



*Drawing by Jon Hlafter*

## The Lutheran Church of the Messiah

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Martin K. Erhardt, *Pastor*

Janice Hofreiter, *Organist*

Paul C. Hofreiter, *Choir Director*

John Mark Goerss, D. Min., *Pastor Emeritus*

Third Sunday in Lent (Oculi)

March 8, 2026

**Prayer upon entering:** Eternal Lord, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your Word and obey it, and use us as instruments of your redeeming love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

**Guests, welcome!** We are delighted you are with us for worship this morning. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Erhardt, sign our guest book next to the main doors. Bibles are available on a shelf in the back of the nave. Kneelers and large-print bulletins are available from the ushers upon request. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to join us here at Messiah.

**Cover art:** Gustave Dore (1832–1883) - Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a draft from the well

**Worship** begins with the prelude and continues through the postlude. Once the prelude begins, please refrain from conversation. We use two hymnals: the green *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) and the blue paperback *With One Voice* (wov). Hymn numbers below 600 are generally in LBW; above 600, in wov. The pastor's parts (spoken and sung) are designated "P:." Parts spoken or sung by the congregation are italicized, prefaced by "C:." The liturgy text and music are in the LBW on the pages noted in this service folder.

**Holy Communion:** Lutheran Christians celebrate a divine service of Word and sacrament in which God comes to us both in his proclaimed Word and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We invite to commune at the Lord's table all baptized Christians who with contrite hearts trust God's word of forgiveness for their sins, acknowledge the presence of Jesus Christ both in the Communion elements and in this gathered body of believers, and seek, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to follow Jesus and walk in newness of life. If this doesn't describe you, we invite you to come to the altar rail to receive a blessing instead of the Communion elements. Indicate this by folding your arms across your chest at the rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

Individual cups are available in addition to the chalice (the common cup). Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are also available upon request from the server at the Communion rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

**Families with young children:** Welcome! We have children's activity backpacks in the back of the church for use during the service, as well as an unstaffed nursery on the stage downstairs. Feel free to ask an usher for help locating them. The stairs are at the back of the sanctuary.

*Confession and Forgiveness*

*Please stand as you are able.*

P: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C: *who made heaven and earth.*

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C: *and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

*Please kneel or sit for silent reflection and confession.*

P: Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: *Most merciful God, who has given Your only begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen*

P: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore we implore him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do on this day, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal glory. Resting in Christ's righteousness and not on your own confession, receive God's free and full forgiveness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

*Please stand as you are able.*

## *Divine Service of Word and Sacrament*

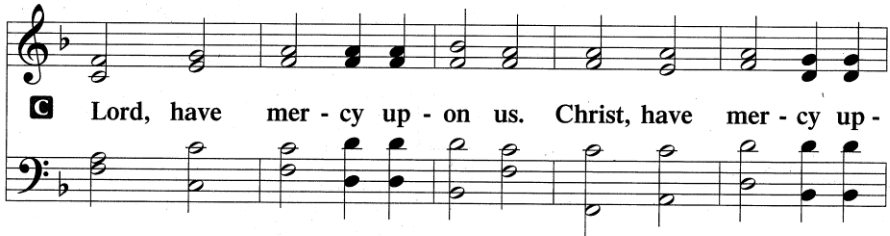
*Opening Hymn* Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow LBW 355

### *Apostolic Greeting*

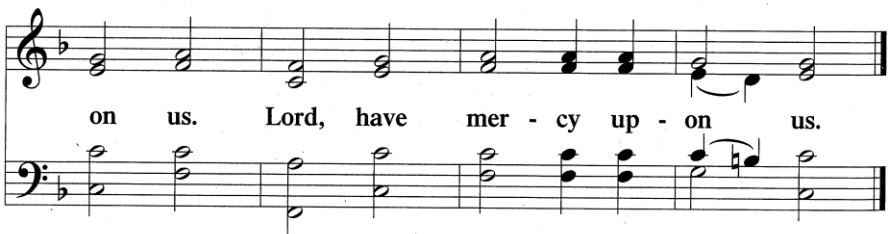
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: *And also with you.*

### *Kyrie*



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

P: The Lord be with you.      C: *And also with you.*

### *Prayer of the Day*

P: Let us pray.

