



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1 West Ridge Road, Savannah, GA 31411  
(912) 598-1188  
[www.messiahsi.org](http://www.messiahsi.org)

WELCOME TO THIS  
WORSHIP CELEBRA-  
TION of the living  
Christ's presence in  
our midst. Christ  
comes to us with new  
life and strength for  
Christian living in  
daily life through the  
hearing of the Word,  
preaching, prayer,  
song, and community.

As the Confession and  
Forgiveness begins, all  
may make the sign of  
the cross, the sign that  
is marked at baptism.

*Congregational re-  
sponses are in bold*

*\*Asterisks through-  
out the order of  
worship indicate  
the people stand-  
ing, in body and/or  
in spirit.*

# GATHERING

## CHIMING OF THE HOUR

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Lynn McLauchlan, Reader*

### PRELUDE "Nearer My God to Thee"

arr. Sherwood

*Johnson-Liu Family String Quartet*

### \*CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Leader:      Blessed be the holy Trinity,  $\dagger$  one God,  
                  the Creator of heaven and earth,  
                  the Word who spoke life into being,  
                  the Wind stirring the waters.

**People:**      **Amen.**

Leader:      Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us  
                  completely.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Leader:      Mighty God, lover of justice,

**People:**      **you call us to life in community,  
                  but we have served our own interests  
                  at the expense of our neighbors.**

**We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.**

**We say the right words,**

**but our hearts are far from you.**

**Turn us to seek your face.**

**Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ,  
                  that we may do justice, love mercy,  
                  and walk humbly with you, our God.**

**Amen**

Leader: The former things have passed away,  
and new things God now declares:  
Like a spring of water that never fails,  
God covers you in the righteousness of Christ,  
and forgives your sin in <sup>+</sup> Jesus' name.  
May the Spirit give you strength to live for others,  
and bless you with the gift of peace.

People: **Amen.**

**\*GATHERING SONG** "Shine, Jesus, Shine"

*Hymn 671*

*Music not available to include in bulletin. Please use the hymnal.*

**\*GREETING**

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
People: **And also with you.**

**\*LITANY FOR TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**

Leader: On the mountain, Christ was revealed in glory.  
People: **We come to behold his light.**  
Leader: In shining presence, God spoke love and promise.  
People: **We listen for the voice of grace.**  
Leader: Transformed by mercy, we are sent into the world.  
People: **We follow Christ, bearing his light.**  
Leader: Let us pray.

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

## ANTHEM "This is My Beloved Son"

Choplin

*Chancel Choir*

*Long, long ago, the prophets spoke to ancient generations.*

*But in these day, God shows His ways and through the Son He's spoken.*

*The Son is in God's likeness, in glory and in brightness, in high authority.*

*You are my Son, beloved one, you are my first begotten.*

*The heavens you made, your hand has laid the very earth's foundation.*

*The Son is in God's likeness, in glory and in brightness in high authority.*

*The Son, your sins has lightened, He sits upon the right hand of power and majesty.*

*The first begotten One, this is my high and holy Son.*

*On earth one day, John, Peter, James followed Him up a mountain.*

*Before their eyes, His face would shine with light as bright as morning.*

*His garment shone and brightened. The disciples were so frightened, their faces on the ground.*

*A bright cloud overwhelmed them, a voice came forth to tell them, "Now listen to this one, for this is my beloved Son!"*

*You are my Son, beloved one, you are my first begotten.*

*The heavens you made, your hand has laid the very earth's foundation.*

*The Son is in God's likeness, in glory and in brightness, in high authority.*

*The Son, your sins has lightened, He sits upon the right hand of power and majesty.*

*For this is my Son, for this is my beloved Son. This is my Son.*

*The choir's Transfiguration Sunday anthem is from the Gospel of Matthew 17, which is today's Gospel reading.*

# WORD

Lynn McLaughlan, Reader

## FIRST READING: Exodus 24:12-18

Old Testament 65

*At Mount Sinai, Moses experienced the presence of God for forty days and forty nights. The “glory of the Lord” settled on the mountain, and on the seventh day God called out to Moses. On the mountain God gave Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the ten commandments.*

<sup>12</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” <sup>13</sup> So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up onto the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup> To the elders he had said, “Wait here for us, until we come back to you. Look, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.”

