OAK TREE-ISELIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mind, hearts, hands and voices in Christ

Third Sunday in Lent

1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ 08830
www.oaktree-iselinpres.org
(732) 283-1188
Email: info@oaktree-iselinpres.org

Sunday, March 8, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Service led by: Elder Herb Williams

Liturgist: Elder Chris Madsen Alaine Bolton, Director of Music

Gathering for Worship

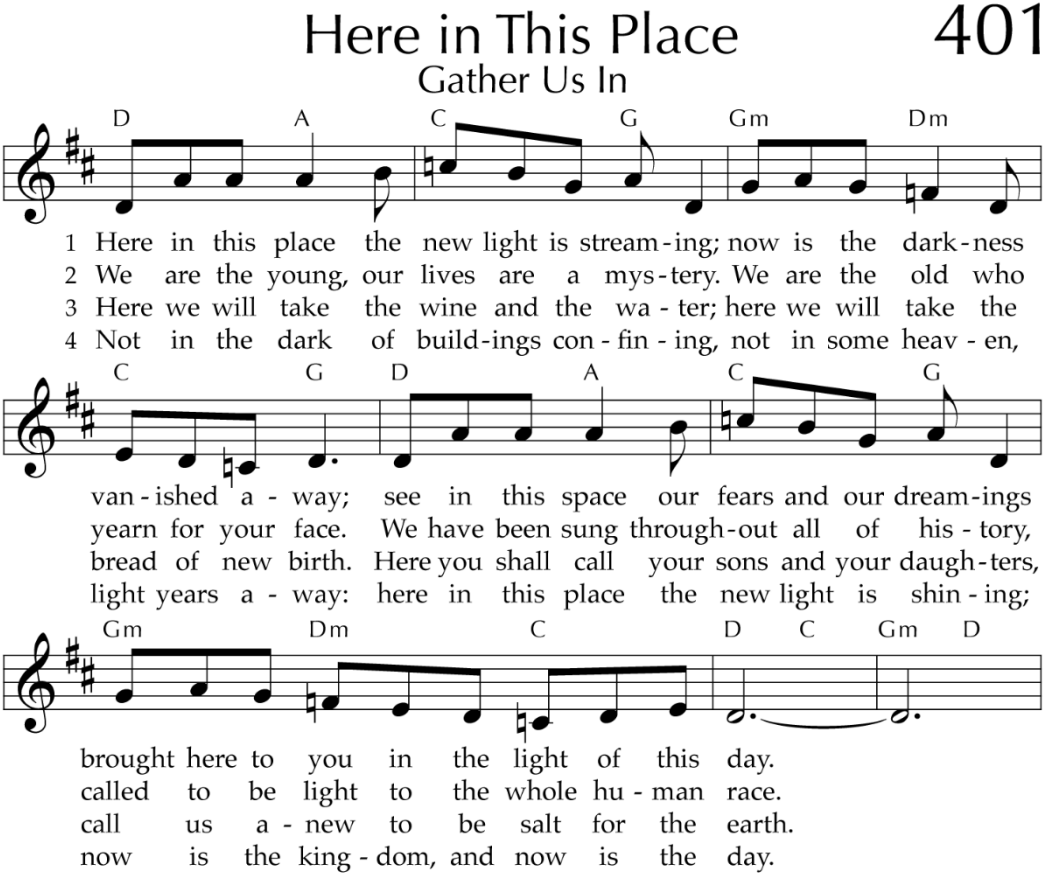
We request that you silence all electronic devices before service begins.
*Please rise in body or spirit.

