

3rd Sunday of Lent, Communion
Worship Service at WCUMC and via Zoom

March 8, 2026
9:30 AM

Prelude – “Lead Me Unto Thee”

Southbridge

Greeting

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Opening Hymn – “Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service”

Call to Worship

This is the season to awaken,

The moment to return, the day to grow in grace.

We turn our hearts to you, O God,

And rejoice in your steadfast love.

Let’s worship the One who does not give up on us.

Let’s worship the One who gave his life for us. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Merciful God, in this season of Lent, we pause to reflect on our lives and the ways we are called to witness to the teachings of Jesus.

Give us courage to live faithfully and strength to show your love in our words and actions. Lead us with your Spirit and open our eyes to where your love is needed. We offer this time of worship to you, trusting in your mercy and grace. 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

Nancy Bissell

Offertory – “Love of God”

Southbridge

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Generous creator, we bring these gifts not out of routine, but from hearts longing to be part of your work that restores, renews, and redeems. May our giving, like our living, lean into your spirit, bearing witness that abundant life is possible in you. We pray in the name of Christ, who calls us out of the grave and into your grace. Amen.

Hymn – “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Gospel Reading – Luke 23:50-53**

Sermon – “Power and Passion: Joseph of Arimathea”

Closing Hymn - “Stand by Me”

Announcements

Benediction

And God’s people say: **Amen.**

Postlude – “When Morning Gilds the Skies”

arr. Ritter

~~~~~  
\*\*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 the Ruth Family in loving memory of Jim and Carol McMillin.

**Today**

Acolyte – William Weirich

Lay Reader – David Grudinski

Minister of Music – Karen Leonard

Pastor – Rev. Geisa Matos

## THIS WEEK AT WEST CHELMSFORD UMC

### **Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent**

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

**10:00 AM, Sunday School in the Education Wing**

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

**11:00 AM, Simon Peter Book Study in the Library**

1:30 PM, MVR Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

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

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 – **7:30 PM, Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom**

Wednesday – **6:30 PM, Simon Peter Book Study via Zoom**

**7:30 PM, Trustees' Meeting via Zoom**

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

Thursday – **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

Saturday – **10:30 AM, Ruth Wyman Celebration of Life service In-Person and via Zoom. Reception to follow in Fellowship Hall**

### **Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, UMCOR Sunday**

**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**.

- Articles for the **April 2026 Newsletter** are due in the church office by **Monday, March 16, 2026**.

**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 third Sunday of Lent, we encounter Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph is a good and upright man who risks his reputation to provide dignity for Jesus in death. **Luke 23: 52,53** *“Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.”* The **rock tomb** in front of the cross represents the tomb that Joseph of Arimathea courageously gave to Jesus. The **red cloth on the cross** represents passion, action, and courage.

**Book Study - Simon Peter: The Flawed but Faithful Disciple** – begins this morning at 11:00 AM in the Library and on Wednesday night at 6:30 PM via Zoom. Participant books are available at the church office or through Amazon <https://a.co/d/OhMc1ulh>. Please contact Lorraine Macpherson with questions.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

**Celebration of Life for Ruth Wyman** – Ruth's Celebration of Life service has been rescheduled to **Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 10:30 AM** in the Sanctuary. Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall following the service.

**Men's Group Study** - The 5 Masculine Instincts by Chase Replogle - Through this book, the intent is to discover your instincts and believe that they are neither a curse nor a virtue. They are the experiences by which you develop a new and better instinct - an instinct of faith. Through exploring these five instincts through the lives of Cain, Samson, Moses, David, and Abraham, we will strive to understand our own instincts and how we could step forward on our own faith journeys, listening to God's intended message. Our next discussion will explore the instinct of Reputation through the story of David: The Image of a King. Please review Chapter 6 in preparation for our discussion group on **Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM**, following the Sunday Service. We will meet in the Youth Lounge.

For those of you who do not have books or would like to invite a friend, please contact Bill Evans, 978-852-1456 or [evans1818@verizon.net](mailto:evans1818@verizon.net).

**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, March 25, 2026**. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448A8AB28A AFF2-62548257-march>

**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.

**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.

**Easter Flowers** - Easter is on **Sunday, April 5, 2026**. The flowers have been preordered. There is a poster in the entryway for you to sign up for Easter Flowers. Please indicate whether you would like to take them home after the Easter Sunday worship service or give them to a shut-in. If you are paying by check, don't forget to put "Easter Flowers" in the memo. If you have any questions, please contact Diana Bard at 978-692-7668.

- Double Stem White Lilies are \$20.00 per pot
- 6" Tulips are \$10 per pot
- 7" Hyacinths (blue) are \$10.00

**2026 Summer Camp** - Summer is just around the corner. If you are looking for a summer camp experience for your child, the following camps are accepting registrations.

- **Aldersgate** – For information and Camp Registration, [click here](#).
- **Mechuwana** – For information and Camp Registration, [click here](#).
- **Wanakee** – For information and Camp Registration, [click here](#).

**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.