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup> The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. <sup>17</sup> Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the Israelites. <sup>18</sup> Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## PSALMODY: Psalm 2

*You are my son; this day have I begotten you. (Ps. 2:7)*

Leader: <sup>1</sup> Why are the nations in an uproar?

Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?

People: <sup>2</sup> Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together, against the Lord and against the Lord’s anointed?

Leader: <sup>3</sup> “Let us break their yoke,” they say; “let us cast off their bonds from us.”

People: <sup>4</sup> God whose throne is in heaven is laughing; the Lord holds them in derision.

*The reading of Scripture is when God makes known his will: God desires mercy and salvation.*

*Ultimately, this word points us to the Word, the incarnate Son of God.*

*Through Christ — God’s only Son — are we able to know the Father’s favor and grace.*

Leader: <sup>5</sup> Then in wrath God speaks to them, and in rage fills them with terror.

People: <sup>6</sup> **“As for me, I have anointed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain.”**

Leader: <sup>7</sup> Let me announce the decree of the Lord, who said to me, “You are my son; this day have I begotten you.

People: <sup>8</sup> **Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.**

Leader: <sup>9</sup> You shall crush them with an iron rod and shatter them like a piece of pottery.”

People: <sup>10</sup> **And now, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.**

Leader: <sup>11</sup> Submit to the Lord with fear, and with trembling bow in worship;

People: <sup>12</sup> **lest the Lord be angry, and you perish in a sudden blaze of wrath. Happy are all who take refuge in God!**

## SECOND READING: 2 Peter 1:16-21

*New Testament 209*

*At the transfiguration, God’s voice was heard, declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son. By the activity of the Holy Spirit, God’s voice continues to be heard through the word of scripture.*

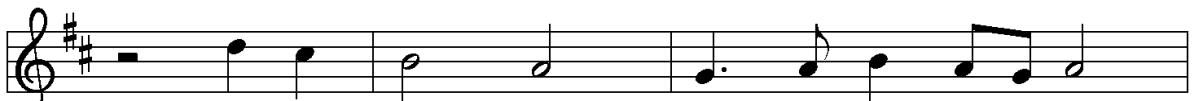
<sup>16</sup> We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

<sup>19</sup> So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

## \*GOSPEL: Matthew 17:1-8

*New Testament 16*

*Shortly before he enters Jerusalem, where he will be crucified, Jesus is revealed to Peter, James, and John in a mountaintop experience of divine glory called the transfiguration.*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. <sup>3</sup> Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” <sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” <sup>8</sup> And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

Rev. Jason Talsness

*Altar Flowers are given this week by Yvonne Johnson "in honor of Oskar Johnson-Liu's confirmation day".*

*February's Eternal Candle is given by The Ridberg Family 'in honor of the Lenten season.'*

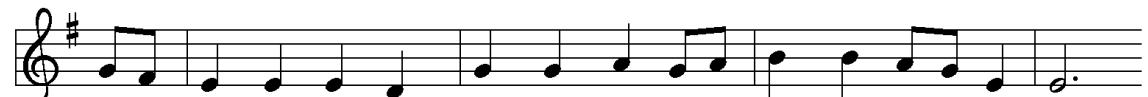
## \*HYMN OF THE DAY "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

*Hymn 611*

*Oskar Johnson-Liu selected this hymn.*



1 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Come un - to me and rest;  
2 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly give  
3 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's light;



lay down, O weary one, lay down your head up - on my breast."  
the liv - ing wa - ter, thirst - y one; stoop down and drink and live."  
look un - to me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."



I came to Je - sus as I was, so wea - ry, worn, and sad;  
I came to Je - sus, and I drank of that life - giv - ing stream;  
I looked to Je - sus, and I found in him my star, my sun;



I found in him a rest-ing-place, and he has made me glad.  
my thirst was quenched, my soul re - vived, and now I live in him.  
and in that light of life I'll walk till trav -'ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889  
Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune

## \*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*(In between the petitions of the prayers, the following response is offered.)*

Leader: Merciful God,

People: Receive our prayer.

*(Final petition and response.)*

Leader: Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

People: Amen.