Centering Thought

For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! - Romans 5:10

PRELUDE **Alaine Bolton Director of Music**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS **Chris Madsen**

CHORAL INTROIT # 401 *(verse 1)*

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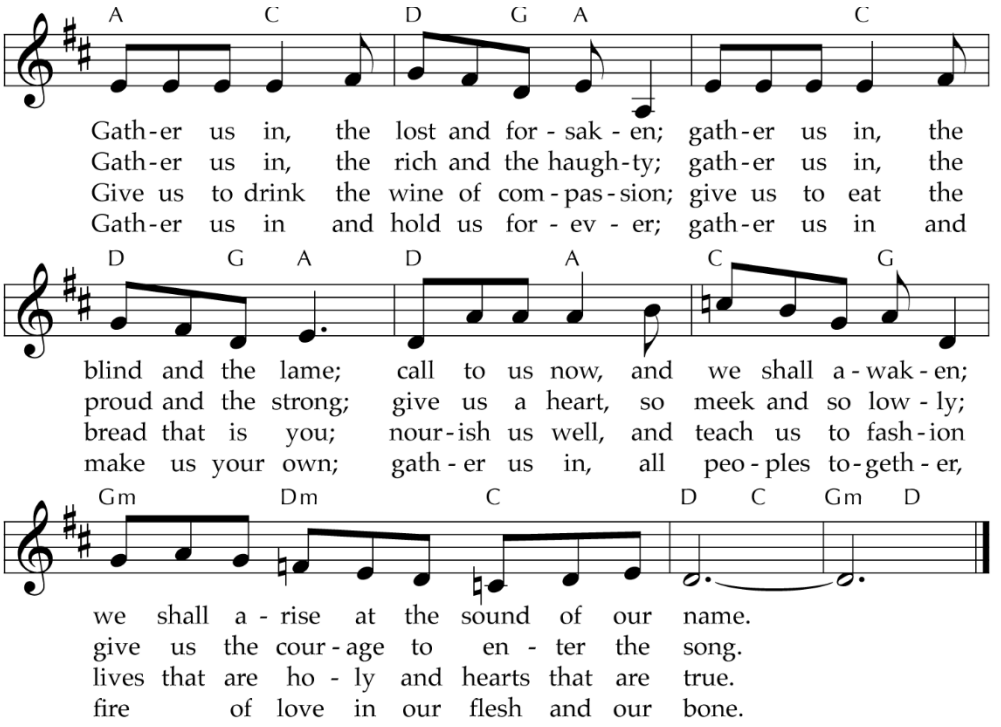


***THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 95:1-7a) Chris Madsen**

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great ruler above all gods. In God's hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are God's also.

The sea is the Lord's, for God made it, and the dry land, which God's hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of God's hand. Amen.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY (In Unison) Chris Madsen**

There is glory within each sunrise, Lord, a warm effusion of praise reaching upwards and out, connecting earth with heaven, creator with created. Shafts of sunlight outstretched to your children, arms outstretched in worship of our Father, encourage participation from those who watch and wonder at the beauty of it all. Thank you, Lord God, for the opportunity of worship, for the freedom to be among your family meeting together in your house, and in the warmth of your embrace. Thank you, that in worship we can put aside, the uncertainties of this world and rest upon the certainties of the Kingdom, for your promises are not changeable as those of a mortal might be, but immovable and eternal. Thank you, that we can bring to your feet all the hurts and fears that trouble us, and leave them there, knowing that your strength and assurance are all that we require. Thank you, that as we draw near in worship, we are transported from a world of concerns and fears, to a place where we can be at peace in your presence, find healing, wholeness and refreshment. Almighty God, we come together today as your people to worship, adore, glorify, magnify and praise you, our loving Father and creator of all that is. Amen.

