



Thomas A. Edison  
**Congregational Church**

*FEBRUARY 22, 2026*



# Order of Worship

## *First Sunday in Lent*

\*\* You are invited to stand  
(Please remember to silence your cell phone during the service.)

*When the prelude begins, let us quiet our hearts and conversation.*

## Church Bell Calls Us to Worship

### Prelude

#### **Wondrous Love, Southern Folk Hymn**

from The Sacred Harp  
arr. by David N. Johnson

### Call to Worship (responsively)

One: We gather, O God, as pilgrims beginning our Lenten journey. During this season may we seek to learn more truths about You, more clearly discern Your will for our lives, and then more faithfully live in the loving and serving manner as did the Christ in whose spirit we pray.

All: **God of rainbow, fiery pillar, Leading where the eagles soar.  
We Your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and  
ever, now and ever more. Amen.**

~Slightly adapted from the book of Listening to the Spirit by John E. Biegert

~Adapted from the tune: In the Midst of New Dimensions by Julian Rush

### Hymn of Faith

#### **In the Midst of New Dimensions**

Tune: New Dimensions, Written by: Julian Rush

**In the midst of new di-men-sions,  
in the face of chang-ing ways.  
Who will lead the pil-grim peo-ples  
Wan-dering in their sep-arate ways?**

**God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar,  
Lead-ing where the ea-gles soar.  
We Your peo-ple, ours the jour-ney  
now and ev-er, now and ev-er,  
now and ev-er more.**

**As we stand a world di-vid-ed  
by our own self-see-king schemes,  
Grant that we, your glo-bal vil-lage  
might en-vi-sion wid-er dreams**

**God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar,  
Lead-ing where the ea-gles soar.  
We Your peo-ple, ours the jour-ney  
now and ev-er, now and ev-er,  
now and ev-er more.**

**We are man and we are wom-an,  
all per-sua-sions, old and young,  
Each a gift in your cre-a-tion,  
each a love song to be sung.**

**God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar,  
Lead-ing where the ea-gles soar.  
We Your peo-ple, ours the jour-ney  
now and ev-er, now and ev-er,  
now and ev-er more.**

**Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions  
cause us to with-draw in pain,  
May your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir-it,  
Res-ur-rect the church a-gain.**

**God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar,**

**Lead-ing where the ea-gles soar.  
We Your peo-ple, ours the jour-ney  
now and ev-er, now and ev-er,  
now and ev-er more.**

## **Passing of the Peace**

**May Christ be with You on Your Journey!  
And, also with you!**

**Gift of Music**

**Molly Phillips, Flugelhorn**

## **Softly and Tenderly**

By Will L. Thompson  
Arr. by Timothy Johnson

## **Prayer of Discipleship (responsively)**

### **Prayer For God's Guidance on our Journey of Lent**

One: God, You are enough for us;  
You give us rest in soft fields and besides  
whispering streams; You restore and renew us, and lead us into life-  
giving ways;

**All: When death and evil come close to us,  
You carry us**

**through, You protect and comfort us;  
when others seek**

**to do us harm,  
Your grace uplifts and provides for us in  
public view;**

**You fill us with Your strength, and we enjoy  
overflowing abundance;**

One: We have confidence that Your goodness and compassion will fill our days,

**All: And we will stay immersed in Your life and presence**

**forever.**

## **Silent/Individual Prayer**

### **Prayer for a Change of Heart and Change of Mind**

One: God, from the cowardice that dares not face new truth,

**All: From the laziness that is contented with half-truth,**

One: From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,

**All: Good Lord, deliver us. Amen.**

— This prayer experience comes from adapted portions of A paraphrase of Psalm 23, posted on Sacredise, sacredise.com, September 14, 2019. And a traditional Kenyan prayer

