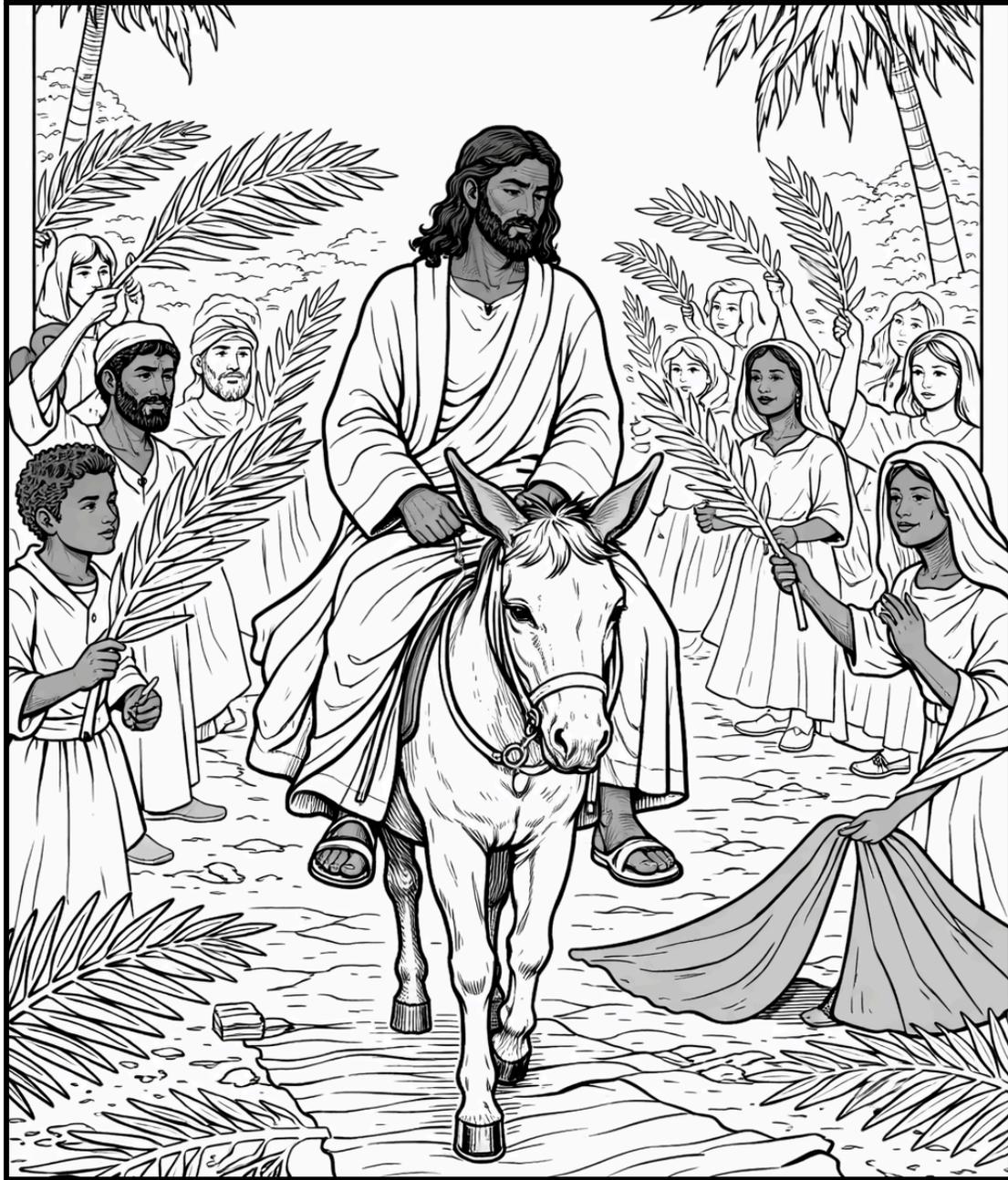




TREE OF LIFE

Christian Fellowship

“for Healing, Obedience, & Peace on Earth” (H.O.P.E.)