***HYMN # 451 Open My Eyes, That I May See**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION Chris Madsen

As we wander through the wilderness of Lent, we come closer and closer to confronting human sin, both our own sin and our collective sin. It is with honesty about how we have hurt others, and hurt ourselves, that we can move closer to the healing that God wills for us. Confession allows us to exercise such honesty, knowing that the God who hears us is the God who already loves us. Therefore, we need not fear confession, but draw near to the love of God in honesty and candor, first together, and then in silence…

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (In Unison) Chris Madsen

God of endless renewal, God who calls us to lives restored, God who rescues the lost and saves the afflicted, there are times when our way grows confused. We struggle to know what to do. Or worse, we know

what needs to be done and find it easier to stay on the wrong path. Forgive us for failing to heed opportunities to follow a better way. Remind us that you stand more ready to forgive than we are to confess those aspects of our lives that stand in need of your grace. And thus forgiven, help us to lean into what you would teach us about how we are to be. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

PERSONAL CONFESSION **Chris Madsen**

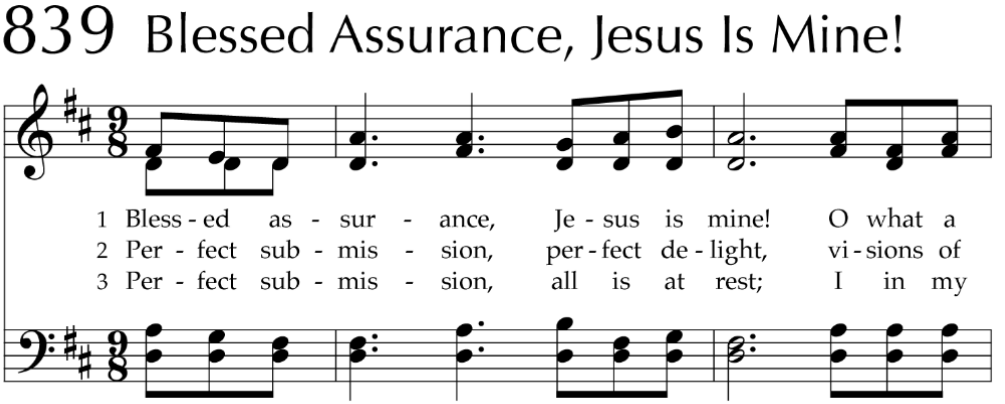
Merciful God, hear now our own personal confessions that we lift up to you in silence.

(Silence is kept)

In the strong name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON **Herb Williams**

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who indeed intercedes for us. Believe the promise of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, we are forgiven, we are forgiven. **Praise be to God.**