## **Prayers of the People / Concerns of the People**

### **Our Lord's Prayer (*unison*)**

**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.**

## **Prayer of Response**

### **Change My Heart, O God**

Eddie Espinoza and the Praise Song Advisory Team

**Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.  
You are the Potter, I am the clay.**

**Mold me and make me this is what I pray.  
Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.**

## **Today's First Scripture**

**Matthew 4:1-11**

### **Temptation of Jesus**

**4** Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt Him. **2** After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He was starving. **3** The tempter came to Him and said, "Since You are God's Son, command these stones to become bread." **4** Jesus replied, "It's written, *People won't live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.*" **5** After that the devil brought Him into the holy city and stood Him at the highest point of the temple. He said to Him, **6** "Since You are God's Son, throw Yourself down; for it is written, *I will command my angels concerning You, and they will take You up in their hands so that You won't hit Your foot on a stone.*" **7** Jesus replied, "Again it's written, *Don't test the Lord your God.*" **8** Then the devil brought Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. **9** He said, "I'll give You all these if You bow down and worship me." **10** Jesus responded, "Go away, Satan, because it's written, *You will worship the Lord Your God and serve only Him.*" **11** The devil left Him, and angels came and took care of Him.

~Common English Bible

## **Response to the Sharing of God's Story**

The Story of God for the People of God!  
**Thanks Be to God!**

## **Pastoral Words**

## **Hymn of Faith**

**Forty**

Words by: Paul G. Janssen  
Music by William Fiske Sherwin

**For-ty days of carv-ing God's law in stone.  
For-ty days of walk-ing all, all al-lone.  
Lead us, and we'll fol-low, fed by your hand.  
Guide us on the path to your prom-ised land.  
For-ty days for turn-ing God gives us all.  
For-ty years of wand'-ring, ans'-w'ring God's call.  
As we stop our seek-ing, some oth-er home,  
Calm us with the prom-ise: "Nev-er a-lone."  
For-ty days of crav-ing Je-sus with – stood,  
For-ty nights dis-cern-ing ev-il from good.  
Send us to our des-erts, heav-en sent Dove,  
'Til we greet the new cre – a - tion of love.**

## **Invitation to the Offering**

*What we give, and the spirit with which we give it, enables this church  
to make a difference in the lives of all whom we touch.*

## **Offertory**

**Molly Phillips, Guitar**

### **Be Still**

By Isaac Slade

## **\*\*Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

## **Life of Our Church**

**Quilting on Wednesday at 12:00 pm.**

**Faith Development**  
**JOIN US WEDNESDAY @ CHURCH @ 11 AM & 6:30 PM;**  
**AS WELL AS ONLINE THURSDAY 11 AM**

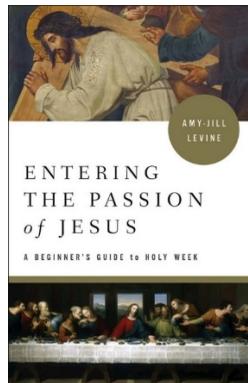
### **Entering the Passion of Jesus**

**Dive deep into the history of the last days before the crucifixion.**

**What if we look at the "ordinary" people who witnessed the Passion events... the women around Jesus? Or the "bad" guys...**

**Judas, Pilate, and Caiaphas?**

**Amy-Jill Levine looks closely at the people who were part of Jesus' life during his last days.**



### **Timeline:**

**Jesus' Triumphal Entry**

**The Temple Incident**

**Jesus Teaching in the Temple**

**The Anointing of Jesus**

**The Last Supper Traditions**

**The Night in Gethsemane**

### **Readings:**

**Zechariah 9; Matthew 21:1–11, Mark 11:1–11,**

**Luke 19:28–44, and John 12:12–19**

**Today's flowers are gifted to the church  
by Rick Hawk. We would like to thank him  
for this beautiful gift.**

**This Sunday, February 22, right after the  
service, we will be celebrating February's  
birthdays. Please join us to celebrate:**

