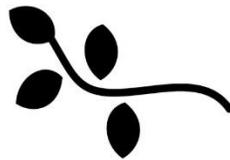




**...a season to dream, explore and recommit to
faith in action!**



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
CELEBRATING LOVE. DOING JUSTICE.

Sunday March 15, 2026 – 10:30 AM
Fourth Sunday of Lent – Morning Prayer

PRELUDE “Steadfast Cross” James Mansfield

ENTRANCE HYMN There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy (NCH 23)

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earthly sorrows
are more felt than in God's heaven;
there's no place where earthly failings
have such kindly judgment given.

2 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our minds;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives would show thanksgiving
for the goodness of our God.

GREETING

Blessed be God who loves us in our limitations and fosters our loving all whom we meet.

Blessed be the ones who welcome the Christ in us all.

CONFESSION

During the season of Lent we take inventory of our lives, as we confess our separation from God, our neighbors, and ourselves. A period of silence for personal prayer and reflection will be observed.

Let us pray together;

Most merciful God, we confess before you and one another that we have fallen short of the wholeness you desire for us. We have betrayed your trust. We have been less than you created us to be. We have failed to speak out against that which is evil. We have cooperated with systems of injustice. We have built our prosperity upon the lives of others who suffer. We know that you accept and forgive us. We know that you are always ready to heal us of our ignorance and lack of concern for others. Help us to open our hearts to your love, that in so doing we may love ourselves along with our neighbor, strive for justice for all people, and hold forth the vision of what is possible. This we pray as Jesus, our great teacher modeled and who chose life in choosing death. AMEN.

ABSOLUTION

The Officiant says to the People:

God freely offers forgiveness and calls us to turn and live in the joy of God’s love. God has given power to all people to forgive one another and themselves. Therefore, know that God forgives us. Therefore let us forgive ourselves and accept others forgiven and be free.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

God is with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Creator and Healer, root of all goodness, working your Sabbath will in the chaos of our life: teach us the insight that gives true judgement and praises you wherever you are found, making miracles from spit and mud; through Jesus Christ, the Son of earth. **AMEN.**

“O God, we hear and hear, and do not understand. We see and see, but do not perceive. Sharpen our memory, unlock our grief, teach us to name what is evil and refuse it: even when it seems normal even when it seems necessary even when it is commanded by religion; then, now, always.” AMEN.

SCRIPTURE APPOINTED for the DAY

A reading from the First Book of Samuel

YAHWEH said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve for Saul since I rejected him as ruler of Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. For I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem, for I have chosen my ruler from among his children.”

But Samuel replied, “How can I go? For if Saul learns about it, I will be murdered.”

YAHWEH replied, “Take a heifer with you: I am sending you to Jesse. Tell him that you came to offer a sacrifice to YAHWEH, and invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me my selection.”

Samuel did what YAHWEH said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met Samuel. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”

Samuel said, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to YAHWEH. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his children and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, and Samuel saw Eliab, and said to himself, “Surely, God’s anointed stands here before YAHWEH.”

But YAHWEH said to Samuel, “Pay no attention to appearance and height; I have rejected him. YAHWEH does not see as mortals see; mortals see only appearances but YAHWEH sees into the heart.”

Then Jesse called Abinadab to pass before Samuel, who said, “No. YAHWEH has not chosen this one.”

Next came Shammah, but Samuel said, “Not this one either.”

Seven sons were presented to Samuel by Jesse, who said, “YAHWEH has not chosen any of these.”

Samuel asked, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse said, “but he is tending the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until the lad arrives.”

So they sent for the boy, a ruddy youth with bright eyes, and handsome to behold. YAHWEH said, “Rise and anoint this one.”

The Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed the boy in the presence of his brothers,

know with surpassing certainty that only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth. And that is not speaking.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church

Thanks be to God

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.

And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God and who moves among and with us today. And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

PRAYERS and PETITIONS of the PEOPLE

O God of our hearts, God of love, you are with us in every transition and change.

We recall your deep compassion, presence and abounding love.

We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills with which you have blessed us.

We thank you for the experiences that have brought us to this moment.

We thank you for the work of others that gives breadth and depth to our own work.

Be with us as we move forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another.

God of mercy, God of peace, **hear our prayer.**

During this season of Lent, let us hold close to our hearts all those in need, those who suffer, and those who mourn. In the prayers that follow, you are invited to respond with your own concerns and thanksgivings related to the particular focus of each petition

For those who are experiencing homelessness, unemployment, underemployment or loneliness, that we may lift each other's' burdens.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of mercy,

Receive our prayer.

For the health and regeneration of our living planet Earth, that we may accept our responsibility for its care and future.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of creation,

Receive our prayer.

For all who govern within our towns, states and nations, that they will hear and heed the cry of all in need, and awaken to the call for peace.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of reconciliation,

Receive our prayer

For those who struggle to see you in their lives and relationships, that we may reflect your Divine love to them.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of tenderness,

Receive our prayer.