***THE RESPONSE # 839** *(verse 1)*

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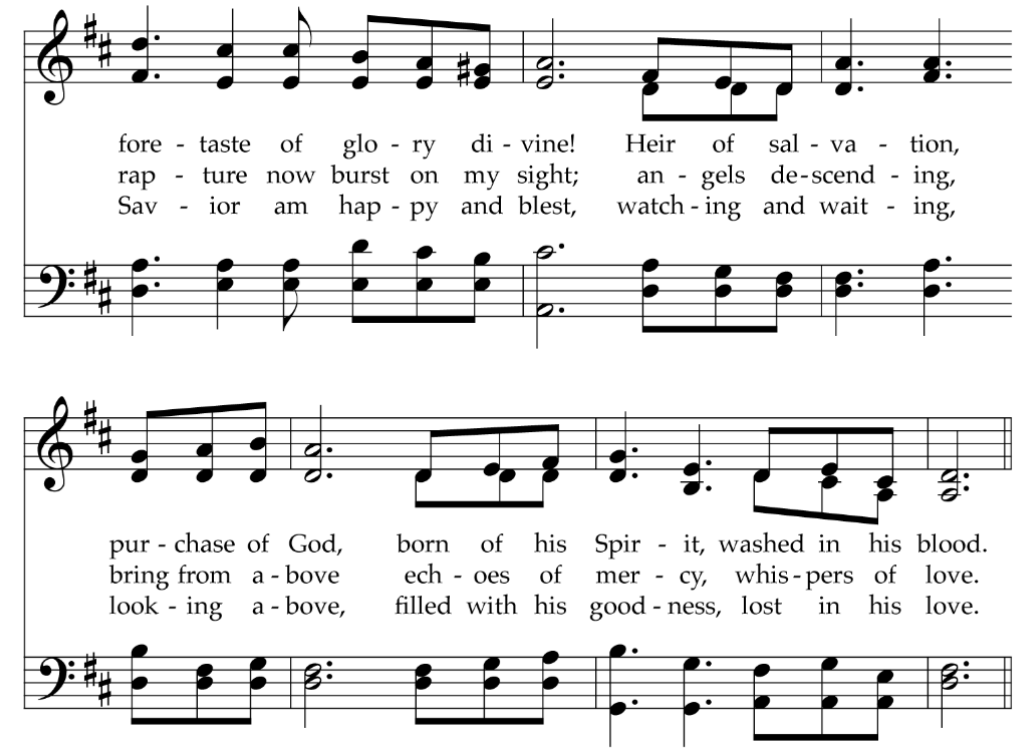
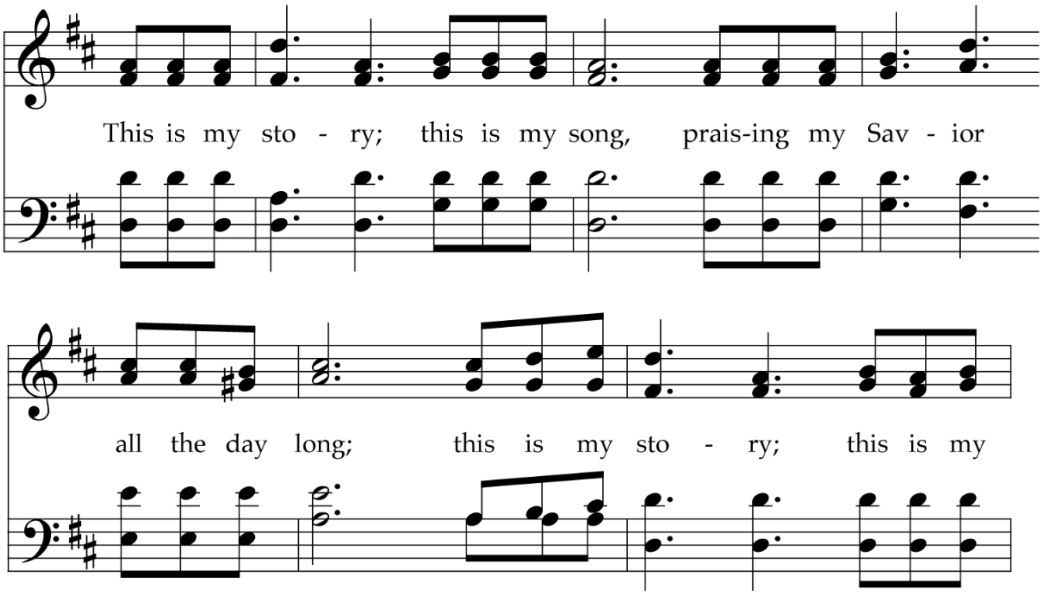
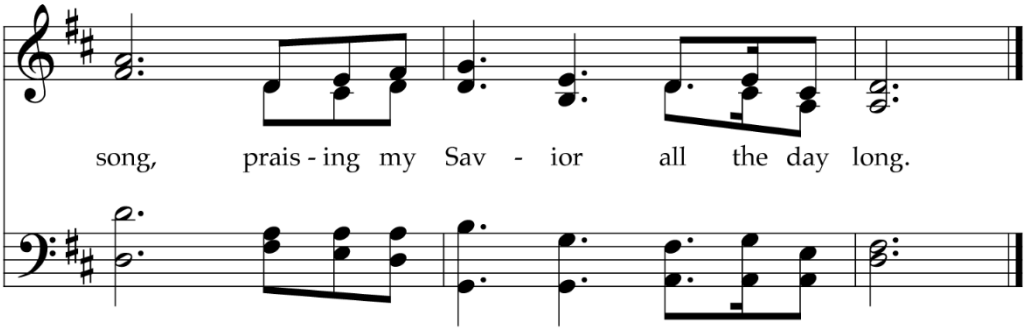

fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion,
rap - ture now burst on my sight; an - gels de-scend - ing,
Sav - ior am hap - py and blest, watch - ing and wait - ing,
pur - chase of God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.
bring from a - bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
look - ing a - bove, filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