Lent IV | 15 Mar 2026

“Who Is This?”

Matthew 21:1—22:14

✠ The Way of Jesus Liturgy ✠

Invocation

Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, ^{Gen 1:1} ♦ **you created us to “serve and protect” your creation.** ^{Gen 2:15} ♦ But we destroy your creation ^{Rev 11:18} ♦ **through Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence.** ^{Gen 3:1—4:17} ♦ So you send your Word in the flesh of your Son Jesus, ^{John 1:14} who says, ♦ **“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven has arrived!”** ^{Matt 4:17} **Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me!”** ^{Matt 16:24} ♦ And you baptize us with your Holy Spirit ^{Acts 1:5} ♦ **so we might care for all your creation by following Jesus’s Way of “faith, hope, and love.”** ^{1 Cor 13:13}

Hear what Jesus says, ♦ **“Love the Lord your Creator with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** ♦ This is the first and great command. And the second is like it: ♦ **Love your neighbor as yourself.”** ^{Matt 22:37-39}

Processional Song — *“When Christ Went to the Temple” (tune: LSB 660)*

- ♫ *When Christ went to the Temple to worship God one day, he entered through the courtyard where anyone could pray. That court was for the nations — and all could enter in. But Jesus found a market, a shameful robbers’ den. ♪*
- ♫ *There, cattle, sheep and pigeons were sold for sacrifice, And money-changers shouted of quality and price. Outsiders could not enter the inner courts for prayer. Their only place to worship was in the courtyard there. ♪*
- ♫ *When prayer gave way to profit, and pride closed many doors, the Lord cried out in anger and made a whip of cords. He saved the sheep and cattle and all the pigeons, too. God’s house was for all creatures — not for a chosen few. ♪*
- ♫ *He overturned the tables of all the bankers there, for they all wanted money and were not there to share. The blind and lame came with him, in through the temple door, the children followed after along with all the poor. ♪*
- ♫ *O God, you love the nations and call us all to pray. Forgive us when our worship turns other folk away. As Christ, in loving protest, fought selfishness and pride, may we who follow Jesus now welcome all inside. ♪*

Lent Litany

“Naked I came from my mother-earth’s womb ♦ **and naked I will return there.**

The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, ♦ **blessed be the name of the Lord.”** ^{Job 1:21}

“The Lord has torn the mighty from their thrones, ♦ **but he has lifted up the humble.**

He has filled the hungry with good, ♦ **and sent the rich away empty.”** ^{Luke 1:52-53}

Jesus says, “If a seed falls into the earth and dies, ♦ **it produces much fruit.”** ^{John 12:24}

Prayer of the Day

Jesus says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” ^{Matt 18:20}

(the Christ candle is lit to remind us that Jesus is coming among us)

- ♫ *O Christ, who called the twelve to rise and follow you, forsaking old, familiar ways for ventures bold and new: Grant us to hear your call to risk security and, bound in heart and will to you, find perfect liberty. ♪ O Christ, who led the twelve among the desolate and broke as bread of life for all your love compassionate: Lead us along the ways where hope has nearly died and help us climb the lonely hills where love is crucified. ♪ (LSB 856)*

The Lord Jesus be with you. ♦ **And also with you.** ♦ Let us pray. Heavenly Father, help us to see Jesus for who he really is. In the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. † **Amen.**

† Baptism — The Way of Faith †

Surrendering to the Creator

Jesus says, “If you hold onto your soul, ♦ **you will lose it.** ♦ But if you let go of your soul, ♦ **you will find it.** ^{Matt 10:39} ♦ You must be born again through water and the Spirit ♦ **to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.**” ^{John 3:5} ♦ Father, Son, & Holy Spirit ♦ **I surrender to you all my † mind, all my † heart, and all my † body and † soul.**

(we make the sign of the cross—touching forehead, heart, and shoulders)