For those for whom the Immigration Customs Enforcement Agency has caused pain, suffering, and hardship, that those around them will respond tenderly.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of compassion,

God of peace, receive our prayer.

For all who are harmed because of their race or ethnicity, that we may work to dismantle systems of oppression.

(You are invited to add your specific concerns and thanksgivings in this area.)

O God of love,

Receive our prayer.

We now pray the concerns and thanksgivings of this parish family.

(You are invited to add additional concerns and thanksgivings.)

We know that you hear our prayers, O God. During this season of Lent, help us to open ourselves to the needs of those around us, that by so doing, we may reveal the beauty of your beloved community. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The Savior will not command legions of angels nor ride the machine of holy war; the Redeemer will become a slave, take our hate into their heart and win us with forgiveness, for the Savior is God's unexpected peace.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY – “Hope Is the Thing with Feathers” - Sheryl Martineau

Krista Donough – Soprano, Chris Henke - Piano

GATHERING AT THE TABLE

God be with you!

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to the Creator.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

We thank you, desert Mother, for in the valley of dry bones you create hearts of flesh quickened by the Spirit's breath. We thank you, wise Sister that you walk in cloud and fire with your lost and faithless people.

We thank you, Son of heaven, that you empty yourself of might and glory and set your face toward the fickle crowd, the cruel empire, and the faithful despisers.

We welcome you as God's own son whose cross brings to nothing the violence of the world and reveals another wisdom outside the city walls.

Therefore, with all who follow your way with the traders and tax collectors, the soldiers and prostitutes, and all who caught a glimpse of glory in the humanity you shared, we worship God's own holiness revealed in sweat and tears, as we sing:

Holy, Holy, Holy, my heart, my heart adores you.

My heart is glad to say the words, you are the holy one!

Holy and gracious Creator: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen astray and became vulnerable to evil you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Creator of all.

Before Jesus's mortal death, he taught us and we are bold to pray in whatever language or form that brings us closer to God,

**Our Mother, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN.

As we gather here today, we are sanctified by Jesus's love and the gift of the Holy Spirit which sustains us this day and always. All this we offer in the unity, constancy and peace; at the last day let us join with all our ancestors and forbearers into the joy of everlasting life.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Let us pray together

Creator of this gathering beyond measure and price; we thank you for meeting us in our brokenness so that none might be lost: liberate us now to share our bread with neighbors and strangers, each receiving from the other what we need to be ourselves. AMEN.

BENEDICTION

CLOSING HYMN Guide Me O My Great Redeemer (NCH 18)

1 Guide me, O my great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

3 When I reach the River Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on heaven's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever sing to you,
I will ever sing to you.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
ever be my strength and shield,
ever be my strength and shield.

POSTLUDE “*The Upper Room*” - James Southbridge

ANNOUNCEMENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Palm Sunday and Holy Week: Palm Sunday, March 29th: Service at 10:30 a.m. **Maundy Thursday, April 2nd:** Service at 6:30 p.m. **Good Friday, April 3rd,** at 6:30 p.m.
Easter Sunday, April 5th: Service at 10:30 a.m.

The Serendipity Stitchers welcome you. **Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m.** On 3/17. Our gatherings are always full of laughter, delicious treats, and plenty of good company. No experience necessary. Please get in touch with Veronica for more information.

Annual Meeting: March 22, following the 10:30 service.

The Whippany River Clean-up Saturday, 3/21/2026: The Whippany River Clean-up! 8:30 am-12 noon. 59 Spring Street, Morristown. See the Peg after the service, or fill out the signup sheet near the MLK portrait.

Easter Flowers and Music dedication: A beautiful tradition at Redeemer is the Easter display on all of the altars and the lovely music that fills our Church through Easter. Any contribution is appreciated. Place the completed form or envelope in the offering plate or bring it to the church office before

Palm Sunday, March 29th. Please print clearly on the form. Any questions, contact Sandra at office@redeemermorristown.org

The Book Group meets online at 7pm: 3/30/26 THE HORSEWOMAN by James Patterson and Mike Lupica. Please contact Veronica for the link. Please support your local bookshop and Redeemer by ordering from our online Bookshop by going here. <https://bookshop.org/shop/Redeemer>

Keep updated with all that is going on at Redeemer

Visit our website: <https://redeemermorristown.org/> for further information and to sign up for our newsletter.

Please "like" and check out our Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/FBchurch> or follow us on Instagram - @RedeemerMorristown - <http://bit.ly/Instachurch>.

We are now on BlueSky -@redeemermorristown.bsky.social , <https://bit.ly/RedeemerBSKY>



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Visit our website- www.redeemermorristown.org and click on “Donate” in the upper right-hand corner.
Or (can you tell we want to make it easy for you?!), go to: <http://tinyurl.com/RedeemerDonateNow>

From Rev. Willie J. Smith

On March 15th we are at mid-point of Lent, the words of Isaiah 66:10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all who love her " starts off the week. There are alternate references made to the Fourth Sunday it is known as Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday, Mothering Sunday and Refreshment Sunday. There are 21 days to the celebration of Easter.

