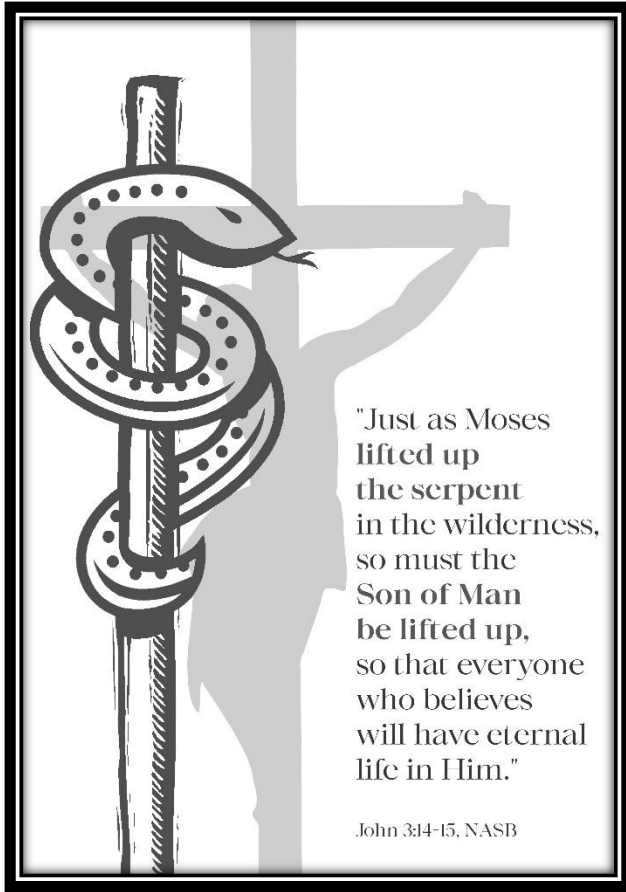


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Holy Cross Day

September 14, 2025

**HOLY CROSS DAY**



*This festival, which originated in the fourth century, celebrates the triumph of the cross. Paul reminds us that Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and salvation. Each time we make the sign of the cross we remember our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.*

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
our maker, our helper, and our keeper.

**C:** **Amen**

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

*Kneel*

**P:** Merciful and loving God,

**C:** **we are your stiff-necked people.**

**We trample on the needy.**

**We grumble about your grace to others.**

**We turn away from the poor.**

**Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.**

**Rejoice over us as ones who were lost  
and have been found.**

**Amen**

**P:** Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.  
Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.  
You who were lost have been found.

In the name of ✠ Jesus, your sins are forgiven!

**C:** **Amen**

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN** *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tow'r - ing  
 2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -  
 3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and  
 4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the

o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of  
 ceive, and fears an - noy, nev - er shall the  
 love up - on my way, from the cross the  
 cross are sanc - ti - fied; peace is there that

sa - cred sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.  
 cross for - sake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.  
 ra - diance stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.  
 knows no mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792–1872

Music: RATHBUN, Ithamar Conkey, 1815–1867

**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.

**HYMN OF PRAISE***Refrain*

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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

*Refrain*

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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich-es, wis - dom, and



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

*Refrain*

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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or.



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

*Refrain*

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

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was  
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.  
*Final refrain*  
 This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**[P]:** Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, 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: Numbers 21:4b-9**

*When the people spoke against God and Moses, the Lord sent poisonous snakes against them. Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord ordered him to erect a serpent of bronze on a pole. All who looked at it after having been bitten by a serpent would live.*

**[A]:** A Reading from Numbers:

From Mount Hor the Israelites set out, <sup>4b</sup> but the people became discouraged on the way. <sup>5</sup> The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup> The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Moses,

"Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

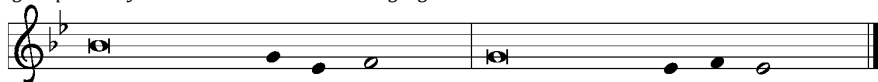
### **PSALM: Psalm 98:1-4**

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



The LORD has done mar - vel - ous things.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



<sup>1</sup> Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done | marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.

<sup>2</sup> **O LORD, you have made | known your victory,  
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the  
nations. R**

<sup>3</sup> You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of  
Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.