“Father, not my will, ♦ **but your will be done.** ^{Matt 26:39} ♦ Father, into your hands ♦ **I commit my spirit.**” ^{Luke 23:46} ♪ *Take my life and all my heart, take my whole soul ev’ry part. Take my mouth and let it be, filled with your truth and mercy. ♪ Take my hands and let them love, with compassion from above. Take my feet and let them go, on the Way that Jesus showed. ♪ Take my money and fam’ly, give me faith and set me free. Take my life and teach me how to love all creation now. ♪ (LSB 783)*

Listening to the Creator

Jesus says, “Come to me, all of you who are tired and burdened. Take my Way upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.” ^{Matt 11:28-29}

♪ *Listen to what Jesus teaches, listen to him every day. Listen as you walk and follow, listen also as you pray. Listen to him every moment, listen with an open mind. Listen to find peace and patience, listen so you will be kind. ♪ (LSB 770)*

Remembering the Saints & Martyrs — Perpetua & Felicity

Father, we give you thanks for the great cloud of saints and witnesses who have gone before us and have embodied the Way of Jesus. Today we remember Perpetua and Felicity who were arrested in 203 AD for following Jesus. They said, "We are not in our own hands, we are in God’s hands." Perpetua had a young baby and Felicity had given birth two days before entering the arena to be executed. Perpetua's last words were, "Stand fast in the faith and love each other." Help us learn from their faith and example, † **Amen.**

Chanted Psalm — Psalm 17



♪ *Lord, let judgment come forth | from your hand,
* let your eyes look upon us with | your justice.
I have called upon you, for you will | answer me,
* incline your ear to me and | hear my cries.
Deliver me from the men | of the world,
* those who are wealthy, greedy, | and violent.
Save me so I can follow you | with justice
* and be satisfied by your daily | provision. ♪*

Law & Prophets — Isaiah 19:1-10

The Prophets reading comes from Isaiah 19. ♦ **“Those who listen will live.”** ^{John 5:25}

We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every Word from the Lord.** ^{Matt 4:4}

Epistle — 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

The Epistle reading comes from 1 Cor 11. ♦ **“Those who listen will live.”** ^{John 5:25}

We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every Word from the Lord.** ^{Matt 4:4}

† Holy Gospel † Matthew 21:12-17

We stand for the word of Jesus. ♪ ***If you lose your life for my sake, you will find it; if you want to save your life, let it go. Take up your cross, deny yourself. Come, follow me, follow me.*** ♪ (tune: GC2 688)

The holy Gospel comes from Matthew 21. ♦ **“Those who listen will live.”** ^{John 5:25}

“If you have ears, then listen!” ^{Matt 13:9} ♦ **Lord, help us to practice your Word.** ^{Matt 7:24}

Message

† Repentance — The Way of Hope †

Confronting Our Past

Jesus says, “I know what you do. I search minds and hearts and I will give to each of you according to your practices.” ^{Rev 2:19, 23} Remove the log from your own eye!” ^{Matt 7:5}

(silence for reflection)

For prostituting ourselves with the false gods of Civilization, ^{Ex 20:3} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For trusting the works of human hands, especially money, ^{Ex 20:4} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For being hypocrites who misrepresent your name, ^{Ex 20:7} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For overworking land, animals, and each other, ^{Ex 20:8} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For not respecting our fathers and mothers in Christ, ^{Ex 20:12} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For being violent to our bodies and your creation, ^{Ex 20:13} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For degrading ourselves and others with our sexuality, ^{Ex 20:14} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For trying to possess and control your creation, ^{Ex 20:15} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For not being vulnerable and honest with others, ^{Ex 20:16} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

For competing with others and desiring more, ^{Ex 20:17} ♦ **Father, forgive us.**

Jesus says, “Enter through the narrow Way. Because the Way of Destruction is wide and easy ♦ **and many enter through it.** ♦ But the Way of Life is narrow and difficult ♦ **and few find it.** ^{Matt 7:13-14} ♦ Whoever does not disown his own father, mother, wife,

children, brothers, sisters, and even his own soul, ♦ **cannot be my disciple.** ♦ Whoever does not carry his own cross and follow me ♦ **cannot be my disciple.”** ^{Luke 14:26-27}