Refrain

This is my sto - ry; this is my song, prais-ing my Sav - ior
all the day long; this is my sto - ry; this is my

***THE PASSING OF THE PEACE** **Chris Madsen**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

(Please pass the peace with friends and loved-ones)

Hearing and Responding to the Word Proclaimed

TIME FOR CHILDREN OR THE YOUNG AT HEART **Herb Williams**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION **Chris Madsen**

Gracious Lord, like Nicodemus, we come to the word with many questions. Like the Pharisees, we can be captivated by correctness, intent on right answers. As we turn to your word, Spirit of God, do not let our desire for information dominate our need for transformation. Speak your eternal word that does not change. Let us hear the word and be moved to greater faith and obedience. Then may we respond to your gracious promises with faithful and obedient lives, through our Lord Jesus Christ, **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING **Psalm 121** **Chris Madsen**

1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. **2** Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, "Give us

water that we may drink." And Moses said unto them, "Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" 4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." 5 And the LORD said unto Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

NEW TESTAMENT READING Romans 5:1-11 Herb Williams

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

THE MESSAGE How Much More! Herb Williams

***HYMN # 688 Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH Herb Williams**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (Responsive)
Hear now, we ask, Lord, the prayers of your people.
Eternal God, you have reached out to us so often, so persistently, we know of your love for us from so many sources, that we know as well that we may draw near to you with the needs of our hearts. And so we do, not as distant followers held at arms-length, but as beloved children, held close. So it is that we pray to you this morning with our concerns.

We lift up to you, Lord, our joys and our concerns…
For world affairs beyond our control, we pray your mercy. For the people of Ukraine and Gaza, Iran and Israel and the whole Middle East, we pray for peace. Where there are those in harm's way, we pray protection. Where we harbor enmity and prejudice, we pray awareness and grace for ourselves that we may learn forgiveness.

We pray to you, Lord, for needs closer to home, for our own community.
Through this season of Lent, we ask that you would open our eyes to the needs that are on our very doorstep. May we see those and others whose names are known to you and offer compassion and goodwill.

We pray for your children, Lord, who are hurt, sick or recovering.
We pray for all who practice the healing arts, for their endurance and for their safety. We pray as well for ourselves, our own material and spiritual needs. Where our members suffer from illness and affliction, grant your healing touch, bringing wholeness. For any in our midst who suffer from depression or addiction, give us understanding and compassion. For those who are lonely, may we be a place of friendship, a warm haven where love is shared.

We make this and all of our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray together, saying…

