



MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 14, 2021

WOV Service of Word and Sacrament

PRELUDE

I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ

J.S. Bach

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son

that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Let those who know they are redeemed celebrate it!

Let those who have been reclaimed from deep trouble share God's grace with the world!

Though we were as good as dead,

God made us alive with the grace of Christ

through whom we are rescued and healed.

O give thanks to God for such unswerving love, for such wonderful deeds for the children of earth.

We come to worship in joy,

Knowing that we who believe and trust in the name of Jesus Christ will be saved

Because God is always faithful!

Let us worship God in peace and hope!

OPENING HYMN Christ, Be Our Light

- 1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice. *Refrain*
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. *Refrain*
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *Refrain*
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:13) **And also with you.**

The word is near you, **on your lips and in your heart.**

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Faith comes from what is heard,

and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. (Romans 10)

KYRIE:

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen, amen.**

Prayer of the Day

O God, rich in mercy, **by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

A time of silence

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The 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." ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The 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. ⁸And 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." ⁹So 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

You deliver your people from their distress. (Ps. 107:19)

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good, for God's mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths; through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food and drew near to death's door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love
and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Gospel Acclamation

As we prepare to hear the Gospel of our Lord, we cry out:

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord. Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.

Gospel: John 3:14-21

Glory to you, O Lord!

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already,

because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all

who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Praise to you, O Christ!

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Healer of Our Every Ill

Refrain

Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.

- 1 You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. *Refrain*
- 2 In the pain and joy beholding how your grace is still unfolding, give us all your vision, God of love.
Refrain
- 3 Give us strength to love each other, every sister, every brother; Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.
Refrain
- 4 You who know each thought and feeling, teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. *Refrain*

RESPONSE TO THE WORD: CREED AND CONFESSION

In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. (*Ephesians 1:13-14*)

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

Build yourselves up on your most holy faith; **pray in the Holy Spirit.** (*Jude 20*)

Keep yourselves in the love of God; **look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.** *Jude 21*

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: **Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!** (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

Silence for reflection and self examination.

Gracious God, **have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our

partners in ministry in Papua New Guinea, Far East Russia, the Leyoles in Africa,, our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought especially Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn and are suffering especially we pray for our members lone, Rolland, Donna, Walli, Betty, Ron, Gloria and Gene. We pray for our friends Donna, Denise, Bill, Dawn, Dorothy, Erin, Stephani, Karla, Orin, Danielle, Krista, Betty, Charlene and Meghan, let us pray that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace. We pray for those serving in the military including: Alex, T.J., Ben, Vicki, Jeremy, Luke, Miranda and Daniel. We pray for seminarian Kaylie Ines. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter including Mini Miracles and Dala Pantry. Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. (2 Corinthians 13:11) The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY

Our Father, Who Art in Heaven

J.S. Bach

Faithful God, **you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING:

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 God thanks and praise!**

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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you have brought us this far along the way. In times of bitterness you did not abandon us, but guided us into the path of love and light. In every age you sent prophets to make known your loving will for all humanity. The cry of the poor has become your own cry; our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire. In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant to preach good news to the afflicted, to break bread with the outcast and despised, and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when Jesus shall return to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.

Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen **Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate, to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen **Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

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.

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN **My Faith Looks Up to Thee**

- 1 My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away, oh, let me from this day be wholly thine!
- 2 May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me, oh, may my love to thee pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!
- 3 While life's dark maze I tread and griefs around me spread, be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away, nor let me ever stray from thee aside.
- 4 When ends life's transient dream, when death's cold, sullen stream shall o'er me roll;
blest Savior, then, in love fear and distrust remove; oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Lord God, Be Merciful to Me

J.S. Bach

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Messiah Lutheran Church

2/28/2021

	Actual Feb-21	Actual Jan - Feb 21	Budget Jan - Feb 21
Revenue	\$15,413.70	\$24,221.45	\$24,193.30
Expenses	<u>15,001.86</u>	<u>26,684.17</u>	<u>26,747.44</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	<u>\$411.84</u>	<u>-\$2,462.72</u>	<u>-\$2,554.14</u>
Reserve Balance	<u>\$78,203.91</u>		

Members, Friends, and Family for Whom We Pray

Members of Messiah:

Ione Toll, Rolland Christenson, Donna Forsberg, Walli Ellis, Betty Peterson, Ron Wilson, and Gloria and Gene Holdsworth

Friends of Messiah

Donna Stejksal	Daniels' friend	Karla Goewert	Friend of Kirsten Bruce
Denise	Pari Ford's mother	Orin Shogren	Har's brother
Bill Stephenson	Joy Janis's brother	Danielle	Robbie Peterson's
Dawn	Sharon Hoffman's Daughter	VanDeVyvere	granddaughter
Dorothy Carmichael	Friend of Messiah	Krista Bahler	Betty Peterson's Niece
Erin Erb	Friend of Sherry Peterson	Betty Finney	Sharon Hoffman's friend
Stephani White	Betty Holcombe's daughter	Meghan Presley	John & Margaret Presley's daughter
Charlene Stevens	Sister in law of Sharon Bruce		

Serving the U.S.A.

