40th Anniversary of
Messiah Lutheran Church Amherst, NH
Saturday, November 14, 2026



THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✢ one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

water is poured into the font

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN

ELW 576 We All Are One in Mission

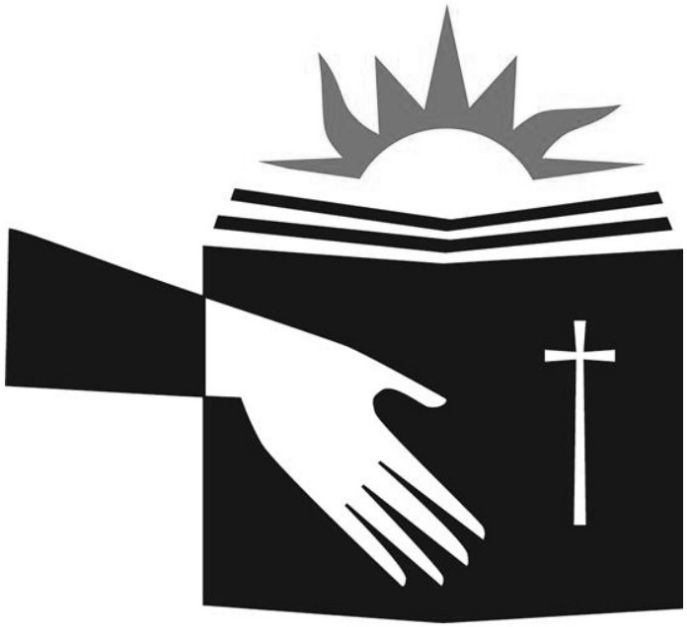


Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955
Music: KUORTANE, Finnish folk tune; arr. hymnal version
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PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you have promised through your Son to be with your church forever. We give you thanks for those who founded this community of believers and for the signs of your presence in our congregation. Increase in us the spirit of faith and love, and make our fellowship an example to all believers and to all nations. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.



1st READING
A reading from 1 Kings the 8th chapter:

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the
presence of the whole assembly of Israel and spread out his
hands to heaven. **23** He said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no
God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping
covenant and steadfast love with your servants who walk
before you with all their heart, **24** the covenant that you kept for
your servant my father David as you declared to him; you
promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your
hand. **25** Therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant
my father David that which you promised him, saying, 'There
shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of
Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me
as you have walked before me.' **26** Therefore, O God of Israel,
let your word be confirmed that you promised to your servant
my father David.

27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and
the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house
that I have built! **28** Regard your servant's prayer and his plea, O
Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant
prays to you today, **29** that your eyes may be open night and
day toward this house, the place of which you said, 'My name
shall be there,' that you may heed the prayer that your servant
prays toward this place. **30** Hear the plea of your servant and of
your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in
heaven your dwelling place; hear and forgive.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 84 *read responsively:*

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!
2 **My soul longs, indeed it faints, for the courts of the Lord;**
my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
3 Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.
4 **Happy are those who live in your house,**
ever singing your praise.
5 Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
6 **As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;**
the early rain also covers it with pools.
7 They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
8 **O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;**
give ear, O God of Jacob!
9 Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed.
10 **For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.**
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.
12 **O Lord of hosts,**
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

2nd READING
A reading from 1st Peter the 2nd chapter:

2 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice and all guile, insincerity,
envy, and all slander. **2** Like newborn infants, long for the pure,
spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— **3** if
indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet
chosen and precious in God's sight, and **5** like living stones let
yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy
priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ. **6** For it stands in scripture:

> "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone
> chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him
> will not be put to shame."

7 This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do
not believe,

> "The stone that the builders rejected has become
> the very head of the corner,"

8 and

> "A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that
> makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were
destined to do. **9** But you are a chosen people, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you
may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of
darkness into his marvelous light.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Alleluia. We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Alleluia. *(2 Cor. 5:1)*

The Gospel according to John the 10th chapter.
Glory to You, O Lord.

22 At that time the Festival of the Dedication took place in
Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was walking in the temple,
in the portico of Solomon. **24** So the Jews gathered around him
and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you
are the Messiah, tell us plainly." **25** Jesus answered, "I have told
you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's
name testify to me, **26** but you do not believe because you do
not belong to my sheep. **27** My sheep hear my voice. I know
them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they
will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My
Father, in regard to what he has given me, is greater than all,
and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** The
Father and I are one."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON **Pastor Karl Hester**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God, we give thanks to you for the members and the ministry of this congregation:

- for those who had the vision to begin this congregation,
- those who sustain its present ministry,
- and those who will carry its mission forward into the future.

