lent

March 9, 2025



**FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

*These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.*

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**C:** Amen

**P:** Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

*Kneel*

**P:** Compassionate One,

**C:** you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,  
but our lives do not always reflect you  
and your love for the world.

**We do not show others the tender compassion  
you have shown to us.**

**We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality  
you grant to all people.**

**We oppress others,  
even though you have set us free again and again.**

**We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.**

**Transform our lives  
and guide us again in the way of the cross.**

**Amen**

**P:** Beloved in Christ,  
God's arms are always stretched open wide  
to welcome the wandering ones home.

In † Christ your sins are forgiven.

You have a place in God's house forever.

**C:** Amen

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN***Bless Now, O God, the Journey*

1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,  
 2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;  
 3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.

the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.  
 your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.  
 We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,

The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,  
 We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;  
 but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.

then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.  
 to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.  
 Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

**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 Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through 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: Deuteronomy 26:1-11**

*The annual harvest festival, called the Feast of Weeks, provides the setting for this reading. This festival celebrates the first fruits of the produce of the land offered back to God in thanks. In this text, worshippers announce God's gracious acts on behalf of Israel.*

**A:** A Reading from Deuteronomy:

<sup>1</sup> When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, <sup>2</sup> you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. <sup>3</sup> You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." <sup>4</sup> When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, <sup>5</sup> you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. <sup>6</sup> When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, <sup>7</sup> we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup> The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup> and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup> So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. <sup>11</sup> Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16**

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

God will give the an - gels  
charge o - ver you, to guard you in all your ways.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*

<sup>1</sup> You who dwell in the shelter of | the Most High,  
 who abide in the shadow of | the Almighty—  
<sup>2</sup> **you will say to the LORD, “My refuge | and my stronghold,  
 my God in whom I | put my trust.” R**

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the | LORD your refuge,  
 and the Most High your | habitation,  
<sup>10</sup> **no evil | will befall you,  
 nor shall affliction come | near your dwelling.**

<sup>11</sup> For God will give the angels charge | over you,  
 to guard you in | all your ways.

<sup>12</sup> **Upon their hands they will | bear you up,  
 lest you strike your foot a- | gainst a stone. R**

<sup>13</sup> You will tread upon the lion | cub and viper;  
 you will trample down the lion | and the serpent.

<sup>14</sup> **I will deliver those who | cling to me;  
 I will uphold them, because they | know my name.**

<sup>15</sup> They will call me, and I will | answer them;  
 I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and | honor them.

<sup>16</sup> **With long life will I | satisfy them,  
 and show them | my salvation. R**

**SECOND READING: Romans 10:8b-13**

*Paul reminds the Christians at Rome of the foundation of their creed, the confession of faith in the risen Christ as Lord.*

**A:** A Reading from Romans:

<sup>8b</sup> “The word is near you,  
on your lips and in your heart”

that is, the word of faith that we proclaim; <sup>9</sup> because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup> The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**A** 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: Luke 4:1-13**

*After being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is led in the wilderness. Through his responses to the temptations of the devil, he defines what it means to be called “the Son of God.”*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to St Luke, the fourth chapter.

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

<sup>1</sup> Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, “It

is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.'"

<sup>9</sup> Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,  
to protect you,'

<sup>11</sup> and

'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

<sup>12</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

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

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

*Sit*

**SERMON**..... Pastor Amme

*Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*O Lord, throughout These Forty Days* .....LBW 99



**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:** Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world,  
and all those in need.

*After each petition:*

**P:** God, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your  
love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**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**

***Softly and Tenderly Calling*.....Patti Drennen**

*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:** Gracious Provider,  
 you set your immense treasures among us,  
 opening your heart to the world.  
 As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,  
 deepen our commitment to sharing those  
 treasures with others,  
 through our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
 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**: All who are hungry, come!  
 The feast of grace is spread.

**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.

**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**

***Let Us Break Bread Together* .....LBW 212**

*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.