Alex Klapp	Betty Russin's grandson	Vicki Charboneau	Elaine Eller's granddaughter
Ben Youngquist	S Hoffman's nephew	Jeremy Guy	Hensley's son-in-law
T.J. Paulsen	Barb Malm's child	Daniel & Miranda Norland	Randy/Gretchen's son & wife

Serving the U.S.A. Overseas

Luke Hammontree	Daniel's grandson	<u>Seminary</u>
		Kaylie Ines

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sharon Bruce	03/09	Andy Carlson	03/09
Mark Lucas	03/14		

Please pray for all affected by Covid-19: Healthcare workers/administration/staff, residential staff and residents, those who seem unaffected and those who are currently aware they are infected and are fighting the virus. Also, we pray for all who are being negatively affected by the virus and it's social disruption. We give thanks for vaccinations and a hopeful return to a less stressful lifestyle.

Wider Church by Jeanne Ahlers

It has now been a whole year since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. This past year has been one of unimaginable loss. But there are some encouraging signs. Congress and the Biden Administration have signed into law the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*.

This act provides vital funding that will expand access to vaccines, and cuts U.S. childhood poverty nearly in half by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. This affects nearly 4.1 million children, of whom some 1.2 million are Black, 1.7 million Latino, and 684 thousand American Indian or Alaska Native.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 will provide urgently needed relief to young, working, jobless and senior Americans alike. It furthers the ELCA World Hunger vision of "a just world where all are fed." Increased Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, assistance to U.S. territories, resources for food banks and extended unemployment insurance are among the resources available. Since the earliest days of the ELCA, the church has committed itself to ending hunger and poverty domestically and internationally. Our support for this fourth legislative response to the COVID-19 virus represents the shared commitment of Lutherans to serve our neighbors. We can help by contacting our legislators to thank them for continued attention to the needs of hungry people

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you are interested in **being a worship assistant**, please contact Ida in the office, 785.227.3977, or mlchurch@mlc.kscoxmail.com, and let her know! She will be happy to hear from you!

Please pick up your **offering envelopes** in the hallway beside the office. If you prefer to not have envelopes, please let Muriel know (785.906.0101).

Choir Director **Dr. Mark Lucas** has resigned his position at Messiah after seven years of service. We wish Mark all good will as he ventures out for whatever awaits him! His direction in our musical ministry will be missed! Please send card or thoughtful memory in honor of his service to Messiah (411 N. Main, Lindsborg, KS 67456). Blessings on the journey, Mark!

Youth Director **Jeanne Lucas** has resigned her position as Youth Director at Messiah. We wish Jeanne all good will as she ventures out for whatever awaits her! Her direction and leadership in our youth ministry will be very missed! Please send a card or thoughtful memory in honor of Jeanne's service to Messiah (411 N. Main, Lindsborg, KS 67456). Blessings on the journey, Jeanne!

Messiah is seeking **a person to lead** the way for a Treasure Sale (aka: garage sale!). If you would like to be a leader in this endeavor, please contact the office (785.227.3977) or Muriel Gentine (785.906.0101). Thank you!

Youth Group Fundraiser has been extended through Easter. This is a penny war between Pastor Chris and Pastor Amy. Pastor Amy will color her hair if her point total is highest, and Pastor Chris will shave his mohawk if his point total is highest. All proceeds go to the National Youth Gathering for BLC and MELC students. Donate COINS(+) to Pastor Amy to ADD to her point total. Donate COINS(+) to Pastor Chris to ADD to his point total. Donate BILLS(-) to Pastor Amy to SUBTRACT from her point total. Donate BILLS(-) to Pastor Chris to SUBTRACT from his point total. (Think 100 penny adds 100 points; \$1 bill subtracts 100 points)



1-2-3-4 WE DECLARE A

PENNY WAR



POSITIVE POINTS	NEGATIVE POINTS
1 Penny = 1 pt	\$1 = -100 pts
1 Nickel = 5 pts	\$5 = -500 pts
1 Dime = 10 pts	\$10 = -1,000 pts
1 Quarter = 25 pts	\$20 = -2,000 pts and so on...



