

Prelude – “Prayer” Davis

Greeting

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Opening Hymn – “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

Call to Worship

The Lenten season has begun.

**Listen, for God is still speaking.**

Look, for God is still present.

**Worship, for God is in our midst.**

We follow Jesus on the Lenten path,

**for where he is, we would be also.**

Choral Introit - “Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley” Amer. folk hymn

Opening Prayer

**Gracious and loving God, we have come to this place to be your faithful disciples. On this Lenten journey, help us grow in our faith and in our relationship with you. Open our hearts to your love.**

**Open our eyes to the light of your Son. Open our hands to the work of your Holy Spirit. Transform us so that we may share your grace and follow the ways that lead to new life. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

Passing of Peace

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Call to Prayer

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

Children’s Message

Offertory Reflection

Offertory Anthem – “Lord, Lead Me, Lord” arr. Martin

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

**These offerings belong to you, O Lord, for you are the source of every blessing and joy. Employ these gifts to build your realm. Send them into the world to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and reconcile us to one another. By our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our service, make your church a true instrument of peace. Amen.**

Hymn – “Goodness Is Stronger than Evil” (sing twice)

Gospel Reading – Matthew 27:11–26\*\*

Sermon – “Pontius Pilate: The Power We Fear”

Closing Hymn - “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Announcements

Benediction

And God’s people say: **Amen.**

Benediction Response – “Jesus, Tempted in the Desert” Williams

Postlude – “Grand Triumphal March” Guilmant

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\*\*After the scripture readings, please respond, "Thanks be to God."

We extend a warm welcome to all who are attending our worship service this morning in person, on Zoom, or watching later via a video link.

**The Flowers on the altar** this morning are given to the Glory of God by Ellen, Richard, and Nancy Cellini in loving memory of Tony and Sandy Cellini.

**Today** – Senior Choir

Acolyte – William Weirich

Lay Reader – Angela McAlister

Minister of Music – Karen Leonard

Pastor – Rev. Geisa Matos

## THIS WEEK AT WEST CHELMSFORD UMC

### **Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent**

**9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom**

**9:30 AM, Sunday School in the Education Wing**

**10:30 AM, Coffee Hour in the Vestry**

1:30 PM, MVR Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

2:00 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Tiger Den Mtg, in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

3:00 PM, Westford Girl Scout Troop 70533 Mtg, in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

3:30 PM, Private Event in Fellowship Hall

Monday – 6:45 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Bear Den Mtg. in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

**7:30 PM, Jubilee Ringers Rehearsal in the Sanctuary**

Tuesday – **7:00 PM, Christian Ed Committee Meeting via Zoom**

7:00 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Arrow of Light Den Mtg. in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

Wednesday – **7:30 PM, Staff/Parish Meeting via Zoom**

**7:30 PM, Festival Ringers Rehearsal in the Sanctuary**

Thursday – 6:30 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Wolf Den Mtg, in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

**7:30 PM, Senior Choir Rehearsal in the Choir Room**

Friday – 7:30 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Webelos Den Mtg. in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

### **Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent, Communion**

**9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom**

Sermon: Based on Samuel Wells' *Power & Passion: Six Characters in Search of Resurrection*

### **Ongoing Prayer Requests**

- World peace and social justice for all God's children, independently of race, gender, or socioeconomic background.
- All who are sick, mourning, and/or lonely.

## Article Submission Due Dates

- Articles for the **mid-week email** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Monday**.
- Articles for the **church bulletin insert** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Tuesday**.

**Altar Visual:** As we journey through Lent, the altar will reflect five characters from the four Gospel accounts of the week leading to Easter.