Generous Host,  
you have shared your feast with us and made us new.  
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,  
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,  
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C:** Amen

***SENDING***

**BLESSING**

**P:** God our tender parent,  
God the crucified one,  
God the reconciling Spirit,  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**C:** Amen

**SENDING HYMN**

***Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word* .....LBW 230**

**DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

## SERVICE ASSISTANTS

**Ushers:** Fred Harbaugh, Susan Christ, AnnMarie Hohman, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker; **Lay Assistant:** Georgette Copp; **Comm. Assistant:** David Bausinger; **Acolyte:** Weston Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Rita Strickler, Carol Winter **Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Al Cole and Judy Berfield  
**Cantor:** Bob Schweppenheiser; **Flower Delivery:** Susan Bryan

## IN BLESSED MEMORY

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of loved ones by Jane Hassler

## 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.*

**March 29<sup>th</sup> from 9 – Noon** will be Our annual Lenten Kids in Mission. We are in need of volunteers to teach, assist and walk children from one activity to another. If you know someone you think may be interested, please let me know or contact them directly. It's always a fun morning not only for the kids but for the volunteers, as well! Thanks for your prayerful consideration.  
Kathryn

**Copies of the Lenten Devotional Booklet and Lenten Self-Denial Folders** are now available in the Narthex or the church office. The Self Denial folders contributions will benefit the Shepherd of the Streets.

**NOW IS THE TIME to put in your reservation for memorial Easter Flowers.** Several varieties of flowers are available. More information can be found on the order form. **PLEASE RETURN THE ORDER FORM BY MONDAY, MARCH 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.** during Lent there will be Lenten Vespers held in the Chapel followed by a brief Bible Study.

**Rev your engines ... sewing machine engines, that is!** This week we will kick off our “**School Kits for Lutheran World Relief**” project. It’s time to get sewing so that the backpacks are ready in time for the older class of kids to add the cords during Bible School week. We’ve been shopping and came home with a LOT of fabric in beautiful fun colors and patterns. Fabric pieces cut to size - along with instructions on how to sew the backpacks – will be available in the narthex this coming Sunday or at the church office beginning Monday, March 10.

***We are also hoping to have another Sew-a-thon this year for those who enjoy working in a group. There will be plenty of non-sewing jobs to do, too! Watch for more information coming soon. In the meantime, please call Sally Congdon at 570-547-6193 or Kathy Wither at 570-651-2802 if you’d like 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)

## **Journeying through the Wilderness**

The wilderness has captured the imaginations of artists, adventurers, and spiritual seekers for thousands of years. It can be a place of profound self-discovery, exploration, beauty, and solitude. It is a place of few distractions: no commerce, no schedule, no business as usual. The wilderness can be a freeing place that opens us up to experience life in new and profound ways.

However, the wilderness is also disorienting and lonely. The landscape can be brutal and unforgiving. Wilderness wanderers can easily find themselves lost, exhausted, and dirty. The unbearable heat of the day, the uncomfortable cold of the nights, and the lack of food, water, or shade can bring people to their breaking point. The wilderness has been a place of exile and punishment, and a place where people's strength, determination, and faith are put to the test.

The complexities of the wilderness set the stage for today's gospel story, in which we get a glimpse of who Jesus is and who he is called to be. In the wilderness, we see the depth of Jesus' faith. Jesus is not swayed by the allure of power, control, authority, or physical comfort. He does not buy into the tempter's lies. Even in the disorientation and isolation of the wilderness, Jesus trusts in the Spirit, who has led him to this place and who gives him the strength to live into his call throughout his journey.

We are at the beginning of our own journey, a Lenten season of metaphorical wilderness wandering. The good news is that we do not go alone. The Spirit goes before us, behind us, beside us, and within us. Along this journey, the many voices of the tempter may try to lure us in with power, control, authority, or comfort. And yet, our trust and our identities lie with the One who already defeated the tempter. We already have all we need. In Christ, we are already loved, forgiven, and made whole, no matter where our journeys take us.

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