♪ ***Lord Father we have wandered and hidden from your face. Rescue your whole creation with your almighty grace. From trust in wealth and weapons and blindness to your Way, save us and all creation with your own hands, we pray.*** ♪ (LSB 449)

Jesus says, “I discipline those I love. Repent! I am standing at the door knocking!” ^{Rev 3:19-20} Come out of Civilization, my people, so you will not share in its sicknesses! ^{Rev 18:4}

Not one stone will be left standing, it will all be torn down.” ^{Matt 24:2} Will you turn away from Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence and reaffirm your Baptism into Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love? ♦ **Yes, I renounce Civilization’s Way and pledge to follow Jesus.** ♦ Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive

mercy. ^{Matt 5:7} If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ^{Matt 6:14} Put your sword away. If you take up the sword, you will die by the sword.” ^{Matt 26:52} Will you release all debts and grudges that you hold against anyone—including every member of this church? ♦ **Yes, I forgive all those who have hurt me, frustrated me, or owe me anything.** ♦ Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven. Get up and walk!” ^{Matt 9:5} Remember what you have heard and obey it!” ^{Rev 3:3} † **Amen.**

Song of the Day — “A King Planned a Party” (tune: LSB 643)

- ♫ *A king planned a party — a feast, rich and hearty. He sent invitations to all of his guests. So what could be better than getting a letter And being invited and welcomed and blessed? “My work needs attention,” said one, “Not to mention, My family is growing. There’s so much to do.” “My farm,” said another, “Is big, and—oh, brother—I’m busy with hobbies I want to pursue.”* ♪
- ♫ *“The wedding is ready! My guests are not worthy!” The king told his servants when nobody came. So go search the alleys, the hills and the valleys, And bring in the poor and the blind and the lame.” That day there was singing and halls that were ringing With laughter and joy in that wonderful place. For those who attended knew how they depended Upon the king’s generous mercy and grace.* ♪
- ♫ *O God, you invite us! You seek to delight us. Your table is ready for those who say “Yes!” Do we make excuses when you want to choose us To sit at your table, forgiven and blessed? And, Lord, as you welcome us into your kingdom, May we reach to welcome the world by your grace. You love the outsider. Now may we reach wider To welcome the world with your loving embrace.* ♪

Waiting on the Creator

- ♫ *Our Father, bring your Rule and will to earth. Give what we need for worry-free rebirth. Bring peace among us and forgive us too, as we forgive and love in all we do.*
- ♫ *Protect us from all things that will mislead. Keep us from selfishness, violence, and greed. We place our lives into your hands this day. Teach us to listen and to walk your Way. Amen.* ♪ (LSB 637)

(incense is lit to symbolize our prayers ascending to God and as its smell fills this space we are reminded of his presence among us)

Jesus says, “Learn from the birds. They do not store things up and your heavenly Father feeds them. ^{Matt 6:26} Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness and everything you need will be given to you. Do not worry about tomorrow. ^{Matt 6:33-34} Stay awake and pray so you will not fall into temptation. The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ^{Matt 26:41}

*In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, set us apart from Civilization in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Take charge of our lives and all those in authority. Use everything that happens to bring your good judgment and healing upon all creation. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, provide for us, protect us, and heal our brokenness. Especially this day we remember Charlene Sargent, John Espino, Bill Mellott, Cebra Sims, and those we name in our hearts... Father, give us exactly what we need this day and teach us to be content with that. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, forgive us and free us from all that enslaves us. Help us to walk away from our anxieties, traumas, and addictions to Civilization’s Way, so we may walk in Jesus’s Way. Empower us to love and forgive everyone, even our enemies, in the way you have loved and forgiven us. *In*

peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♪ Lord have mercy. ♪ Father, humble us and remind us that we have no strength apart from you. Stay with us in difficult times and save us from our selfishness. Comfort us in the certain hope that all your creation and children will be renewed and raised from the dead. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♪ Lord have mercy.* ♪ Father, help us to let go and surrender everything into your loving hands, trusting that you “work all things for the good of those who love you.” Rom 8:28 ♦
“Our Father in Heaven, may your name be holy, may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done—on Earth as in Heaven. Give us this day what we need for today. Forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. Do not abandon us when we are tempted, but pull us away from what is evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours—now and forever.” Matt 6:9-13 † Amen.