Lord, in your mercy… **Hear our prayer.**

God, we give thanks to you with our partnership and relationship with the New England Synod, the ELCA and all of the ministries we have blessed to serve, to serve with and to be served by.
Lord, in your mercy… **Hear our prayer.**

For what does this community gathered here tonight give thanks as we think on the last 40 years of ministry in and through Messiah Lutheran Church?

prayer petitions spoken and in silence are offered

Lord, in your mercy… **Hear our prayer.**

For what does this community gathered here tonight pray for and hope for as we look ahead to the next 40 years of ministry in and through Messiah Lutheran Church?

prayer petitions spoken and in silence are offered

Lord, in your mercy… **Hear our prayer.**

And all of God's assembled people say… **Amen.**

Mums for the 40th Anniversary Celebration

Deb and Mike Scheetz	
	In honor of Wilma Minnick
	In honor of John and Lee Scheetz
	In honor of Doug Pulfer
Rande and Arja Neukam	
	In honor of Winona Neukam-Cogan and Unelma Jokinen (our moms)
Sue Retelle	
	David (her brother)
Gail Pituck	In honor of Jim and Jean Pituck
Mark and Teri Drake	In honor of our parents
Julie and Bill Mitchell	
	In honor of John, Sandy, Cindy (Julie's cousins)
Michelle Alvarez	
	In honor of newer members of MLC and Forward Funding efforts
Pastor Karl	
	In thanksgiving for clergy who have served MLC
Marge and Richard Ball	
	for Marge – "Happy birthday!"
Trudi Costa	
	In honor of Ed Costa and loved ones of the Miller and Costa families
Connie Wisneski	

COMMUNION
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.

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.
By the witness of your saints
you show us the hope of our calling
and strengthen us to run the race set before us,
that we may delight in your mercy and rejoice with them in glory.

And so, with all the saints who have been part of this cloud of witnesses at Messiah over these past forty years and all of our partners in ministry in this community and throughout the New England Synod and the ELCA, with the choirs of angels and all the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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

O God before time, O God at the end,
we delight in the splendor of your universe.
Daily we laud your continuing creation,
and we give thanks
for all the homelands of your Reformation people.
We glorify you, now and forever.
We glorify you, now and forever.

O God of the covenant, O God of the church,
we hear you speaking to centuries of your people.
We come as your children to this table,
and we give thanks for your presence
among Lutheran congregations around the world including the Lutheran Church in Honduras and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).
We praise you, now and forever.
We praise you, now and forever.

You gave us Mary and Magdalene, Peter and Paul,
Luther and Melanchthon, Henry Muhlenberg, and
Elizabeth Fedde

—let us call out more names—

Katharina Luther the homemaker, Cranach the artist, Bach the musician, Nicolai the hymnwriter, Nommensen the missionary, Kierkegaard the philosopher, Bonhoeffer the martyr, Hammarskjöld the statesman, countless other servants of the Reformation.

We bless you, now and forever.
We bless you, now and forever.

You came as Jesus, our wisdom, our guide,
embodying forgiveness, granting us grace, setting us free,
dying for sin, and alive for the life of the world.
We worship you, now and forever.
We worship you, now and forever.

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 his death, we cry out Amen.
Amen.

Celebrating his resurrection, we shout Amen.
Amen.

Trusting his presence in every time and place, we plead Amen.
Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, and make here the body of Christ.
Breathe onto this food, that it bring us your life.
Empower your Reformation people throughout the world
to preach and teach, baptize and feed,
pray and sing, comfort and heal.

By your Spirit,
preserve what is faithful;
reform what we treasure;
create in us what is vital and new.
We honor you, now and forever.
We honor you, now and forever.

O God before time, O God at the end, Father, Son, and Spirit,
we laud you, Covenant Lord, our Redeemer, the Strength of
truth. Glory and praise, blessing and worship,
honor and power and might be to you, our God,
forever and ever. **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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty God, we give you thanks that you have fed us with this heavenly food. In your grace and by your Spirit, help us to be what we celebrate, the body of Christ in the world.

Send us out, renewed by this sacramental meal, to do the work you have given us to do: to witness for Christ, to love you with singleness of heart, and to serve you with clarity of purpose; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

GRACE FOR OUR MEAL TOGETHER

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

After we have broken bread together and shared in this anniversary celebration, go forth in peace and with the courage of faith.

Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. **Amen.**

Whatever you do in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God through him. **Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, Father, ✢ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN **ELW 733 Great Is Thy Faithfulness**





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Music: FAITHFULNESS, William M. Runyan, 1870–1957
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Preacher	Pastor Karl Hester
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