

FEBRUARY 2023 WORSHIP GUIDE

CHERRYVALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 709 CHERRY HILL DR, STAUNTON VA - 540 885 0098

This booklet contains the outline for each worship service during the month of February 2023.

Sunday worship is in person, online and broadcast on the radio (you can listen in your car on FM 87.9, in the church parking lot). If you are not able to attend in person, you can watch online on our website and YouTube channel.

Even if we are not worshipping in the same building, we are still one body, one family, we are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Look up the scriptures referenced in the following pages; pray the words, and claim the promises for you and your family. - Pastor Jonathan

A SOLEMN WAY TO SAY GOODBYE TO A VERY JOYOUS WORD UNTIL IT IS SAID AGAIN AT EASTER.

This year, the season of Lent starts on February 22. At the conclusion of our worship service on Feb 19th, we will symbolically 'bury' the Alleluia. If you are unfamiliar with this tradition, what follows is a brief teaching on the origins and meaning of 'Burying the Alleluia.'

During the entire 40 days of Lent the word "Alleluia" is completely absent from the liturgy of the Church. It is never said once, even on Sundays. However, it is an important word, one that deserves an appropriate send off before resuming its use at the Easter Vigil.

First of all, the word "Alleluia" is rooted in a Hebrew expression that means "praise the Lord." It is frequently found in the Psalms and has always been associated with joy and exultation. This is why we refrain from using the expression during Lent; a somber liturgical season focused on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. To put it simply, Lent is like one long Good Friday. With this in mind the Alleluia never fit in the Lenten season, but Christians over the centuries didn't think it was right to simply stop saying it. Instead they "buried" it in a solemn ceremony. It was a way to put the Alleluia into the "tomb," only to discover it again at Easter when the stone is removed and the Alleluia is "resurrected."

Various traditions arose in the middle ages to "bury" the Alleluia before the beginning of Lent. It is said that many were inspired by the words of Bishop William Duranti in the 13th century when he wrote, "We part from the Alleluia as from a beloved friend, whom we embrace many times and kiss on the mouth, head and hand, before we leave him." Some United Methodist churches refrain from singing "alleluia," "hallelujah" and/or "gloria" during Lent. "Burying the Alleluia," is a way of recognizing the solemnity of the season and anticipating the glorious praise to be sung in celebration of Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday!

You may ask, should praise and prayer and the tone of worship be the same during Lent and on the Sundays of Lent as they are in the rest of the year. The answer can be both "yes" and "no." Lent is not a season where we pretend that Jesus is crucified and dead so we make our worship funereal. The Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days of Easter; rather, they are "little Easters." Yet there is a sense in which – as with Christmas decorations – things become more meaningful when they are not used constantly. After Christmas, we put the lights, crèche, and star away. When we retire something familiar for a season, recovering its use has a way of making it "new" for us. It has a way of giving emphasis to what precedes and follows it. Taking a rest from something gives shape and rhythm to life, to worship, to relationships – even to our relationship with God.

While the UMC worship resources do not call for this tradition as part of the worship service, such a practice can be a kind of fasting from joy and ecstatic praise, as the alleluias lie dormant for six weeks before we again burst out in joyful and ecstatic affirmation of the Resurrection.

Blessings Pastor Jonathan

February Worship

Worship February 5

Scriptures to read and meditate on

Isa 58:1-12; Ps 112:1-9 ; 1 Cor 2:1-16; Matt 5:13-20

Call To Worship

We are called to bring a new understanding of God: that God so loves the world. We are the salt of the earth. We are called to bring a new hope in God: that God gives us new life. We are the light of the world. We are called to follow the commandments and the law. The Law of God is to love God and to love one another. Come, let us be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Let us love one another with the love of God. Let us join together in our love of God to worship and follow Jesus.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, You have called us to be salt and light for Your world. And so, we confess our failure to live up to Your faith in us. When doubts, fears, and discouragements invade us, we lose our saltiness and we hide our light. We see the great need and the thick darkness in the world, but we confess our deep-down distrust that anything we could offer would really make a difference. We cut ourselves off from the privilege of service, the joy of participation with Christ, and the wonder of experiencing what You will do through us. Forgive us, we pray.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of all creation, source of every blessing: you have given us so much. We thank you for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. As we bring our tithes and gifts to you this day, it seems so small by comparison, unless we see that we are truly called to give ourselves back to the world. May we be the salt that brings value and flavor into relationships with those around us. May we be the light that helps others find their way to your love and care. Grant that we may go in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Worship February 12

Scriptures to read and meditate on

Deut 30:15-20; Ps 119:1-8; 1 Cor 3:1-9; Matt 5:21-37

Call To Worship

Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. Happy are those who keep God's decrees, who seek God with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. You have commanded your teachings to be kept diligently, O Lord. O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous laws.