† Communion — The Way of Love †

Sharing the Lord’s Peace

Jesus says, “Before you come to the Lord’s altar, ♦ **make peace with each other.**” Matt 5:24
Blessed are the peacemakers, ♦ **for they will be called the Creator’s children.**” Matt 5:9

Offering & Musical Offering

Jesus says, “Do not store up things on earth.” Matt 6:19 To be my disciple you must give up all you own. Luke 14:33 Sell your possessions, give to the poor, and you will have a storage in heaven.” Matt 19:21 We offer everything to the Lord, as we offer gifts to this church.

Pledge of Allegiance

♪ *We come before you, Lord, to bow. We lay our lives at your feet now. All things are yours, we own nothing! Our lives are in your hands this day. Give what we need, O Lord, we pray. Please protect us, provide for us! Watch over us, ever with us, always love us!* ♪ (LSB 816) Jesus says, “If you pledge your allegiance to me before others, then I will pledge my allegiance to you before my heavenly Father.” Matt 10:32

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one God, the all-powerful Father, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is God’s only Son. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He loved and he suffered. Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day he was raised from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is coming to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will not end.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the baptism for forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life in the age to come.** † Amen.

Thanksgiving — Ευχαριστία

Let us give thanks to our Creator! ♦ **It is right to give him thanks and praise!**

Father, we praise and thank you, ♦ **for you provide, protect, love, and renew us and all creation!** ♦ We are grateful for all that you give, especially for... Father, we thank you for marrying yourself to us and uniting Heaven and Earth, Spirit and Flesh, and Christ and the Church through your Son Jesus! Eph 5:32

♫ *Lord Jesus, think on me, amid struggle and strife. In all my pain and misery, please be my health and life. ♪ Lord Jesus, think on me, that when the flood is past, I may a new creation be, and walk with you steadfast. ♪ (LSB 610)*

† Words of Our Lord Jesus †

Jesus says, “Whoever humbles himself is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” ^{Matt 18:4} On the night before our Lord Jesus was crucified, he humbly washed the feet of his students and enemies. Jesus said, ♦ **“I have given you an example. Do as I have done for you.”** ^{John 13:15} **Love others. In the same way I have loved you, love others. By this all will know that you are my disciples: if you love each other.”** ^{John 13:34-35} ♦ During supper, Jesus then took the bread and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is my † body, given for you. Do the same in my memory.” After supper, Jesus then took the cup and gave thanks. He said, “This is my † blood of the covenant, poured out for you, for the forgiveness of sins. Do the same in my memory.” ^{Matt 26:26-28, Luke 22:19-20}

♫ *Oh come Lord Jesus come and dine and give yourself through bread and wine. Feed us so we may have new birth, and bring your rule ov'r all the earth. Come now, come now! Our Lord Jesus and bring your healing love to us! ♪ (LSB 357)*

Sharing the Bread & Wine

Jesus says, “I am the Bread of Life. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me.” ^{John 6:51, 56} As we feed on the Bread of Life ♦ **we are made members of Christ’s Body.** ^{1 Cor 10:16-17} ♦ We no longer live for ourselves ♦ **but Christ lives within us.** ^{Gal 2:20} ♦ We invite all Baptized members of the universal Church, who give their undivided allegiance to Jesus and are at peace with their brothers and sisters in Christ, to join us ♦ **as the Creator’s Lamb mysteriously gives himself to us in, with, and under this bread, wine, and communion.** ♫ *When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride. ♪ Were the whole realm of creation mine, that would be a gift far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. ♪ (LSB 425)*

Song — “Once a Father Told His Children” (tune: LSB 583)