<b>Susy Mertz</b>	<b>Cathy Kebbekus</b>	<b>Hayden Gallo</b>
<b>Paul Perisho</b>	<b>Cindy Wilson</b>	<b>Lynn Young</b>
<b>Bob Cole</b>	<b>Elizabeth Kinsey</b>	<b>Jennifer Gallo</b>
<b>Frances Minella</b>	<b>Malcolm Youngquist</b>	<b>Rich Snyder</b>
<b>Cory Mertz</b>	<b>Ian Walsh</b>	<b>Cynthia Deragon</b>
<b>Sharon Gunsett</b>	<b>Tina Harper</b>	

**Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Lori McMullen will be offering Blood Pressure checks.  
Blood Pressure Screening is an important part of health  
maintenance. All are encouraged to do this.**

**INASMUCH DAY – March 7, 2026,**

**JOIN US! SUPPORT US! DONATE!**

**Activity 1-3 Prior to Event, 4-9 Day of Event**

**Donation Opportunities - more details will be forthcoming**

**\*New children's clothing, diapers & pull-ups**

**\*Toiletries**

**\*Adult socks & underwear**

**\*Backpacks & duffel bags**

**\*Quarters for laundromat (in Fellowship Hall)**

**\*Flannel fabric**

**\*Home repair & landscape supplies**

**\*Greeting card materials, Crayons, stickers**

**Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Concert Series  
February 28, 2026, 7:30 p.m.  
Juan Pablo & Friends  
March 20, 2026, A Joyful Celebration**

**Free concert: March 11<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM  
St. Michael Lutheran Church,  
3595 Broadway, Fort Myers.  
The Concordia University Christus Chorus**

**Sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board to donate  
flowers to enhance our Sunday Service.**

**Looking for Volunteers for Greeters and for Ushers. Sign-  
up sheets are on the bulletin board if interested.**

**For next week's God's word:  
"Jesus and the Wilderness"  
John 3:1-17**

## **Benediction (responsively)**

Our worship has ended, but now our life of service begins!  
Go from this space, for you and I are the body of Christ, and all of creation  
awaits us. So, live passionately, love faithfully, and celebrate every  
moment of your life from now until the finale. Our God of relentless,  
amazing, creative, and hopeful grace goes with us! Amen. **Amen.**

~ Adapted from The Rev. Michael S. Piazza

## **Postlude**

**Prelude in G Minor, BWV 558**

By J. S. Bach

## Time With Our Children

Hold up a radio, turn it on, and ask the children if the radio ever gives them messages. Have them list some of the messages that come over the radio: weather reports, sports scores, news stories. Then ask if the radio is the only thing that gives them messages. No! Have them list to some others: TV, the Internet, teachers, parents. Ask them if their stomach ever gives them a message ... does it speak to them when they are hungry? Point out that Jesus was very hungry once, and his stomach was calling out for food. Stress that Jesus could have turned a rock into bread, because He was the Son of God, but He listened to a better message: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Emphasize that Jesus listened to a message from God, instead of from His stomach. Then tell them that Jesus was tempted to do a crazy stunt and ask for God to save Him, but He listened to the message, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (v. 7). Finally, let them know that Jesus was tempted to worship the devil in exchange for all the wonderful kingdoms of the world, but Jesus listened to a better message, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him" (v. 10). Hold up the radio and remind the children that they will hear all kinds of different messages throughout their lives, but the best messages always come from God, messages that will always give them the information they need for life.

~from homiletics online

**TO BEGIN AGAIN, by Rabbi Naomi Levy**

### A PRAYER

*When I panic, God, teach me patience.  
When I fear, teach me faith.*

*When I doubt myself, teach me confidence.  
When I despair, teach me hope.  
When I lose perspective, show me the way-back to love, back to life,  
back to You. Amen.*

***"L.E.N.T.  
Lord, Everyone Needs To...Have Hope"***

*Lent doesn't have to be a  
40-day guilt trip or  
endurance test. We could  
make it a 40-day gratitude  
journey and spend 40 days  
practicing the greatest  
commandment of all: Love.*

Be The Miracle  
[www.ReginaBrett.com](http://www.ReginaBrett.com)

  
Sacred Bonds, Shared Hopes  
**Interfaith Event**

**Thursday, March 5**  
**6:30-8:00pm**

*followed by dessert & fellowship*

**Edison Congregational Church**  
1619 Llewellyn Dr. Fort Myers, 33901

Join our interfaith community for a communal reading of Emma Lazarus's poem *The New Colossus* on the Statue of Liberty. We'll reflect on our shared humanity and America as the land of freedom and opportunity.