C: *Heavenly Father, pour your love into our hearts, that, refreshed and renewed, we may invite others to the living water given to us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Please be seated for the scripture readings, printed on the last two pages of this bulletin.

### *First Lesson*

*Exodus 17:1-7*

Reader: The Word of the Lord.      C: *Thanks be to God.*

### *Venite (based on Psalm 95:1-7)*

*pp. 132-133*

### *Second Lesson*

*Romans 5:1-11*

Reader: The Word of the Lord.      C: *Thanks be to God.*

### *Choir Anthem*

Lord, for Thy Tender Mercy's Sake

Music attrib. Richard Farrant or John Hilton

Text from J. Bull, *Christian Prayer and Holy Meditations*

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake,  
Lay not our sins to our charge,  
But forgive that is past,  
And give us grace to amend our sinful lives:

To decline from sin and incline to virtue,  
That we may walk in a perfect heart  
Before thee now and evermore. Amen

Verse (stand)

Joel 2:13

P: The Holy Gospel according to John, the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel Lesson

John 4:5-42

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon (sit)

Sermon

Living Water

Hymn of the Day

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

LBW 497

*Creed (Apostles') Spoken in unison*

*C: 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*

*The Prayers of the People*

P: Led by Christ in our journey of repentance and moved by his compassion, let us pray for the body of Christ throughout the world and for those known to us in need of prayer.

After each prayer or petition,

P: Create in us a clean heart, O God,

C: *and renew a right spirit within us.*

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: *Amen*

## The Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: *And also with you.*

Please exchange a greeting of peace with your neighbors, then be seated.

## Gathering of Offerings

*As the offering is brought forward, please stand and sing vv. 10–12 of Psalm 51:*

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 Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -  
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The score begins with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of three flats. The music is a simple, hymn-like setting of the text.

P: Let us pray.

Blessed are you,

C: *O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

## The Great Thanksgiving

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And with thy spir - it.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** We lift them up un - to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.

**C** It is meet and right so to do.

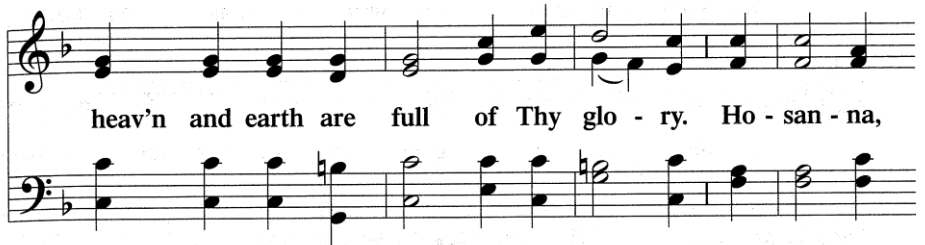
*Meet* means fitting, proper.

P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God: Who on the tree of the cross didst give salvation unto mankind that, whence death arose, thence Life also might rise again; and that he who by a tree once overcame might likewise by a tree be overcome, through Christ, our Lord; through whom with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying:

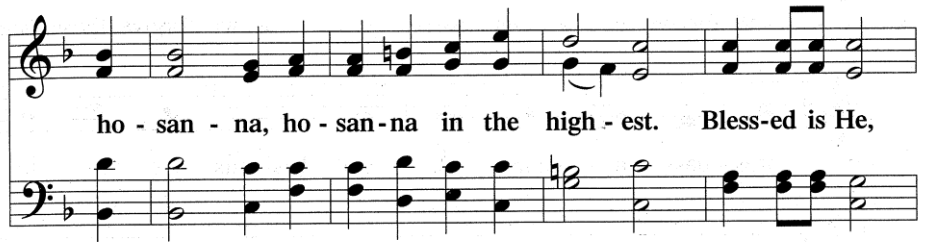
# Sanctus



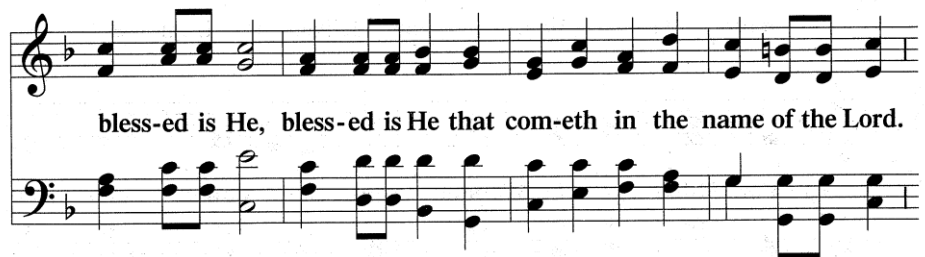
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