# CONFIRMATION

## PRESENTATION

Ron Maner

I present Oskar Johnson-Liu, who desires to make public affirmation of his baptism.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you for Oskar, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called him to yourself, enlightened him with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished him in the community of faith. Uphold Oskar in the gifts and promises of baptism and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

*I renounce them.*

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

*I renounce them.*

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

*I renounce them.*

People of God, let us join Oskar Johnson-Liu in our Confession of Faith

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

## **AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM**

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,  
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

*I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.*

People of God, do you promise to support this brother of faith and pray for him in his life in Christ?

**We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake,  
stir up in Oskar the gift of your Holy Spirit;  
confirm his faith,  
guide his life,  
empower him in his serving,  
give him patience in suffering,  
and bring him to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

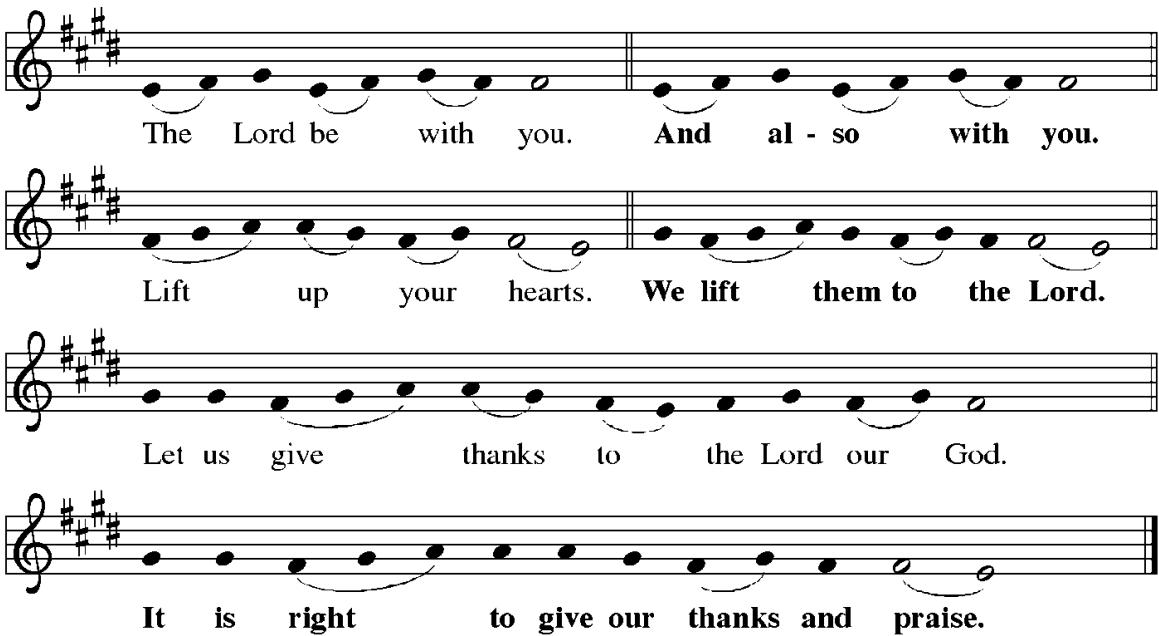
Let us rejoice with this brother in Christ.