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, we confess that we have taken Your commandments and turned them into rules. We have criticized those who have fallen short and selfishly proclaimed ourselves righteous. We have failed to understand the spirit of the commandments and the Way that was shown by You to live, loving God and loving our neighbors. Forgive us for turning Your law into burdens for others and ourselves, instead of a Way to love and find our freedom in You. In the name of Christ, who has given us the Way and leads us on, we pray.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy God, as we offer to you gifts from the abundance you have provided us, we recognize that the offering that concerns you is more than what is in our wallets and purses, but in our hearts. You desire from us hearts that are a fit place for you to live and dwell. Help us to clear out long-held anger, resentments, prejudice, and hate. Help us to furnish our hearts with love, mercy, justice, compassion, and forgiveness so they might be a place where you feel welcome and at home. Help us present this offering as well. In Jesus, we pray. Amen.

February Worship

Worship February 19 - Transfiguration Sunday

Scriptures to read and meditate on

Ex 24:12-18; Ps 99; 2 Pet 1:16-21; Matt 17:1-9

Call To Worship

The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples. Let them praise your great and awesome name. Holy is he! Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Extol the LORD our God; worship at his footstool. Holy is he! Extol the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy.

Prayer of Confession

We sing our alleluia on our mountain tops but fail to be an alleluia for others in the valley. We praise you with our lips but fail to live as you taught us. Forgive us. Lord, as your Son was transfigured on the mountain top, transfigure our hearts and lives, so that we may live according to your Word, as we listen to him. Mold us and shape us into the image of Christ, so that our alleluia's may flow from the mountain tops into the valleys of despair and brokenness.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

When Jesus came down from the mount of Transfiguration, he began to tell his disciples that he would be betrayed and crucified. SOMETIMES WE LOSE OUR ALLELUIA. Jesus did not enter into glory before he stretched out his arms on the hardwood of the cross. SOMETIMES WE LOSE OUR ALLELUIA. Jesus told his disciples, "If you want to become my followers, deny yourselves and take up your cross and follow me." SOMETIMES WE MUST LET GO OF OUR ALLELUIA. At Easter we will again celebrate the Resurrection and sing "Christ is risen." IN GOD'S TIME, WE WILL FIND OUR ALLELUIA! For the days of Lent, we discontinue singing and saying, "Alleluia." SOMETIMES WE LET GO OF OUR ALLELUIA.

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**Worship February 22** - Ash Wednesday

**Scriptures to read and meditate on**

Joel 2:1-17; Ps 51:1-17; 2 Cor 5:20b-6:10; Matt 6:1-21

## **Opening Prayer**

O God, maker of everything and judge of all that you have made, from the dust of the earth you have formed us and from the dust of death you would raise us up. By the redemptive power of the cross, create in us clean hearts and put within us a new spirit, that we may repent of our sins and lead lives worthy of your calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Prayer of Confession**

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have stumbled and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is nothing good in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent; according to Your promises declared unto all people in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grant that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of His name. Amen

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

O God our deliverer, we thank you that you led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever.

# February Worship

## Worship February 26

## Scriptures to read and meditate on

Gen 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7; Ps 32; Rom 5: 12-19; Matt 4: 1-11

### Call To Worship

Welcome pilgrims on the way to the cross. We are learning to follow Jesus. For those who feel Christ near, May we not turn away from the discomfort of the journey ahead. For those who feel as far from Christ as the desert is from the ocean, May we find Christ in the wilderness with us. For all of us who stumble and fall in our silence, indifference, and lack of generosity, May we reach for the hand of Christ, who raises us up to continue on the journey. Pilgrims on the way, come let us worship God! We come to worship God because we trust God's Word!

### Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, whose Son was tempted in every way, yet was without sin, we have failed to be obedient to your Word, we have not done your will, and we have broken your law. Most merciful God, we confess before you that we have sinned; we have hungered after that which does not satisfy; we have compromised with evil; we have doubted your power to protect us. Forgive our lack of faith; have mercy on our weakness. Restore in us such love and trust that we may walk in your ways and delight in doing your will.