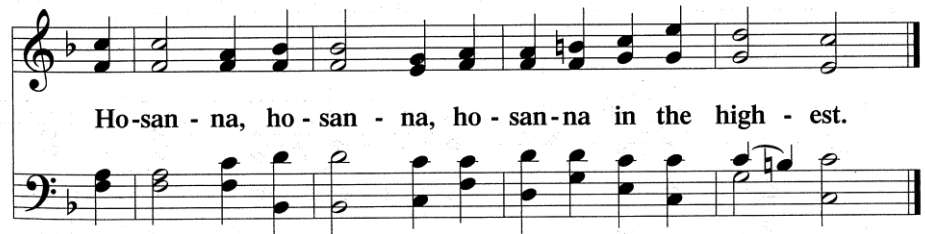
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,



bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Sabaoth* (SAH-bay-oath) is Hebrew for "heavenly hosts."  
*Hosanna* is a Hebrew word of praise meaning "save us now."

## *The Words of Institution*

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

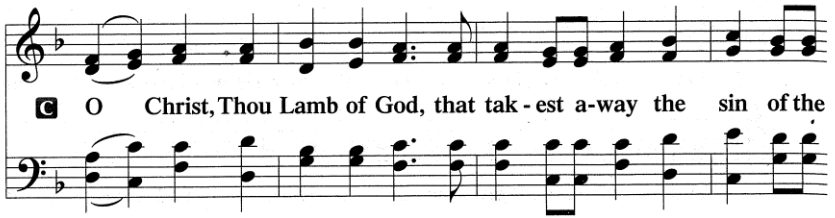
In the same way also he took the cup after supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

## *The Lord's Prayer*

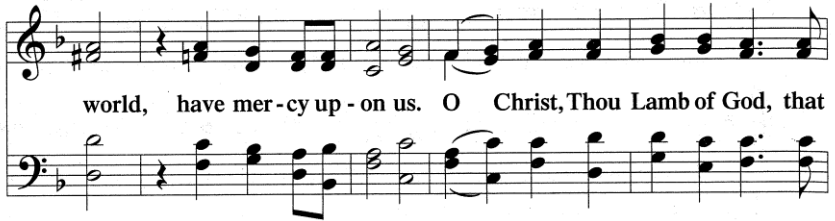
P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

*C: 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*

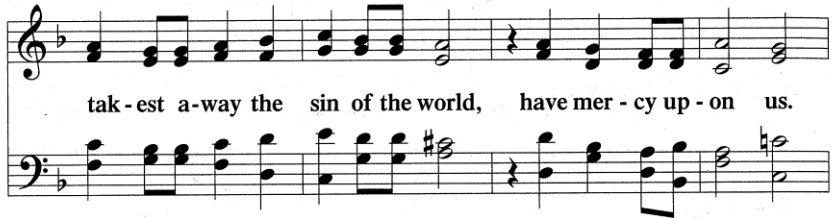
*Agnus Dei: Lamb of God*



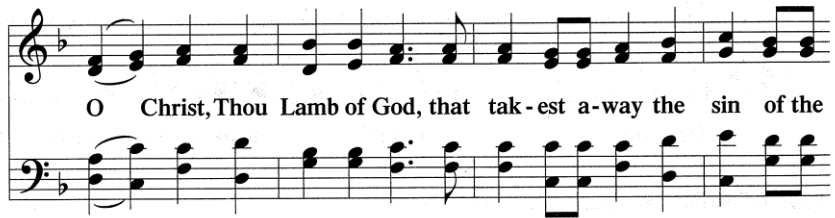
**C** O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that



tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up-on us.



