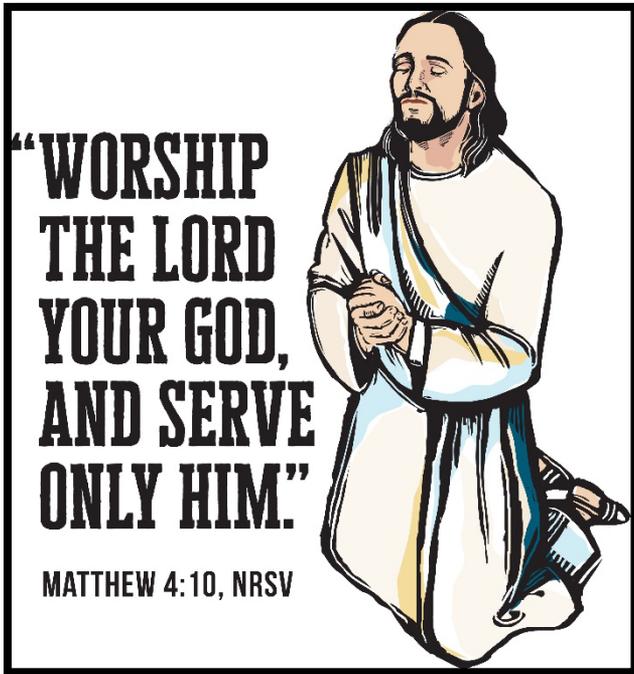


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

**FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**



*Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.*

**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 confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*Kneel*

**P** Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P:** For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:  
Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P** For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:  
Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P:** For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P:** For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdain  
the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P** For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of  
your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P** For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding  
Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

**P:** God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.  
 Through faith, the free gift of God,  
 you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.  
 In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.  
 The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead  
 dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts,  
 and gives you life and peace.

**C** Amen

Stand

**GATHERING HYMN**

*O Lord, throughout These Forty Day*



1 O Lord, through-out these for - ty days you prayed and kept the fast;  
 2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your faith - ful - ness en - dured;  
 3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and fixed your mind a - bove;  
 4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and all our earth - ly days,



in - spire re - pen - tance for our sin, and free us from our past.  
 lend us your nerve, your skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.  
 so teach us to de - ny our - selves that we may know God's love.  
 that when the fi - nal Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.



Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838–1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan, b. 1930  
 Music: CAITHNESS, *Psalter*, Edinburgh, 1635

**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**



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



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



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

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Ⓐ Let us pray.

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Ⓒ Amen

*Sit*

**WORD**

**FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7**

*Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.*

Ⓐ: A Reading from Genesis:

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

<sup>3:1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman,

"You will not die, <sup>5</sup> for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 32**

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



Mer-cy em - brac - es those who trust in the LORD.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



- <sup>1</sup> Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,  
and whose sin is | put away!
- <sup>2</sup> **Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!**
- <sup>3</sup> While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,  
because of my groaning | all day long.
- <sup>4</sup> **For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer. R**
- <sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave  
me the guilt | of my sin.
- <sup>6</sup> **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of  
trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.**
- <sup>7</sup> You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
- <sup>8</sup> **I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;  
I will guide you | with my eye. R**

<sup>9</sup> Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>10</sup> **Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup> Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are true of heart. **R**

### **SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19**

*Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.*

**A:** A Reading from Romans:

<sup>12</sup> Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned <sup>13</sup> for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. <sup>17</sup> If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

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

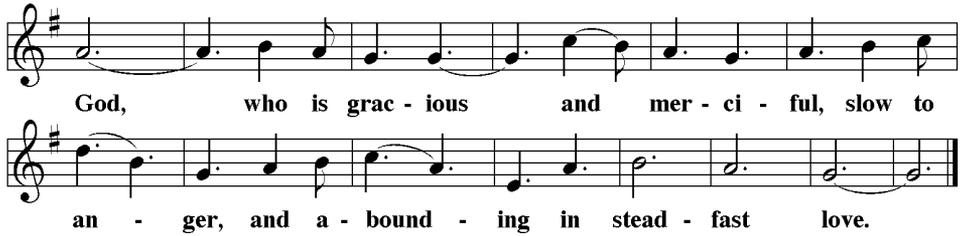
**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