- ♫ *Once a father told his children, “Go and do your daily chores. Go and work out in my vineyard; All that’s mine will soon be yours.” One responded, “I won’t do it!” Then he changed his mind and went. One said, “Yes! Just send me to it!” But he went back home again. ♪*
- ♫ *Once a church was filled with Christians Who were proud and feeling blessed. “God has called us and we’ve answered! We have truly answered, Yes!” On a chilly Sunday morning, When a homeless man came by, They said, “Go! It’s not yet storming! God is love — he will supply.” ♪*
- ♫ *Once a woman, quite the sinner, Struggled deep in pain and doubt. As she passed that church in winter, There she saw that man walk out. He was homeless, worn and weary, So she stopped her car and said, “I’m no saint but you look hungry — Let’s go buy some soup and bread.” ♪*
- ♫ *God of love, you call your children; Some say, “No!” and some say, “Yes!” Lord, forgive us for our judging Who will be among the blessed. For your kingdom is surprising; Some you call will not obey; Those we find ourselves despising May be those who seek your way. ♪*

Αγάπη Feast & Text Discussion

Jesus says, “Do you love me? ♦ **Then feed my sheep.**” ^{John 21:17} ♦ We now move to our Bible study room to continue devoting ourselves ♦ **“to the Apostles’ teaching, to communion with each other, to the sharing of bread, and to prayer.”** ^{Acts 2:42}

Sent to “Do the Same in My Memory”

Jesus says, “Love your enemies ♦ **so you will be children of your heavenly Father.**” ^{Matt 5:44-45} ♦ Go proclaim, ♦ **the Kingdom of Heaven has arrived!** ♦ Freely you have received from the Creator, ♦ **now freely you must give.** ^{Matt 10:7-8} ♦ I am sending you like sheep among wolves, ♦ **so be as clever as serpents and as non-violent as doves.** ^{Matt 10:16} ♦ Make disciples of all nations, ♦ **baptizing and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.** ^{Matt 28:19-20} ♦ Do not be afraid to suffer! ♦ **Be faithful through death and I will give you the crown of life.**” ^{Rev 2:10} † Amen.

♫ *Go to dark Gethsemane, you who feel the tempter’s pow’r. Your Lord Jesus’ conflict see, watch with him one painful hour. Shun not suff’ring, shame or loss, learn from him to bear your cross. ♫ To his cross go make your climb, there to worship at his feet. It is here his kingdom’s time, his self-sacrifice complete. “God forgive them,” hear his cry; learn from Jesus Christ to die. ♫ (LSB 436)*

Blessing

Jesus says, “Blessed are you who are poor, for the Creator’s Kingdom is yours.” ^{Luke 6:20}
Blessed are your eyes, because they see. Blessed are your ears, because they listen. ^{Matt 13:16}
Blessed are those who listen to the Creator’s Word and obey it.” ^{Luke 11:28} † **Amen.**

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- * Faith & Film: “The Chosen” Season 5 (Mar 16, 23, 30, Apr 6, 13)
 - * 40 Days of Walking the Way: Weds in Sanctuary @ 6 pm (Mar 18, 25)
 - Liturgies focused on the Way of Jesus and study of the Sermon on the Mount
 - * Game Night: First Fridays @ DG (6 pm, BYOB), Apr 10, May 8
 - * Congregational Affiliation Survey: Pick one up in the back and please return by Mar 29

Weekly Calendar | March 15 - 22, 2026

Sun, Mar 15	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Matthew 21:1—22:14
Mon, Mar 16	6:00 pm	Faith & Film
Wed, Mar 18	6:00 pm	40 Days of Walking the Way
Sat, Mar 21	7-9 am	Breakfast & Devotion
Sun, Mar 22	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Matthew 22:15—23:39

Tree of Life Christian Fellowship (722 Reynolds Ave) — www.TreeofLifeKC.com

Luke Kammrath, Pastor — luke.kammrath@gmail.com (913) 303-0977

Marie Sasnett, Financial Deacon — marie.stlukes@gmail.com

Marsha Oyer, Music — arbpe@sbcglobal.net

Disciple Garden (DG): 3200 N 10th Street, Kansas City, KS 66104

Donate Online Through Venmo: @StLukes-Church