On the first Sunday of Lent, we encounter Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. The ***bowl and towel*** are representative of Pilate's fear and indecision. "*When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood, he said'*" **Matthew 27: 24**. Upon learning that Jesus is a Galilean, Pilate hands Jesus over to Herod, another act of indecision. The ***purple cloth*** on the altar represents the robe in which Herod dresses Jesus and sends him back to Pilate and the ***crown*** to mock the true king. No one wants to take responsibility. The ***black cloth on the cross*** symbolizes the false power and authority of Pilate.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

**The sign-up sheet for the St. Paul's Meal** is now online. To volunteer, please click on the link below. The St. Paul's Meal will be served on **Wednesday, February 25, 2026**. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448A8AB28AAFF2-61903615-stpauls>

**Book Study - Simon Peter: The Flawed but Faithful Disciple** - Join us during Lent and beyond, as we follow the journey of Simon Peter, an ordinary fisherman who heard an extraordinary call. This six-week Adam Hamilton study is designed to help us examine our unique gifts that God can use despite our human shortcomings. The study will begin **Sunday, March 8, 2026**. Each lesson will be offered in person on Sunday morning following coffee hour, and the same session will be offered again on **Wednesday nights (beginning March 11<sup>th</sup>) at 6:30 PM** via Zoom.

Participants are encouraged to attend the session that best fits their schedule each week. We will not offer a class on Easter Sunday or the following Wednesday. Participant books are available at the church office or through Amazon <https://a.co/d/0hMc1ulh>. Please contact Lorraine Macpherson with questions.

**2026 Lent Devotional** - This year, the Congregational Care Committee decided on two ways to provide a devotional for everyone: a free online daily Bible devotional app (see below) and a printed devotion called "The Sanctuary for Lent 2026." This devotional booklet is available at the Usher's Table.

The app is extremely easy to use and very thought-provoking. Every morning, it will appear in your notifications and include a Daily Bible "Verse of the Day", a "Guided Scripture" video, and a "Guided Prayer."

We pray that you find these devotions inspiring and that they help you deepen your connection to God. May all of our lights shine bright, in Jesus' name.

With love,  
The Congregational Care Committee- Janice Rutter

Instructions for the Daily Bible Devotional (The App icon is Holy Bible with a red background)

These instructions may require you to use your password to complete the connection. If you have difficulty, Sue Loiselle, Ellen Cellini, or Janice Rutter can help you during coffee hour after the church service.

- For the Apple iPhone
  1. Go to the App Store on your device
  2. Click on "Search" (looks like a magnifying glass at the bottom of the page)
  3. Type "YouVersion Bible App" by Life Church (HOLY BIBLE - red icon)
  4. Click on "Get."
- For an Android Phone
  1. Go to the Google Play Store on your device
  2. Search for "YouVersion Bible App" by Life Church
  3. Install by tapping "Download" or "Install" to install the app.

### Message from the Trustees

- If you are the last person leaving the church or education building, please make sure that the door is locked behind you. There have been several recent incidents of the front doors of both buildings being left unlocked.
- Trustee Spring Cleaning day is still a few months away, but we encourage all committee members to take a close look at their storage areas/closets with an eye to what is still being used and what could be disposed of come the warmer weather.
  - In addition, committees should also review files and papers that are stored in the church office. Can older papers be shredded and destroyed? Is filing current and up to date?

**Open Pantry Donations** - Storage space is limited at the Greater Lowell Open Pantry, but that doesn't mean that we cannot help families in need. We can make monetary donations directly to the Open Pantry at <https://theopenpantry.org/donate/>. In addition, small-denomination Gift Cards for local grocery stores, like \$10 and \$15, can be shared with families whenever their supplies run low.

And speaking of Gift Cards... Do you have random gift cards sitting in a desk drawer with a few bucks left on them? Or did you perhaps receive a holiday gift card to an establishment that is not quite your cup of tea? How about donating those gift cards to the Missions Committee? We can check the existing value online and then receive a portion of the balance, after paying a processing fee. It may not be a lot of money, but with a little effort, we may have enough to buy another grocery store gift card!

Gift Cards can be put in the Collection Plate or left in the Office, and the Missions Committee will deliver them to the Open Pantry. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Missions Committee.

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

~Sir James M. Barrie.

**Lost and Found** – If you are missing a pair of gloves, a single glove, or a toy dinosaur, please pick them up in the church office. Your items miss you.