Pastor Chris

VS



Pastor Amy

A survey invitation to share your Lutheran perspective

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you during this season of Lent. It is a time when we, as Christians, reflect on our life together in Christ and the ways in which our identity in Christ is reflected in the world. Being able to articulate that identity can help guide us to a better understanding of ourselves and each other as God continues to call us to respond to the needs of the world.

There are many ways to reflect on our identity as Christians and Lutherans, one of which is by engaging each other across our global Lutheran family. As part of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), we seek to contribute our North American Lutheran perspectives to the larger Lutheran tapestry, made up of 77 million members across 99 countries! And like the ELCA, the LWF has a rich history of theological study processes that can help us better understand ourselves and what it means to be church.

In 2019, the LWF launched a study process to explore the ways our global Lutheran identities are lived out through biblical interpretation, worship and the work of justice, peace and reconciliation. As a member of the LWF, the ELCA is taking part in this unique study process in a number of ways as we examine our Lutheran identity in our own context here in North America. We hope this process will allow us to experience the diverse ways our Lutheran tradition is being lived out. This is an opportunity to discern the ways in which we, in our own contexts, express law and gospel, faith and works, nature and grace, justification and sanctification, freedom and vocation – all parts of our common theological identity.

This Lent, I invite you to reflect on your Christian and Lutheran identities by participating in the Global Survey on Being Lutheran. We also ask that you invite others in your churches to participate. The survey will be open through March 31, and responses gathered will help to shape the 13th LWF Assembly in 2023.

In addition, between now and June you are invited to take part in a larger conversation that will transpire across the LWF communion. The LWF has produced a discussion guide titled *We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Welcome to a Global Conversation on Being Lutheran*. This guide will help lead your congregation's Christian education and/or youth group on a journey of mutual discovery and learning.

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences. They will contribute to furthering our understanding of what being Lutheran means in this time and place as we continue to journey together in Christ through these next 500 years of reformation.

With peace and gratitude,

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MARCH 14, 2021
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



God loves the whole world.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 3:14-21	God so loved the world
Monday	Numbers 21:4-9	The serpent of bronze
Tuesday	Ephesians 2:1-10	Faith is a gift from God
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 10:12-22	The essence of the law
Thursday	1 John 5:1-5	Faith conquers the world
Friday	Zephaniah 3:14-20	The song of joy
Saturday	Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22	Thanksgiving for deliverance
Sunday	John 12:20-33	The hour has come

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“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.” **John 3:16 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of steadfast love, help us to remember that you hate nothing that you have created and that you love the world through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, we thank you for feeding us today with this food and nourishing us with your love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God who loves the world shine brightly on you with the light of Christ.

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Christ Be Our Light

WEEKLY MILESTONES CARING CONVERSATIONS

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Talk or think about something you really love to do.
- How do you show love for others?
- God created the whole world and loves it. What does that say about the kind of God we have?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 3:14-21.

These words from Jesus are part of a conversation he is having with Nicodemus who had come to see Jesus by night. There is a contrast here between those who love the darkness (initially Nicodemus) and those who “come to the light” (v. 21). Nicodemus would eventually be drawn to the light by defending Jesus in front of the Pharisees (John 7:51-52) and preparing Jesus’ body after his crucifixion (John 19:39). In the Gospel of John, following and believing in Jesus can be a journey of coming to the light and gaining eternal life, as Nicodemus does. Darkness cannot choose light; it must be overcome by the light. The judgement of which Jesus speaks is remaining in the dark. Eternal life is having the light of Christ overcome the darkness that prevents us from seeing and loving Jesus. How has the light of Christ helped you in challenging times or times of darkness?

Pray: **Merciful God, we thank you for your love for us that calls us out of darkness and to the light of Christ that we may not perish but have eternal life. Amen.**

SERVICE

Numbers 21:4-9 records that God sent snakes among the people of Israel to punish them. But after Moses prayed for the people, God directed Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. When anyone who had been bitten looked at the snake, they were healed. The symbol of a snake on a pole is associated with medicine and health care. This week, plan an act of thanks and appreciation for a doctor, nurse, or medical worker in your community.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Martin Luther referred to John 3:16, the *Scripture Verse for this Week*, as “the gospel in miniature.” *“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.”* This week, light a candle and read the *Daily Bible Reading* each day, then say the *Prayer for the Week* and a word of thanks for how God shows love to you and the world. End by saying: **Remember that you are God’s, and to God you shall return.**

In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org