This Sunday is considered a day of relaxation from normal Lenten fast (Refreshment Sunday); a day of hope with Easter at last within sight. Traditionally, weddings (otherwise banned during Lent) could be performed on this day, and servants were released from service for the day to visit their church, the place in which they received the sacrament of baptism (hence 'Mothering Sunday').

As we continue our Lenten Journey, here is something from Richard Rohr OFM to meditate on:

What about Original Sin?

The "image of God" in us is absolute and unchanging. It's pure and total gift, given equally to all. But this picture was complicated when the concept of original sin entered the Christian mind.

In this idea—first put forth by Augustine in the fifth century but never mentioned in the Bible—we emphasized that human beings were born into "sin" because Adam and Eve "offended God" by eating from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." As punishment, God cast them out of the garden of Eden. Original sin wasn't something we did at all; it was something that was done to us (passed down from Adam and Eve). In this understanding, we're all off to a bad start.

By contrast, most of the world's great religions start with some sense of primal goodness in their creation stories. The Jewish and Christian traditions beautifully succeeded at this, with the Genesis record telling us that God called creation "good" five times in Genesis 1:10–25, and even "very good" in 1:31.

But after Augustine, most Christian theologies shifted from the positive vision of Genesis 1 to the more negative vision of Genesis 3—the so-called fall, or what I am calling the "problem." Instead of embracing God's master plan for humanity and creation—what we Franciscans still call the "Primacy of Christ"—Christians shrunk our image of both Jesus and Christ. Our "Savior" became a mere Johnny-come-lately "answer" to the problem of sin, a problem that we had largely created ourselves.

In one way, the doctrine of “original sin” was good and helpful in that it taught us not to be surprised at the frailty and woundedness that we all carry. Just as goodness is inherent and shared, so it seems with evil. This is, in fact, a very merciful teaching. Knowledge of our shared wound ought to free us from the burden of unnecessary and individual guilt or shame and help us to be forgiving and compassionate with ourselves and one another.

Yet historically speaking, the teaching of original sin started us off on the wrong foot—with a no instead of a yes, with mistrust instead of trust. We have spent centuries trying to solve the “problem” that we’re told is at the heart of our humanity. But if we start with a problem, we tend to never get beyond that mindset.

To begin climbing out of the hole of original sin, we must start with a positive and generous cosmic vision. Generosity tends to build on itself. I have never met a truly compassionate or loving human being who did not have a foundational and even deep trust in the inherent goodness of human nature.

The Christian story line must start with a positive and overarching vision for humanity and for history, or it will never get beyond the primitive, exclusionary, and fear-based stages of most early human development. We are ready for a major course correction.



The Man Born Blind-John 9

FROM DEACON ERIK

I encourage each of you, in this season of Lent, to dream and imagine the Church of Redeemer in the 21st Century. I continue to challenge you to look at who you are as a leader in the Episcopal church, offering not just inclusive language but a congregation that acts on their faith.

Taking this time to dream and explore encourages breaking out of stagnant routines and imagining a better & brighter future. The church of the Redeemer is filled with people who believe in faith inspired by the hope that life is eternal, supported by the sustaining promise of God's unquestionable love.

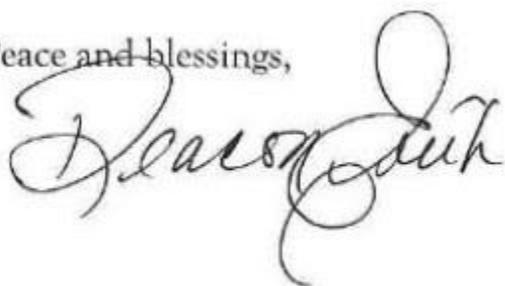
Complacency leads to defeat and exclusion. This is not what I have been told is the spirit of the Church of the Redeemer. Actively exploring new initiatives and ministries is the gift of our imaginations. Now more than ever, it is time for us to dream.

I challenged you all in Advent to do some cleaning and clearing of spaces. The specific space was and is the church undercroft, which is cluttered and presents neglect. I have been told there are treasures in this space, and it is time to rescue these treasures. The opportunity to name and identify these artifacts of Redeemer's history will unearth many of the seeds of your dreams for the Church of the Redeemer.

These are gifts that require moving from dreams to planning and action that will chart the course of faith in action, our ministry in 2026, and thereafter. Let us welcome Eastertide with the joy of resurrection.

In last week's Gospel, we learned that Jesus was talking with Elijah and Moses as witnessed by Peter, James, and John. We also learned that Peter wanted to preserve this with individual huts for Jesus and the two prophets. Instead, God exclaimed this is my son whom I am pleased, listen to him. In the moment of this dramatic transfiguration, belief is realized.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deacon Erik". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed text "Peace and blessings,".



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