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. We thank you for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish, sustain, and strengthen us in the way of eternal life. Take our gifts that we offer this today, and use them to nourish the world with your eternal word of salvation. Send us now, in the strength of your Spirit, into the wilderness of life, to love and serve others. Through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven, we pray. Amen.

## Verona Food Pantry

This list is a guide line, any item you can give is welcomed.

Drop off at the office before the end of the month.

January - Cereal

February - peanut butter

March - canned fruit

April - mac 'n' cheese

May - canned meat / fish

June - canned veggies

July - staples, rice, beans, pasta

August - cereal

September - peanut butter

October - canned veggies

November - canned 'thanksgiving'

December - Pot Luck

The food pantry is always looking for paper products; household, babies, ladies etc  
These items can be donated any time, we will get them to the food pantry for you.

## **WHY IS GOD CALLED THE MOST HIGH**

In the entire book of Genesis, the name of God was a mystery to the people of the world, and over the course of time He began to reveal more and more of Himself. To Abraham, He revealed His sovereign power. To Job, He displayed His mercy and His might. To Moses, He gave the people a name.

Because of how mighty He is, God has His name, and He has titles, one of which is that He is “the Most High.” This title communicates many things about who God is, His place in the universe, and how He is to be seen by humanity and the Heavenly hosts. When considering how to pursue a relationship with God, His titles communicate the different facets of Himself with which a believer can engage. Therefore, understanding what it means that God is The Most High gives a glimpse into the holiness of God, and His ultimate and unyielding authority of Heaven, Earth, and all creations. As much as He is Father, Comforter, Savior, and Redeemer, God should be worshipped and honored, recognized as holy and glorified.

### ***Who Is God?***

God is the Creator of the universe and all living things, the one who made a way for humanity to be redeemed, the Savior, the Spirit that convicts and transforms, and the one who has existed before time and will exist for all eternity. To try and explore the dynamics of God in their fullness would take more than one lifetime, which is why people usually pursue understanding them one at a time.

The title El Elyon comes from the Hebrew *אֱלֹהִים* which is translated into Greek as *ὁ Θεός ὁ ὕψιστος*, which is translated into “God Most High” or “God the Highest.” In context, when someone refers to God as the Most High, or refers to Him being on High, they are generally referring to His role as Creator, as the ruler of Heaven and Earth, and His Majesty. Because God created all things, He also created the angels and all the hosts - or beings - who live in Heaven and who are in His presence. As the most High, He is the ruler over all those beings. He is also the Most High because He is the Creator and He is holy.

### ***Where Is God Called the Most High?***

There are many places in the Bible where God is exalted as “The Most High,” God on High, or some variant thereof. These verses include, but are not limited to: Genesis 14:18-20 ; Numbers 24:15-16; Deuteronomy 32:7-9; Luke 1:35; Mark 5: 5-7; Daniel 3:26; Acts 7:48-50 ; Acts 16:16-17. God is also referred to as the Most High throughout the poetic books of the Old Testament, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

### ***There are a few general implications that can be extracted from how this title for God was used.***

1. It was a name used for God before He gave His name to Moses, like when Melchizedek used it in Genesis, acknowledging they worship the highest being in the universe.
2. It was used when the speaker was communicating the awesome might and authority of God, such as when Balaam gave a prophecy or when explaining that God has the authority to draw the borders of nations or raise or destroy an empire.
3. It was used when someone who does not worship only God acknowledges Him as the highest among the gods - like when Nebuchadnezzar calls the God of the Hebrews captive in his kingdom - or when communicating to nonbelievers the one God is higher than their false gods.
4. It is often used in worship, like in the Psalms.
5. It was used by angels and demons, who have stood in His presence, seated on His throne in Heaven. Angels continue to be in His presence, and demons were angels who were in His presence until they participated in rebellion against Him and were cast out.

# Matthew 17: 1-8 Word Search

Just for fun, or use as a teaching aide with your younger family members.