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the



world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Once the pastor says, “Welcome to the table of the Lord,” kneel or sit. Because Communion is important, please read and follow our Communion policy, printed on p. 2 of this service folder. Feel free to bring your hymnal and continue to sing. If you are not communing, you are invited to come forward to receive a blessing, but feel no pressure to do so. If you do come forward for a blessing (only), indicate this by folding your arms across your chest when you kneel at the altar rail. When the pastor dismisses you, please return to your seat by the center aisle. If you would like Communion brought to your seat, please raise your hand to alert the pastor.

*Communion Hymn*

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

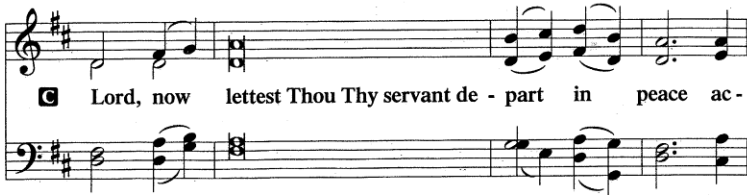
LBW 327

After all have returned to their places, the pastor says: (please stand)

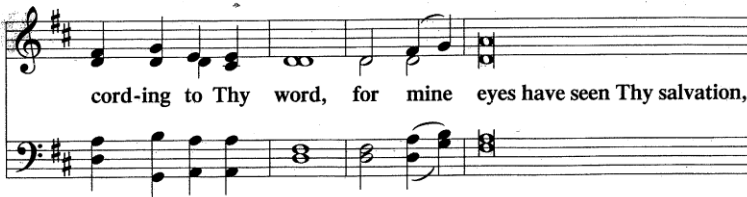
P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. C: Amen

Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32



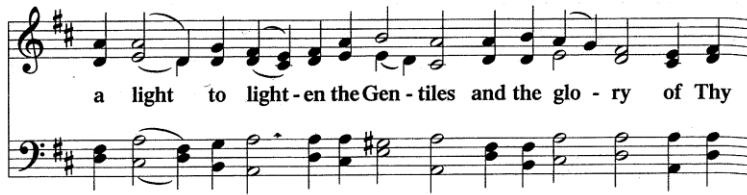
Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -



cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,



which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,



a light to light - en the Gen - tles and the glo - ry of Thy



peo - ple Is - ra - el.

## *Post-Communion Prayer*

P: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: *Amen*

## *Closing*

*Isaiah 40:28-31*

P: The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

C: *He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable.*

P: He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

C: *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and the young shall fall exhausted;*


P: But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;

C: *They shall mount up with wings like eagles;*


P: They shall run and not be weary;

C: *They shall walk and not faint.*

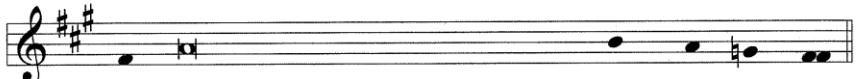
## Benediction



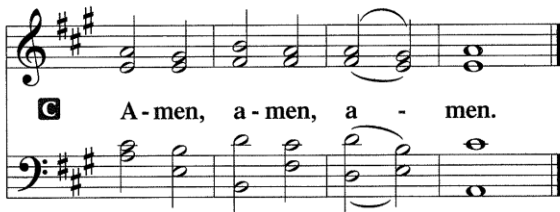
**P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and  $\text{†}$  give you peace.



**C** A - men, a - men, a - men.

## Postlude

Thy Strong Word

Thomas Williams  
arr. Aaron David Miller

## Announcements

P: Go in peace, for God walks with us through the wilderness.

All: *Thanks be to God!*

**Curious about the Latin on the dateline on the first page of the service folder?** Latin was the primary liturgical language of Western Christianity until quite recently, and is still used today. Lutherans and other Christians in the Western tradition often begin Sunday worship services with an "introit" (entrance) Bible verse, usually from a psalm. Sundays were named for the first word of the introit. Today's word is "Oculi", which begins Psalm 25:15 ("Oculi [mei]...") and means "[My] eyes..."