**C** Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your



**GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11**

*Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.*

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup> But he answered,

“It is written,  
 ‘One does not live by bread alone,  
 but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’  
 and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
 so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,  
 and serve only him.’ ”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

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

*Sit*

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

Stand

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**Oh, Love, How Deep** ..... **LBW 88**



1 Oh, love, how deep, how broad, how high,  
 2 He sent no an - gel to our race,  
 3 For us bap - tized, for us he bore  
 4 For us he prayed; for us he taught;



be - yond all thought and fan - ta - sy,  
 of high - er or of low - er place,  
 his ho - ly fast and hun - gered sore;  
 for us his dai - ly works he wrought,



that God, the Son of God, should take  
 but wore the robe of hu - man frame,  
 for us temp - ta - tion sharp he knew;  
 by words and signs and ac - tions thus



our mor - tal form for mor - tals' sake!  
 and to this world him - self he came.  
 for us the tempt - er o - ver - threw.  
 still seek - ing not him - self, but us.

5 For us by wickedness betrayed,  
 for us, in crown of thorns arrayed,  
 he bore the shameful cross and death;  
 for us he gave his dying breath.

6 For us he rose from death again;  
 for us he went on high to reign;  
 for us he sent his Spirit here  
 to guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

7 All glory to our Lord and God  
 for love so deep, so high, so broad;  
 the Trinity whom we adore  
 forever and forevermore.

Text: attr. Thomas á Kempis, 1380–1471; tr. Benjamin Webb, 1820–1885, alt.  
 Music: DEO GRACIAS, English, 15th cent.

**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:** Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray  
for the world and its needs.

*After each petition:*

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

**C: Your mercy is great.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and  
salvation.

**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**

***Lest We Forget* .....** Mary Kay Beale/Charles Yannerella

*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:** O God, maker of heaven and earth,  
 your steadfast love embraces all creation.  
 You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth  
 and bring forth its bounty.  
 Through these gifts of bread and wine,  
 draw us into the death and life of your Son,  
 who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.  
 We ask this in Jesus' 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:** Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

**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** *Lord Jesus, Think on Me*

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;  
 2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;  
 3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;  
 4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,  
 from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.  
 let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.  
 through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.  
 I may the\_e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375–430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808–1896, alt.  
 Music: SOUTHWELL, W. Daman, *The Psalms of David*, 1579, alt.

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.

God of our salvation,  
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,  
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.  
Through the body and blood of your Son,  
may we become Christ’s body in the world,  
bearing witness to your love for all creation,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C**: Amen

***SENDING***

**BLESSING**

**P**: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:

God, who calls all things into existence,  
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,  
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,  
✠ bless you now and always.

**C**: Amen

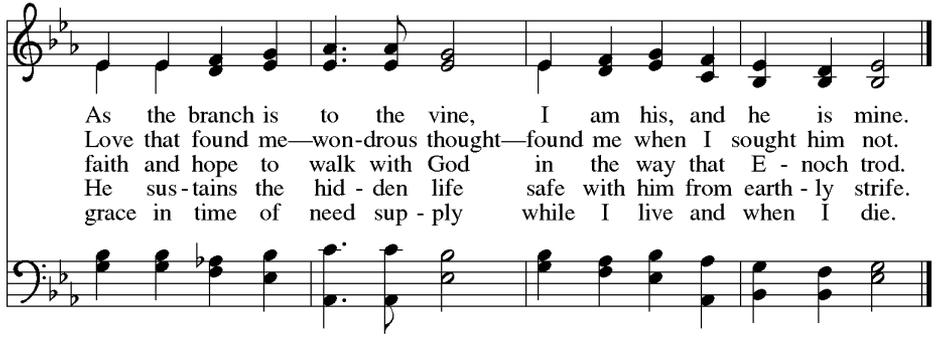
**SENDING HYMN**

*Chief of Sinners though I Be* .....LBW 306

1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed his blood for me,  
 2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love! High - er than the heav'ns a - bove,  
 3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part balm to heal the wound - ed heart,  
 4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;  
 5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford by your Spir - it and your word!



died that I might live on high, lives that I might nev - er die.  
 deep - er than the depths of sea, last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty.  
 peace that flows from sin for - giv'n, joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,  
 all my wants to him are known, all my sor - rows are his own.  
 When my way - ward heart would stray, keep me in the nar - row way;



As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.  
 Love that found me—won-drous thought—found me when I sought him not.  
 faith and hope to walk with God in the way that E - noch trod.  
 He sus-tains the hid - den life safe with him from earth - ly strife.  
 grace in time of need sup - ply while I live and when I die.

**DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

### SERVICE ASSISTANTS

**Ushers:** Carl Gee, Rhonda Koch, Jimmy Gardner, Dave and Rita Strickler, Paul Ulrich; **Lay Assistant:** Carol Waltz; **Comm. Assistant:** Fred Harbaugh  
**Acolyte:** Weston Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Jody Fullmer, Jeannie Bower  
**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Fred and Meg Harbaugh  
**Cantor:** Virginia Amme; **Flower Delivery:** Susan Bryan

### IN BLESSED MEMORY

**The Altar Flowers are given** to the Glory of God and in honor of Martha Kropp's 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 22, by her son Craig Kropp.

**The Basket of Flowers is given** to the Glory of God and in loving memory of O'B, by his wife Gail, children and their families.

### 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 and 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.

**The Kids Lent Event will be held Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>** from 9 - noon. Registration forms can be found online or in the alleyway entrance. We are still in need of volunteers so if you are able and willing to help please contact me as soon as you can. Thank you in advance for your continued support of these wonderful outreach programs for the children in our communities.

Are you handy with a screwdriver? If so, we could use some help putting together a couple of table games for in the Harry Seltzer Room. Please contact me or the office.  
*Kathryn Pratt*

**Lent Began on Ash Wednesday.** Please join us on the following Wednesday nights for our Lenten Vespers at 6:30 pm. We look forward to seeing you!

**Copies of *Behold Your King!* a Lenten Devotional Booklet** are now available in the Narthex, brought to you in partnership with the Lutheran Hour Ministries. In ***Behold Your King!*** Jesus comes to us in flesh and blood as a Man, as God's own Son, and as the lowly Servant-King bearing the sins of the world. Though He was forlorn and forsaken, He did not abandon His mission or shirk His obedience to the Father. He followed through- and in so doing He won for each of us the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in His presence.

**Lenten Self-Denial Calendars & Banks** that benefit Habitat for Humanity are also in the Narthex. Current copies of the devotional booklets *The Upper Room* and *Christ in Our Home* are available in the Narthex and in the church office.

**Are you a soup maker?** Please consider donating to our soup sale on Saturday, February 28. Sign-up on Sunday after worship, and specify what kind of soup you will make and the number of quarts you are donating. Quart containers will be available in the church office for your convenience. If you have a place to help advertise the soup sale, take a flyer and share that information.

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

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### Forty Days of Humility

The devil gives Jesus three opportunities to assert himself as powerful and exceptional: to turn rocks into bread, to be saved by the angels, and to rule over all the earth. Three times Jesus rebuffs the devil, turning his attention to God and refusing to take the bait.

Anthony the Great, a desert father whose life mirrored the experience of Jesus in this text, once said, “I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, ‘What can get through from such snares?’ Then I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Humility’” (Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Cistercian, 1975). This is exactly how Jesus responds to the temptations offered by the devil: turning his attention back to God in humility, refusing the temptation to prove himself through miracles and acts of power.

During Lent, we are invited to engage in practices like fasting, almsgiving, and prayer to discipline our minds and bodies so we can return our full attention to the abiding love of God in Jesus. There will be a temptation to engage these practices as ways of puffing ourselves up, performing, or proving our worth. But Jesus calls us back to a Lent rooted in humility, engaging practices not for the sake of proving ourselves, but for deepening our trust in God.

Where might we be experiencing that temptation to puff ourselves up, perform, or prove our greatness? What practices might support a posture of humility, reminding us that God is the author of all good things, and that we are loved and sustained by a God who humbly took on flesh for the sake of the world?

May these forty days teach us to embrace humility and to trust that God walks with us, making all things new.

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