S W F N T B Q E I P T J G U V K F N B K E W E D L L L T P S  
R I X A D X Q H E E L B D V R C R F G V W S Y P M I B P E T  
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S K X Y E W M D D S A K K E A I Z C S S K C Q Z F A K M F Q  
G C E E E F V P B E H J J C R C W F U Z D N V L R A D P P C  
Z P R K L Z B F Q R D I C L R S I V S K S E M A J S T X S X  
X H Y C M I L G U B O T J O D I H D K V A S V Y D U F C D J  
T L G X X H V P F X E V X U A D A A L Z X U C T Q R B B C H  
E N O L A F L E S M I H E D C N D R D C R L G J B O H V Z C  
M E Q M G X H T G V M E Y R C D E H C O R V K R Z F R I V Z  
O X B I W S R R B F H P P D C X N D W N W N Z V A D W O F S  
E X L O B A D Q H Y Y Y Y J P O Y D W A B E D C L O V K H M  
O F E L L T O T H E G R O U N D M B M H D T D H G O G P X S  
A M D W M H M P Q L E V L G K R G E F G X D E S W G O V D Y  
V Q V A H H T G J G G I P K M V Y I H H B W L V R Y C Y M V  
Z C U O F V G R L Y B P Q S U Q D U J W J G P D H T E Q H W  
Y Z B T R A N S F I G U R E D A H N K A H J O Q R Z G B W W  
R Y V Q W R A N C C N X W L Y P N V T H H P L Z Q K D D R R

Find the **27 bold** words or phrases from Matthew 17

**Six days** later, **Jesus** took with him **Peter** and **James** and his brother **John** and led them up a **high mountain**, by **themselves**. And he was **transfigured** before them, and his **face shone** like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. **Suddenly** there **appeared** to them **Moses** and **Elijah**, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is **good for us** to be here; if you wish, I will set up **three tents** here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still **speaking**, suddenly a **bright cloud overshadowed** them, and a **voice from the cloud** said, “This is **my Son**, the **Beloved**; with him I am well pleased; **listen to him!**” When the **disciples** heard this, they **fell to the ground** and were **overcome** by fear. But Jesus came and **touched** them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they **raised their eyes**, they saw no one except Jesus **himself alone**.

### ***Why Is God Higher Than Others?***

God is the highest for many reasons. First, He is the only being who existed before time and out of time, who is perfect and holy. He is higher because He is holier than all others. He is also the Creator, the one who is the source of all things, making Him higher because He is more powerful than all others. He sits on a throne in Heaven, high the earth, and at the highest place in Heaven. He is physically and spiritually higher than every other living thing in Heaven and Earth.

In the Bible, even those who did not believe in the God of the Hebrews often had to acknowledge that their God was higher and more powerful than their gods. Pharaoh would not concede this point until all the firstborn of Egypt died in the culmination of ten plagues. Nebuchadnezzar and other rulers in Babylon conceded the God of the Hebrews was higher. Nebuchadnezzar declared after a period of madness left him, "At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever...Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble" (Daniel 4:34, 37). God demonstrated His power and authority, and people honored it through worship.

### ***Why Is It Important That People Recognize Him as the Most High?***

Part of having a correct understanding of who Jesus is, why He needed to come, and why His death and resurrection are significant, is tied to having a right understanding of the nature of God. Because God is the Most High, He is holy and perfect. There is no evil in Him.

When God declares things, they are true. When Adam and Eve sinned, they separated themselves from their Creator because they made a choice to rebel against their perfect Father and Creator. Sin encourages people to ignore God, to blaspheme Him, to continue rebelling or to stay in ignorance, leading to eternal separation in hell. Jesus came to restore humanity to God through His sacrifice. If someone does not understand the holiness of God, and His right and proper authority, they may not see their need for a Savior.

Because He is the Most High, He is worthy of worship and reverence. It is important to understand God for who He says He is, and not create a version of Him that is palatable to the sinful human heart. Some people like the idea of God as a friend, a Father, and a Savior, but reject the idea that He is also the great judge, the ultimate authority, and that having a relationship with Him includes worship, prayer, repentance, and being willing to bow before Him and only Him. It means putting Him as first in life and in the heart, not as a supplemental part of life.

"For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. O you who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!" (Psalm 97:9-12).

### **RISE AGAINST HUNGER - MEAL PACKAGING EVENT - MARCH 25, 2023**

We're on the road to end hunger, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Goal #2 of Zero Hunger. From the implementation of sustainable community development projects to our meal packaging program that harnesses the passion of local volunteers, we strive to make an impact on hunger by building resilience, self-sufficiency and empowerment in communities worldwide.

**TO VOLUNTEER OR PLEDGE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THIS EVENT, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.CHERRYVALEUMC.COM](http://WWW.CHERRYVALEUMC.COM)  
OR CALL THE OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE OR MORE INFORMATION**