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Thank you to today's Temple Servants

Acolyte	Jon Hlafter
Reader	Miranda Hempel
Ushers	Doris Gerwers and Robert Coyner
Fellowship Host	Marion Zukas
Chancel	Ziyun Chen
Offering Counter	Robert Engel
Livestream	Mark von Bargaen

This coming week

Wed	6:00 PM	Soup & Salad Supper
Wed	7:00 PM	Lenten Evening Prayer
Wed	7:45 PM	Choir
Sun	9:00 AM	Adult Forum
Sun	10:30 AM	Service of Word and Sacrament

## Next Sunday

1 Samuel 16:1-13 • Psalm 23 • Ephesians 5:8-14 • John 9:1-41

Opening Hymn: Hail to the Lord's Anointed (LBW 87)

Hymn of the Day: Be Thou My Vision (WOV 776)

Communion Hymn: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (WOV 649)

Closing Hymn: Children of the Heavenly Father (LBW 474)

**Adult Forum** meets Sundays at 9:00am in the parish building library.

Current topic: *What Does This Mean? Understanding Important Words in the Bible*

## **Compassion Sunday : Next Sunday, March 15**

Next Sunday, March 15, the children of Messiah invite you to learn how you can help release a child from poverty in Jesus' name through Compassion International. We invite you to stay after the service in the fellowship hall to learn more. For more information, visit [compassion.com](http://compassion.com) or speak with Anna or Elly Jameson.

## **Lenten Wednesdays at Messiah, Feb. 25 – March 25 (not Feb. 18 or Apr. 1)**

6:00 PM Soup & Salad Supper

7:00 PM Lenten Evening Prayer (LBW p. 142)

7:45 PM Choir rehearsal (join us for the season or longer!)

**Thank you to those who have generously volunteered to host Lenten soup & salad suppers!** If you will need to enter the church building before 5 PM on a supper Wednesday and don't have a key, please contact Pastor.

### **Supper Hosts**

February 25: Louise Cooper and Miranda Hempel

March 4: Don Meyer and Mark von Barga

March 11: Debbie Baer

March 18: Patty Hlafter and Marion Zukas

March 25: Laura Bennett and Elizabeth Majsztrik

Bread (each Wednesday): Robert Engel

**Join Messiah for a Princeton Univ. men's volleyball game** vs the College of Charleston, Friday, March 27, at 7pm in Dillon Gym. No need to sign up – seating is free and tickets are not required.

### **Prayer Corner**

We remember in our prayers:

- Brian Blake (son of Celeste Lokos, awaiting diagnosis of a lesion on his lung), Sharon Wilchar (friend of Patricia Wolf who is very ill), the Fischer family, giving thanks to God for the birth of Russell Fisher Aultman (great-grandson of Esther Fischer), children in detention centers, Karin Bergesen (recovering from surgery), Joan Colliflower (released from rehab – now home recovering from knee surgery), Fred Dignon (Greg's father, recovering from surgery after a stroke and fall), Peter Hempel (brother of Miranda Hempel, recovering from surgery), Micha Livne (friend of the Gishlicks who is ill), Ted Alslev (son of Elda Alslev, to overcome his addiction to smoking), Mary Pickens (friend of Jon and Pat Hlafter, undergoing an experimental medical treatment), Sue Parisi (friend of Pat Hlafter, being treated for breast cancer), Peter Schulze (son of Lydia and Carl Schulze, friends of Miranda Hempel), Brad Bergmann, and Jenny Mills – for comfort, strength, and healing

Prayer requests are generally printed in the Prayer Corner and included in the Sunday intercessory prayers for 4 weeks. If you would like us to keep someone there longer, we are happy to do that. Please call the church office or email [lcmprinceton@gmail.com](mailto:lcmprinceton@gmail.com) to let Pastor Erhardt know.

**Available on the back pew:**

- (1) **New:** March/April 2026 edition of the *Messiah Messenger*
- (2) **New:** Portals of Prayer devotion booklets (April-June)
- (3) February – May 2026 Temple Servant schedule

**First Lesson: Exodus 17:1-7**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

**Second Lesson: Romans 5:1-11**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**Gospel Lesson: John 4:5-42**

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you." Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."