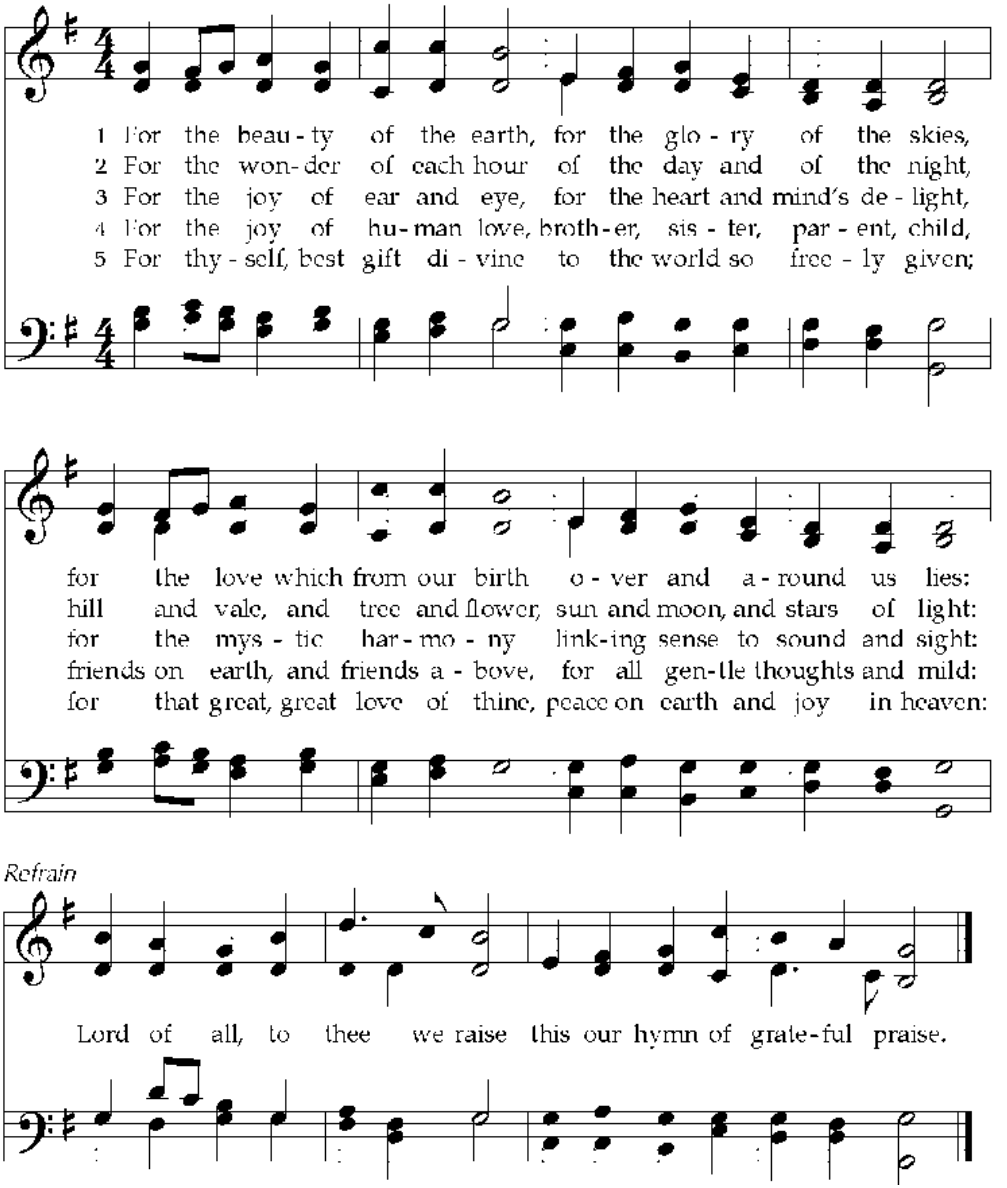
THE LORD'S PRAYER
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

We Give, in Appreciation for God's Gifts

THE OFFERING
With grateful hearts, let us bring our tithes and offerings to the God from whom they came.

***THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 14** *(verse 1)*

For the Beauty of the Earth 14



***THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

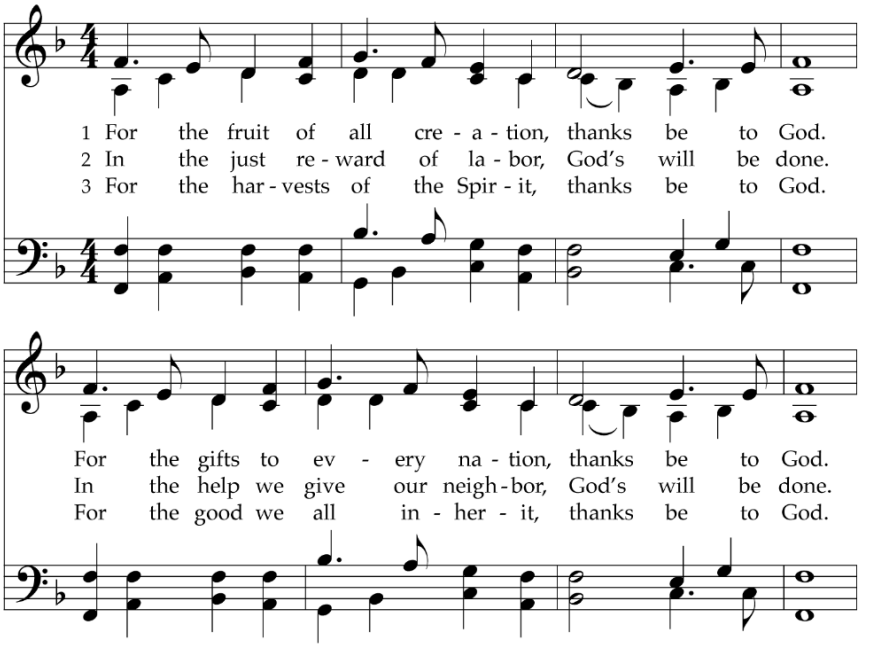
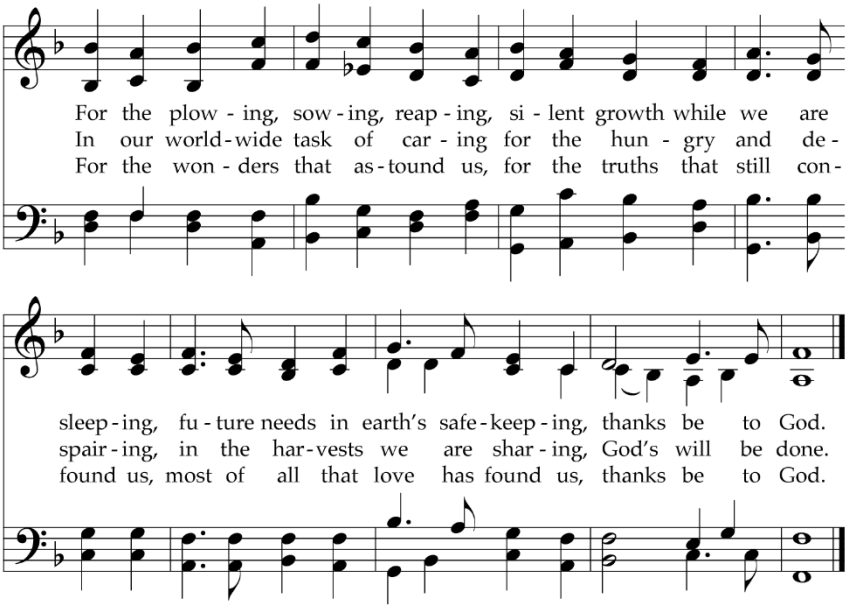
(Guest speaker will share a prayer)

Empowered to Spread God's Love

***HYMN # 817 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight**

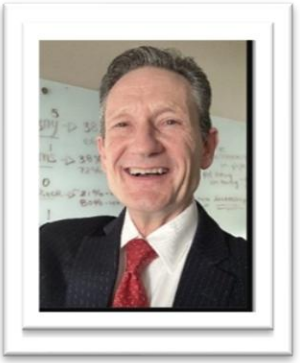
***BENEDICTION** *(Guest Speaker will share benediction)*

***CHORAL BENEDICTION # 36** *(all verses)*

For the Fruit of All Creation 36



THE POSTLUDE

OFFERING: Whether you are just passing through town and wanted to stop in for church, this is your first visit of many future ones, or you are with us every week, we certainly appreciate your desire to give anonymously, but if you would like to receive a record of giving for tax purposes, please fill out a pew envelope, check 'I am visiting', and add your name and address. Please make checks payable to: Oak Tree-Iselin Presbyterian Church. We appreciate every generous gift and want to make sure we have a proper record of it to say, Thank you!