**We rejoice with you in the life of baptism.**

**Together we will give thanks and praise to God  
and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

# MEAL

## \*DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

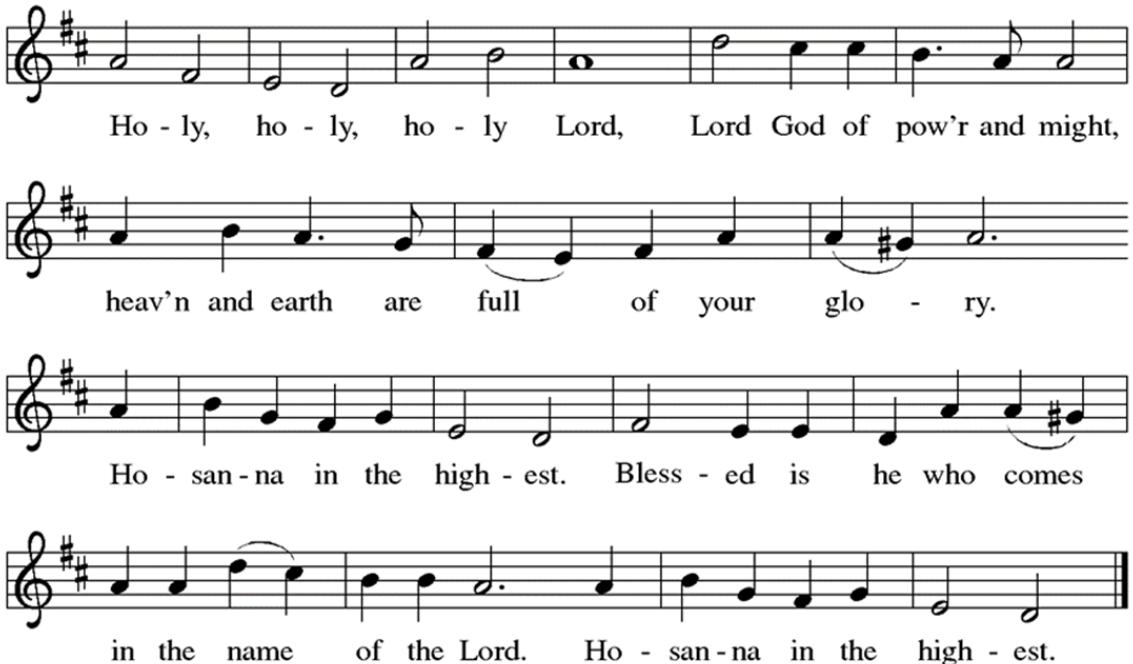
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## \*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ...

We praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## \*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes

in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## \*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

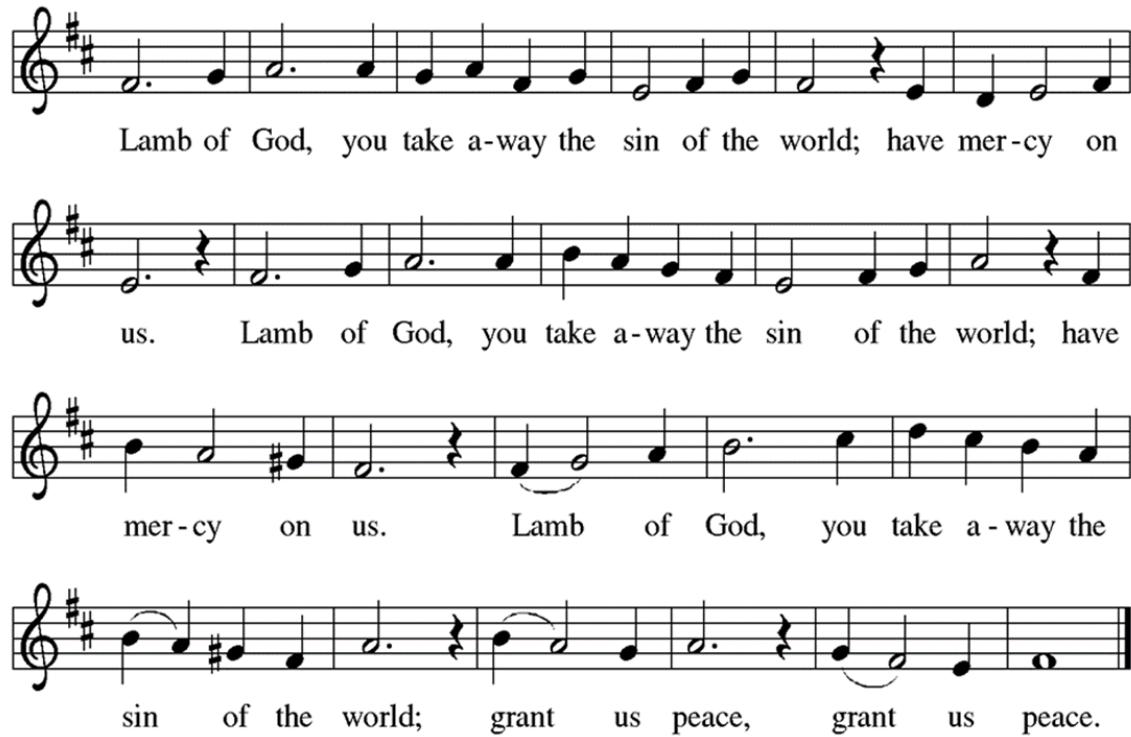
### \*LORD'S PRAYER

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

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!  
Come to the table; taste and see.