**Sponsored by: Cypress Lake United Methodist Church, Edison Congregational Church, Iona-Hope Episcopal Church, Temple Beth El & Temple Judea**

Part of Faith 250- a national interfaith project to come together in fellowship, meaningful conversation, and local rituals that celebrate our shared civic story.

## ✨ Two Sopranos. One Stage. A Night to Remember. ✨

Join us for The Dazzling Drama Queens – Battles of the Sopranos and witness all the glamor and madness as international opera star Angela Maria Blasi, German American soprano Stephanie Lorenz, and phenomenal pianist Janet Carter grace the stage.

This lively concert pairs vocal brilliance with humor, drama, and heart as two remarkable voices take turns captivating the audience.

Whether you love live music, great storytelling, or simply a fun and uplifting evening out, this is a night you won't want to miss.

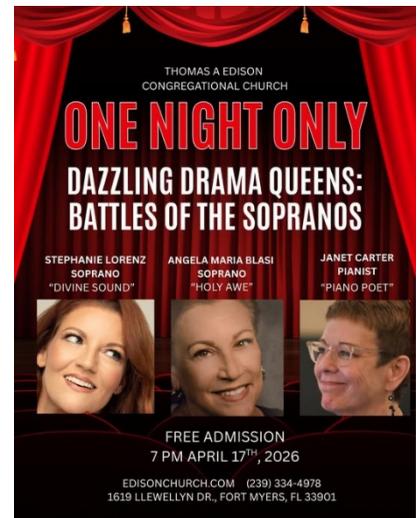
Save the date

Invite friends

Come enjoy something truly special

**Here at the church on April 17<sup>th</sup>,  
2026 At 7:00 PM.**

Battles of the Sopranos  
Stephanie Lorenz and Angela Blasi  
Janet Carter – Pianist



## Financial Recap 2025 Actual vs 2026 Budget

	<u>2025 Actual</u>	<u>2026 Budget</u>
<u>Giving</u>	\$253,068	TBD
<u>Staff Expense</u>	\$210,778	\$207,421
<u>Admin. Expense</u>	\$19,502	\$19,446
<u>Building &amp; Grounds</u>	\$40,537 **	\$28,622
<u>Ministry Expense</u>	\$21,599	\$17,217
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$292,416</b>	<b>\$272,406</b>

\*\* Building & Grounds had approx. \$12,700 in unexpected expense from repairs needed in Cathy's Place. Repair items were HVAC, Windows, and Playground.

**February 22nd – First Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus and the Wilderness”**

**March 1st – Second Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus and Nicodemus”**

**March 8th – Third Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus and the Women at the Well”**

**March 15th – Fourth Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus and the Blind Man”**

**March 22nd – Fifth Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus and Lazarus”**

**March 29th – Palm Sunday (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus on the Road Again”**

**April 2nd – Maundy Thursday (6:30 PM)**  
**“Jesus in the Upper Room”**

**April 3rd – Good Friday (6:30 PM)**  
**“Jesus and the Old Rugged Cross”**

**April 5th – Easter (10:00 AM)**  
**“Jesus Is An Early Riser”**



## Wellness Newsletter

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* **John 16:33**

### Measles Update

**Measles** (rubeola) is an illness caused by a contagious virus, rubeola. Measles is spread through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. The virus may remain active in the air or on surfaces for up to two hours.