<sup>4</sup> **Shout with joy to the LORD, | all you lands;  
lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing. R**

### **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24**

*At the heart of the Christian message is the word of the cross. This proclamation seems foolish to many because it reveals true divine power in the absolute weakness of Christ's crucifixion. True wisdom understands how ours is a God who suffers for and with humankind in the cross.*

**A:** A Reading from First Corinthians:

<sup>18</sup> The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written,  
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we

proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



**Cantor:** May I never boast of | anything\* except the cross of our Lord | Jesus Christ.

**C:** Repeat the Alleluias

**GOSPEL: John 3:13-17**

*After explaining to Nicodemus that one must be born of water and Spirit, Jesus speaks of being lifted up on the cross, with reference to the bronze serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert. Here the Son of God is revealed as the source of healing.*

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

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

Jesus said: <sup>13</sup> “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

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

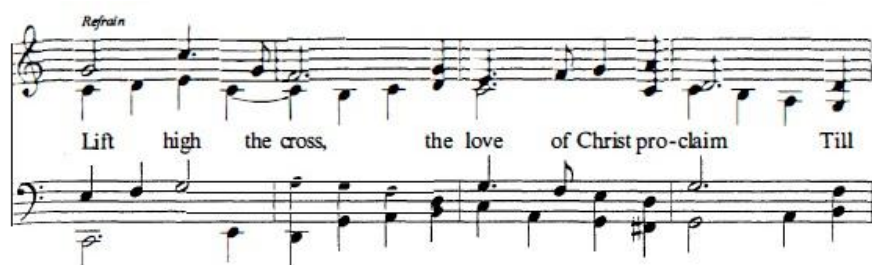
*Sit*

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

*Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Lift High the Cross*

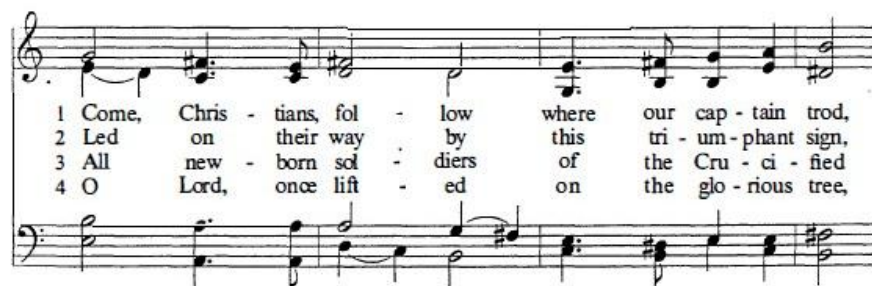
*Refrain*



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro-claim Till

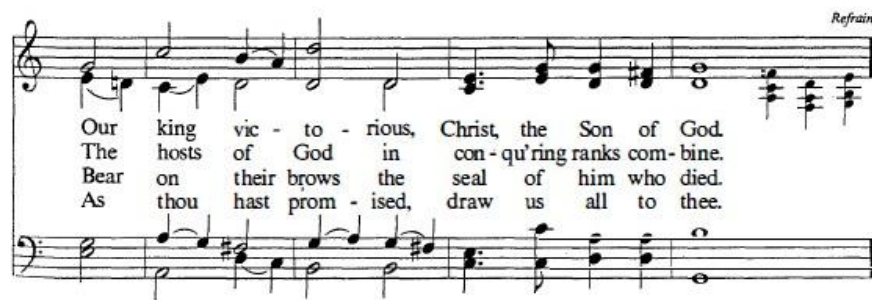


all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,  
2 Led on their way by this tri - um - phant sign,  
3 All new - born sol - diers of the Cru - ci - fied  
4 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,

*Refrain*



Our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.  
The hosts of God in con - qu'ring ranks com - bine.  
Bear on their brows the seal of him who died.  
As thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.

- 5 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
Praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

**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;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,  
and was made man.**

**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.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He 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:** Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

*After each petition:*

**P:** God of Grace,

**C:** receive our prayer.

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.

**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**

***Great is Thy Faithfulness.....Jack Schrader***

*Stand*

**OFFERTORY**

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



**C** 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 the dreams of all; u - nite them with the



### **OFFERING PRAYER**

**A:** Let us pray.

**C:** Lord of the harvest,

we return to you a portion of what you have given to us.

Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches,

but on you, who richly provides for us.

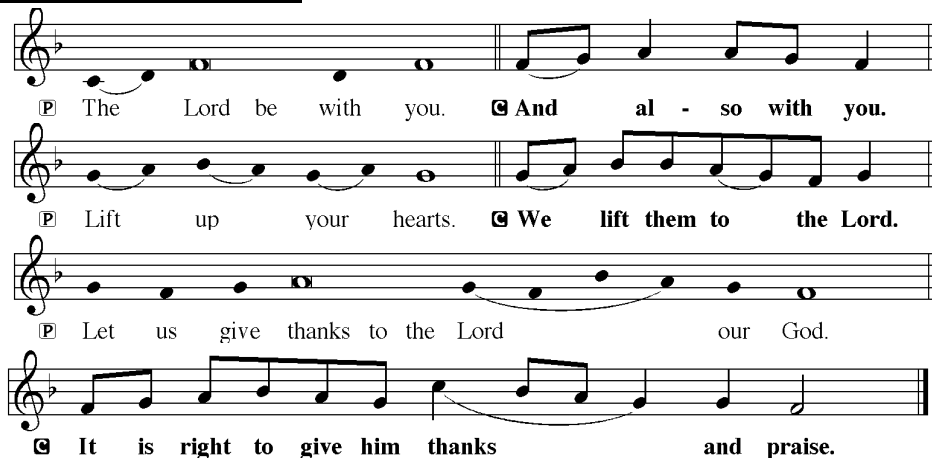
Multiply what we have gathered

to bless all who are suffering and in need,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**



### **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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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'r and might:  
Heav- en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.  
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]:** 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]:** Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.  
 Come to this meal of mercy.