### COMMUNION SONG "Lamb of 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

**SPECIAL MUSIC** "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" arr. Valdez  
Johnson-Liu Family String Quartet

*Members of the Johnson-Liu Family String Quartet include:*

- *Lizhou Liu, violin*
- *Olivia Johnson-Liu, violin*
- *Yvonne Johnson, viola*
- *Oskar Johnson-Liu, cello*

## \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Leader: Radiant God,  
People: we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.  
In the sacrament of his body and blood  
you have drawn us to your heart.  
Send us from this table with delight,  
that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love,  
and bear witness to all we have seen and heard,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.

## SENDING

### \*PASTORAL BENEDICTION

Leader: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth  
and tuned your heart for praise  $\pm$  bless you now and forever.  
People: Amen.

### \*SENDING SONG “Alleluia, Song of Gladness”

*Hymn 318*



1 Al - le - lu - ia, song of glad - ness, voice of joy that can - not die;  
2 Al - le - lu - ia you are sound - ing, true Je - ru - sa - lem and free;  
3 Al - le - lu - ia can - not al - ways be our song while here be - low;  
4 In our hymns we pray with long - ing: Grant us, bless-ed Trin - i - ty,



al - le - lu - ia is the an - them ev - er dear to choirs on high;  
al - le - lu - ia, joy - ful moth-er, bring us to your ju - bi - lee;  
al - le - lu - ia our trans-gres-sions make us for a while for - go;  
at the last to keep glad Eas - ter with the faith-ful saints on high;



in the house of God a - bid - ing thus they sing e - ter - nal - ly.  
here by Bab - y - lon's sad wa - ters mourn-ing ex - iles still are we.  
for the sol - emn time is com-ing when our tears for sin shall flow.  
there to you for - ev - er sing-ing al - le - lu - ia joy - ful - ly.

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.  
Music: PRAISE, MY SOUL, John Goss, 1800–1880

**PERMISSIONS**

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*POSTLUDE** “Oh Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High”

arr. Johnson

*Shirley Newhart, organ*

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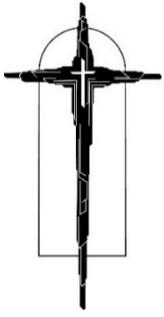
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, February 15	9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:20 am Adult Discipleship Class 10:20 am Confirmation Class
Monday, February 16	PRESIDENTS' DAY OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 4:00 pm A Primer on Lent
Tuesday, February 17	<i>9:00 am Savannah Newcomers</i> 2:00 pm Outreach Ministry 1:00 Staff Support/Mutual Ministry 3:00 pm MLC Staff Meeting
Wednesday, February 18	ASH WEDNESDAY 8:30 am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 10:00 am PLARNing Group 6:00 pm Vox Cordium 7:00 pm Worship
Thursday, February 19	1:00 pm Staff Support/Mutual Ministry 3:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
Friday, February 20	3:30 pm Understanding Your Grief
Saturday, February 21	

*Italics indicate outside group*

## ONLINE GIVING

Please consider making a one-time or recurring gift to Messiah using the secure online portal at the website ([messiahhsi.org](http://messiahhsi.org)) and clicking on the Give tab. Another option to reach the portal is to scan this QR code using your smartphone's QR reader.



If you would like to give the old-fashioned way, the offering plate is on the table as you exit the Sanctuary.



# THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

Ministers	The People of Messiah
Pastor	Jason Talsness
Pastor, Congregational Care	Karen Scheib
Director, Faith Formation	Ken Ritz
Pastor Emeritus	James Peper
Presiding Bishop ELCA	Yehiel Curry
Bishop, SE Synod ELCA	Kevin Strickland
Director of Music & Organist	Shirley Newhart
Choral Director	Rodney Powers
Altar Guild	Pat Cooper
Reader	Lynn McLauchlan
Evangelism Greeters	Karin & Jimmy Viglione
Ushers	Susan & Ron Whitaker
Acolytes	Confirmation Class
Communion Assistants	Terry Blaney, Lynn McLauchlan, Diane Munroe and Susan Whitaker
Eucharistic Minister	Lynnetta Hartson
Audio Visual	Steve Allen and Ken McLauchlan
Coffee Hour	Jennifer Nguyen (Host & Treats) Johnson-Liu Family (Cake)

## MILESTONES THIS WEEK

*Birthdays: Shirley Nack 02/15, Norrita Thorne 02/16, Peggy Pearson 02/18*

*Anniversaries: Andrea & Robert Felkins 02/16*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LENT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 18

Ash Wednesday is this week and will be observed with a special worship service in the Sanctuary at 7:00 pm. Dinner will not be served on Ash Wednesday.

During the season of Lent, there will be the traditional supper and worship. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm, and the worship service will follow at 6:15 pm. These gatherings will take place for five Wednesdays, from February 25 through March 25.

Throughout Lent, Messiah will be using the devotional *Lent for Everyone: Matthew, Year A* by N. T. Wright. Trade paperback copies are available from various sources, and a Kindle edition is listed on Amazon. Everyone is encouraged to purchase a copy and participate in the daily devotional readings beginning on Ash Wednesday, as we journey together through this holy season.

## A PRIMER ON LENT

### Monday, February 16, 4:00 pm

As Lutheran Christians we have a lot of traditions that are not always explained very well. Lent is one of those. What is the goal? What are we supposed to be doing in Lent and why? Messiah is offering a one-session seminar entitled "A Primer on Lent," which will delve into Lenten practices such as fasting (and/or "giving up something" for Lent) and how such practices can improve our daily walk with God. The session will be in the Conference Room. Please sign up on the Narthex Kiosk.

## OUTREACH MINISTRY

### Love Thy Neighbor

#### Deadline: February 15

This February the Outreach Ministry is focusing its "Love Thy Neighbor" collection on SunCare Hospice Care Center of Rincon, an organization that does not have a consistent partnership with any businesses or groups other than holiday donations. They would be so grateful to receive assistance from the members of Messiah for the Love Thy Neighbor collection.

In addition to the items on the shopping list, the Outreach Ministry will gladly accept monetary donations and can do the shopping for you! They will be accepting donations until Sunday, February 15. The ministry members are excited to be helping a new neighbor this year! If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Nguyen (jennifernguyen@yahoo.com; 912.713.2797).

## SAVE THE DATE

### Saturday, March 14

The Landlovers' Flea Market is fast approaching! Messiah will be recruiting bakers, grillers, servers, and sellers. More information and sign-up sheets to come; but, for now, clear your calendars for fun-filled fellowship to raise money for a local charity while we feed sellers and shoppers.

## A SPECIAL CHOIR OPPORTUNITY

What is VOX CORDIUM? It is a special emphasis choir for Lent and Easter. VOX CORDIUM translated means "Voice from the Heart." Every choir member's voice will unite to sing music that is from the heart. Lent is a perfect time to set aside some time for service and commitment by joining the VOX CORDIUM choir. It is a commitment of just 7 weeks, 7 hours, 7 Sundays. The VOX CORDIUM starts on Ash Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. and concludes on Easter Sunday, April 5th. On Easter Sunday, the VOX CORDIUM will present *The Hallelujah Chorus*.

The goal is to recruit at least nine new members to make this choir possible. Please consider signing up on the Narthex Kiosk today! For more information, contact Choir Director Rodney Powers ([rodneykp@gmail.com](mailto:rodneykp@gmail.com); 912.321.4048).

## MESSIAH READS BOOK CLUB

**Tuesday, February 24, 6:30 pm**

Join the discussion of *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn at Patricia Small's home, 5 Oak Shadow Court in The Landings.

## SERMON PREVIEW

On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. In this moment of clarity, the disciples glimpse who Jesus truly is—not just teacher or healer but the very presence of God among them. He suddenly appears to them as a dazzling white. This revelation of God's beloved Son offers a vision of glory that stands in sharp contrast to the suffering that lies ahead. We call this event the "transfiguration," meaning that Christ's appearance is changed, transfigured. In hearing this story, we are invited to see Jesus more clearly—in both moments of radiant light and deep shadow.