#### Who is at Risk

- Vaccination lowers risk but does not exclude measles, especially with high-intensity exposure, if suspected, isolate and get tested
- If you live or work in Ave Maria, Immokalee, or area of outbreak
- If you've had a known measles exposure
- If you are contacted by the Florida DOH and told you have encountered someone who has tested positive for measles
- If you are immunosuppressed

#### You are at low-risk if

- You have been vaccinated against measles even if the immunizations occurred during childhood. Vaccine effectiveness is approximately 75% after the first dose and 97% after the second dose for measles, mumps, and rubella.
- You have laboratory confirmation of having been infected with the disease in the past.
- You were born before 1957 – Although birth before 1957 is considered acceptable evidence of immunity, you should consider vaccinating if you were born before 1957 **and** lack laboratory evidence of immunity or laboratory confirmation that you have had the disease.
- Your physician can order a blood titer test to check for antibodies to confirm immunization.

#### Measle Symptoms include:

- Early Symptoms, within 7-14 days after exposure: Fever (>100.3), cough, runny nose, red watery eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Symptoms that develop within 3-5 Days after early symptoms (within 10-19 days after exposure): A rash all over the body, known as a Descending maculopapular RASH. This rash may extend to the mouth and appear as red spots, known as Koplik spots.

- If you experience any of these symptoms, see your health care provider immediately.

## **Confirmed Measle cases by county as of Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

<b>Total in Florida</b>	<b>92</b>
Alachua	2
Broward	1
Collier	66
Duval	6
Escambia	5
Hillsborough	2
Lee	1
Manatee	3
Miami-Dade	1
Pinellas	3
St. Johns	2

### **Dear Worshipers,**

**We invite your child to join us for Faith Formation learning in Cathy's Place at Thomas Edison Congregational Church. Your children will learn about Jesus through age-appropriate faith activities, songs, prayers, Bible stories, games and arts & crafts.**

**March class curriculum Faith Formation**

**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – Jesus Heals a Blind Man, *John 9***

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 – Jesus Raises Lazrus, *John 11***

**Blood Pressure clinic on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

**Lori McMullen RN-FCN**

**Cards can be sent to the following:**

**General Dozier  
Barrington Terrace, of Ft. Myers**

**9731 Commerce Center Ct., Room #326  
Fort Myers, Fl. 33908**

## **PRAYER LIST**

### **Our Church Members:**

Jean Lindenlaub; Liz Lloyd; General Dozier;  
Sharlene Dozier; Barbara Buch.

### **Friends & Family:**

Betty Denson; Jim Martin (Teri Martin's husband); Michele Baron (friends of Rod Schaffter and Carol Skaza); Fred & Natalie Johnson (friend of Rod Schaffter & Carol Skaza); Bob Mesce (brother of Patti Seebock); Tom Simpson (brother of Kathy Bolen); Dwight Brzinski (friend of Pat Jessie); Christopher Smith and Darwin Solorzono – missing at sea (friends of Mark Rosandich).

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***No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,  
you're welcome here at Edison Congregational Church.  
Welcome home!***

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Website:	<a href="http://www.edisonchurch.com">www.edisonchurch.com</a>
Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/EdisonChurch">Facebook.com/EdisonChurch</a>
Email Pastor:	<a href="mailto:Pastorjim@taecc.com">Pastorjim@taecc.com</a>
Email Office:	<a href="mailto:Admin@taecc.com">Admin@taecc.com</a>
Office Phone:	239-334-4978
Office Hours:	Monday-Thursday 9 AM – 12PM
Mailing:	1619 Llewellyn Dr., Ft. Myers 33901

Pastor Jim can be reached at the office or on his cell phone at 502-494-6649 (voice & text).

***Our Church Staff***

*Senior Minister – Rev. Jim Harper, III*

*Associate Minister – Rev. Anton Pierce*

*Administrative Assistant – Cindy Wilson*

*Distinguished Director of Sacred Arts – Alena Michel*

*Faith Community Nurse – Lori McMullen*

*Pianist - Stephen Brittain*

*Your gifts are deeply appreciated and enable this ministry to continue. Our church retains the right to redirect donations to the area of greatest need.*