This morning, we welcome Oak Tree-Iselin Presbyterian Church Elder Herb Williams, to our pulpit. Herb grew up in Iselin and retired after a career in the Woodbridge Police Department. He attended Sunday school at the lower level of this church (formerly The First Presbyterian Church of Iselin). His mother, Ann Marie, served as an elder in the former Oak Tree Presbyterian Church, Edison, NJ, where she was a beloved member. Herb has two sons, one daughter, and three grandchildren.

2026 Per Capita - $42.00

Friendly Reminders

Sunday 03/29/2026	Rev. Linda Goeddel will lead worship	Palm Sunday
Thursday 04/02/2026	FPresWoodbridge at 7:30 pm	Maundy Thursday
Friday 04/03/2026	Rev. Jeremy Campbell will lead worship	Good Friday Time 3 pm
Sunday 04/05/2026	Rev. Donald Pitches will lead worship	Easter Sunday

Scheduled Liturgists!

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) context, a liturgist sets the tone for worship. They welcome everyone, lead and guide both the congregation and guests through the various parts of worship and assists the pastor throughout the worship service to create an atmosphere of peace, cohesiveness and unity. (). Please email Margarita at info@oaktree-iselinprs.org if you'd like an opportunity to serve as a liturgist.

March 2026	
Today	Chris Madsen
03/15/26 (4th Sun. Lent)	Len Mesonas
03/22/26 (5th Sun. Lent)	
03/29/26 (Palm Sunday)	Ron Stamboly

April 2026	
04/03/26 (Good Friday)	
04/05/26 (Easter Sunday)	Sue Ramirez
04/12/26	Whitney Gilzean
04/19/26	
04/26/26	Ron Stamboly

To all who answered the call to serve as liturgists, Thank you!
Please email Margarita Estrada at info@oaktree-iselinpres.org or call her at (732) 283-1188, if you'd like further opportunities to serve as liturgists.

Session

Laura Reeves, Clerk of Session

Jim Durgana	Treasurer
Grace Rozger	Human Resources
Leonard Mesonas	Finance Chair, President of Corporation; Officer Nomination Committee
Heather Meyers	Christian Education
Sue Ramirez	Worship and Music
Jeff Reeves	Buildings and Grounds
Ron Stamboly	Financial Secretary
Herb Williams	Mission

The Board of Deacons

Rose Anne Anthony, Moderator

Nikkie Hayase, Board Secretary Kate Scott, Session Liaison

Cards	Marion Feliks, Chair
Deacon's Assistance Fund	Joan Moscomagas, Chair
Deacon's Nominating Comm.	Joan Moscomagas, Chair
Flowers	Joanne Mesonas & Karen Wallner Co-Chairs
Hospitality	Rose Anne Anthony & Nancy Abel, Co-Chairs
Literature	Nikkie Hayase & Nandai Sookho, Co-Chairs
Ministry of Compassion	Nancy Abel, Chair / Sara Schweitzer, Co-Chair

Regular Activities

Church Office is open Monday - Friday, 9 am to 1 pm

Men's Breakfast & CLEF Ladies Breakfast meet 1st Saturday in Fellowship Hall.

Session meetings are held monthly (dates will be posted in the Friendly Reminders section).

Prayer Shawl Ministry, every other Thursday at 7 pm, Choir Room

Choir practice: Every Sunday at 9:30 am

Divine Worship: In the sanctuary
Sundays at 10:30 am

Our Mission Statement

We are a warm and welcoming community of faith, living the teachings of Jesus Christ and open to God's presence through the power of the Holy Spirit. We seek new pathways of ministry and service to fulfil God's purpose for our diverse community. - approved by the merger committee on Wednesday, July 20, 2022 and ratified by congregational vote, June 11, 2023.

Dear Members and Guests, if you'd like to know more information about the latest news,

Visit Scan QR code to website! Visit us on Facebook and Instagram, @oaktreeiselinpreschurchnj and YouTube @oaktreeiselinpresnj.
Email us at: info@oaktree-iselinpres.org

Cover Photo: Artist James Tissot, painted between 1886 and 1894.