Questions for Reflection: When have you had moments of clarity about God's greatness? Our own Oskar Johnson-Liu is being confirmed this Sunday, what do you think this story has to say to him as he takes this important step in his life of faith? How can glimpses of God's glory help you live more faithfully in the ordinary and challenging parts of life?

# **FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION**

## **2026 Spiritual Growth Activity**

We are inviting our whole church family to participate in a **12-month spiritual growth journey**. Each month we will focus on one simple, but meaningful activity designed to help you draw closer to Christ.

### **February—Read One Gospel in One Sitting (1.5-2 hours)**

Choose either the Gospel of Mark (shorter, fast-moving) or the Gospel of John (reflective, rich-in-meaning) and set aside enough time to read the entire Gospel without rushing. A modern translation such as New International Version, New Living Translation, or English Standard Version is recommended.

As you read, pay attention not just to the events but to **Jesus' character**, noticing how He treats people, how He responds to interruptions, and what emotions He expresses. Watch for His **mission**—what He says He came to do, how He speaks about the Kingdom of God, and what priorities guide His choices. Finally, reflect on His **heart**—what He cares about most deeply, where He shows compassion, and what grieves or angers Him. End with a simple prayer of gratitude and response.

This extended reading helps you see the big picture of Jesus' life and ministry and deepens your understanding of His heart and mission.

### **Read an Epistle with Study**

For those who want an additional challenge... Choose Philippians, Ephesians, or James.

Read it twice. Pay attention to its historical setting, major themes, and key commands (use a study Bible or trusted commentary if helpful). Write a brief summary of what the letter teaches about Christian living and how it applies to your current habits or lifestyle.

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Stinson is serving the second year of a three-year term that ends in 2027.

<sup>2</sup> George Lawrence is serving the first year of a three-year term that ends in 2028.

*With joy, we look back to 2010, when Oskar was sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. Since then, he's grown into an impressive mix of talents and interests: a cellist extraordinaire, NASCAR expert, technology whiz, swimmer, and soccer player—all while keeping up with school and diving into confirmation studies. Along the way, Oskar has become a wonderful friend to many and a true joy and blessing to his family. Oskar, always remember that you are a beloved child of God, guided by the Holy Spirit every step of the way. May you continue to grow in faith, love, and curiosity as God lights the path ahead.*

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” — Psalm 119:105*

*Uncle Bruce and Aunt Janine*

Dear Oskar,

A "Need for Speed" and "Slow and Steady Wins the Race" are two phrases that come to mind when I think of you on your Confirmation Day!

A couple of years ago, you traveled all the way to Pennsylvania's Pocono Raceway to watch and hear the roars of intrepid race drivers conquer the Tricky Triangle. What an experience you had with the drivers and fans even while you and your mom huddled under the raceway bleachers through the driving rain of a mountain thunderstorm! What a "Need for Speed"!

In true paradoxical fashion, you also are on a journey as a cellist who knows that "Slow and Steady Wins the Race." Think of the countless hours you have spent for many years practicing fingerings and positions, memorizing challenging pieces, and performing confidently in solo contests, family quartets, and orchestras. Slow and steady, indeed!

On this, your Confirmation Day, I see in you both a "need for speed" and the "slow and steady" commitment that accompanies you to the true dialectical heart of the Lutheran faith: that we are Saints and Sinners, Captive and Free, the people of both Law and Gospel.

And finally, my prayer for you today is this playful adaptation of the first verse of John Ylvasaker's hymn, "Borning Cry":

*I was there to hear your borning cry,  
I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,  
To see your life unfold  
I was there when you were but a child,  
With a faith to suit you well;  
In a blaze of light you wandered off  
**Where cars and 'cellos dwell...***

*With love and prayers for your life and faith,*

Aunt Lynnette

# CONFIRMATION

*Today is Oskar Johnson-Liu's confirmation. His family will provide a special cake during Coffee Fellowship following worship, and everyone is invited to join the celebration.*

*See the inside back cover for messages from Oskar's family celebrating his confirmation.*