**[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.

*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*****Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross***

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains the first two verses of the hymn. The second system contains the third verse and the refrain. The music is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The piano accompaniment is in the right hand, and the vocal parts are in the left hand. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staves.

1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;  
 2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;  
 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;  
 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,

free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.  
 there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.  
 help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.  
 till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.

*Refrain*

In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;

till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

*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.

O God,  
through this meal you have strengthened us  
and appointed us to be your servants.  
Send us to do good and to share our possessions  
with all in need.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.

**C:** Amen


**SENDING**

**BLESSING**

**P:** The God of righteousness,  
who gives justice to the oppressed,  
who gives food to the hungry,  
who sets the prisoners free,  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**C:** Amen





The image shows the musical score for the hymn 'When I Survey the Wondrous cross'. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano line (bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the  
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the  
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and  
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a

prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I  
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that  
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and  
pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.  
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.  
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?  
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748  
Music: HAMBURG, Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

**DISMISSAL**

- : Go in peace. Do not lose heart.
- : Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

### **SERVICE ASSISTANTS**

**Ushers:** Mike Larson, Brian Bair. Al Cole, Sally Congdon, Kim Brofee  
**Lay Assistant:** Anita Bair; **Communion Assistant:** Fred Harbaugh  
**Acolyte:** An Usher; **Altar Guild:** Sue Shoemaker, Yvonne Kaiser  
**Greeters/Presenters:** Yvonne Kaiser, Rhonda Koch  
**Cantor:** Bob Scweppenheiser; **Flower Delivery:** Paul Weaver

### **IN BLESSED MEMORY**

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of James D. Wither III (Jamie) by his daughter and son-in-law, Vanessa and Brett Holfelder and grandchildren, Ali Rudinski and Gordie Emick III.

**The Bud Vase** is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of James D. Wither III (Jamie) on the anniversary of his birth into heaven, September 20, 2014, by his wife, Kathy; son Sean Wither; and grandson Jackson Summers.

### **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.

**Save the Date! Saturday, September 27, 5:00 p.m. – Pack-A-Sack Event**

This is when we finally see all the work we have done come to fruition. Members of the congregation, those who attended Bible School, and friends are invited to join us for a pizza supper and to pack the bags assembly-line style. All ages may take part, but we ask that anyone under grade 3 be accompanied/supervised by an adult. Watch for a sign-up sheet in the narthex soon. *We are really going to need all hands on deck this year - plan now to join the fun!*

**MLP Gift Card Bingo** is Saturday, October 25 at 11:30 am. Presale tickets are \$20 and at the door \$25. Tickets will be available, before and after each service in the Narthex on these dates: Tickets are now available this **Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>** before and after worship *or anytime in the church office.*

**Bible Study and fellowship** will begin on Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. *All are welcome!*

**Volunteers are needed.** All of our committees are in need of members. The primary goal of a committee is to support the mission and goals of the church through their specific area of work. Committee members attend meetings usually once a month or every other month, they contribute to discussions and decisions, and collaborate to carry out tasks related to the committee's focus area. Please consider joining one or more. For more info, reach out to one of the chairpersons or the church office. Thank you!

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

(570) 326-9171 | [www.messiahsouth.org](http://www.messiahsouth.org)

### **Saving Presence**

An internet meme circulating a few years ago chided its audience, “If God didn’t send Jesus into the world to condemn it, I doubt God sent you to.” It’s hard to refrain from judgment, especially when so many social pressures tempt us to judge ourselves as right and everyone else as wrong. John’s gospel puts such competitions to rest: God loves everyone and everything—the whole world, all of creation, every person and part of the entire cosmos, all that is.

At first take, we might be baffled that we lift up the cross as the place where God’s expansive love is so significantly shown for us. But through Christ’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection, God works to unravel all the violence that leads to things like crucifixion in the first place. In the cross, God’s presence is with us: God has taken on all of our human suffering so we can know that Christ’s loving presence is with us when we are hurting too. God accompanies us through hardships. God brings new life in the midst of death! This is the mysterious power of the cross.

Every time God gathers us for holy communion, we remember that night when Jesus faced these hardest moments. Before being lifted up on the cross, he broke bread and shared wine and promised to remain with us always. Jesus continues to be with us in the holy meal even all these centuries later: in bread and wine, for us, lifted high. Indeed, this is the presence we need. It is the presence that sustains us at work, at school, at play. It is the presence that makes grace real. It is the presence that saves us from sin and death, always.

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

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