

# Service of Holy Communion

## 1st Sunday of Lent

### February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026



#### **INTRODUCTION**

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

#### **GATHERING**

#### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The congregation stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

P. Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*The congregation sits or kneels. Silence is kept for reflection.*

P. Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace. **Amen.**

*Congregation stands*

**GATHERING HYMN**

Thy Holy Wings

ELW 613

### **GREETING**

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C. And also with you.**

### **KYRIE**

A. Hold us in your mercy.

**C. Hold us in your mercy.**

A. Open our hearts.

**C. Open our hearts.**

A. Hold us in your love.

**C. Hold us in your love. Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P. O God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you, tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Congregation is seated*

## WORD

### **FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7**

<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

<sup>3:1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, <sup>5</sup> for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

A. Word of God, word of life.

**C. Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 32** (*read responsively*)

<sup>1</sup> Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup> **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

<sup>3</sup> While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,  
because of my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup> **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

<sup>8</sup> **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;  
I will guide you with my eye.**

<sup>9</sup> Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>10</sup> **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup> Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

## **SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19**

<sup>12</sup> Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned <sup>13</sup> for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. <sup>17</sup> If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

A. Word of God, word of life.

**C. Thanks be to God.**

## **TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL**

*Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.*

*Congregation stands*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11**

P. The holy gospel according to Matthew. **C. Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil.

<sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'

and 'On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,

and serve only him.' "

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

P. The gospel of the Lord. **C. Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Congregation is seated*

## **SERMON**

Temptation

## **PRAYER STATIONS**

*There are 5 prayer stations throughout the sanctuary that you can move to during this time. The 6th option is to stay seated while meditating, praying, and listening to the background music. The prayer stations are the same each week, with the exception of the poem changing weekly. The intention is that you take in 1 or 2 stations each week, visiting each station at least once by the end of Lent. We will spend about 5 minutes at the prayer stations before entering into the Hymn of the Day.*

*Congregation stands*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

ELW 319

## APOSTLE'S CREED

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 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.

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A. Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

A. God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

A. God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated, especially we pray for...those we now say aloud...and those we

hold in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P. Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

### **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

**C. And also with you.**

P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

*Congregation is seated*

### **CHOIR ANTHEM**

On Eagle's Wings

*Michael Joncas, Arr. Mark Hayes*

### **MEAL**

#### **OFFERTORY INVITATION**

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via Venmo* ↓



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***Thank you for your generous gifts!***

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via Tithely* ↓



*Congregation stands*

## OFFERTORY SONG

Just as I am; thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - 'ry  
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P. The Lord be with you.

**C. And also with you.**

P. Lift up your hearts.

**C. We lift them to the Lord.**

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P. It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The congregation sits or kneels.*

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P. Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide, together with rivers and seas, wells and springs, we bless and magnify you. You led your people Israel through the desert, and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joins us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be renewed for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

## 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Children may come forward for a blessing.*

*Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Gluten free wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come forward. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.*

P. Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## COMMUNION SONG

Take, oh, take me as I am;      sum-mon out what I shall be;

set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

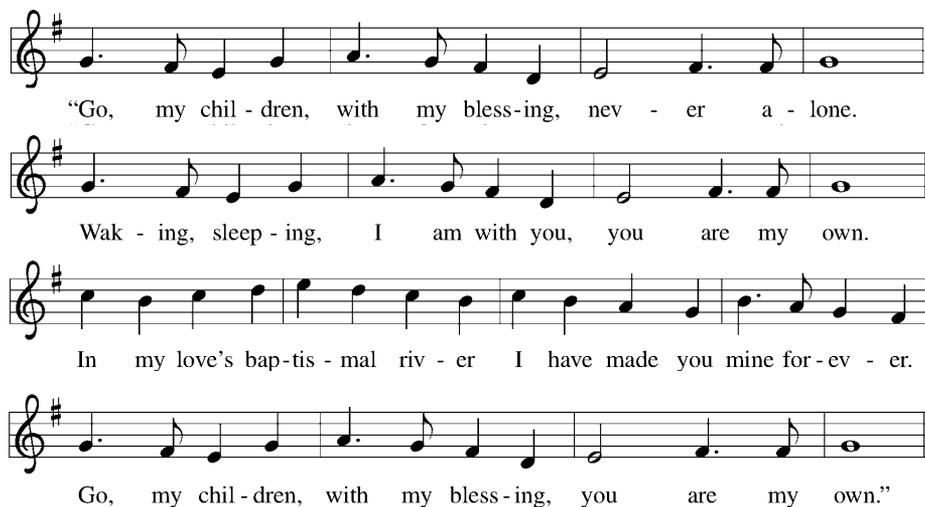
## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*After all have received Communion the congregation stands.*

## TABLE BLESSING

P. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## SONG AFTER COMMUNION



“Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.  
Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
In my love’s bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.  
Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own.”

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray... God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthen us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ’s body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## SENDING

## BENEDICTION

P. Receive the blessings of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit whose breath sustains creation, ✠ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

ELW 325

## DISMISSAL

A. Go in peace. Believe the good news. **C. Thanks be to God.**

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# Announcements for February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

*Welcome to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God’s presence in our worship!*

*If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the “Guest Book” on the table in the narthex and take a welcome bag.*

*Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available.***

***Worship is live streamed** to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.*



**Volunteers for Today’s Worship**

- Lay Asst.**            Emilie Dupont
- Ushers**             Diane Rossi
- Comm. Asst.**      *Volunteer needed*
- Tech**                *Volunteer needed*
- Tellers**            *Volunteer needed*
- Refreshments**   *Volunteer needed*

**Volunteers for Next Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**

*\*All positions open\**

**\*\*\*\*\* Join us for refreshments after worship\*\*\*\*\***

**THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR**

- Sunday, Feb 22:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am  
Worship w/Communion, 1st Sunday of Lent, 9:30am  
Choir Practice following worship
- Monday, Feb 23:** Council Reorg Meeting, 6-9pm
- Wednesday, Feb 25:** Lenten Bible Study, [Zoom](#), 10am & 7pm
- Thursday, Feb 26:** Cluster-wide Grief Study, [Zoom](#), 7-8pm
- Saturday, Feb 28:** Sisters in Prayer, [Zoom](#), 8:30am  
ELCA District Meeting, Redeemer Lutheran, 10am-1pm
- Sunday, March 1:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am  
Worship w/Communion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, 9:30am  
Chili Cookoff following worship  
Choir Practice following worship

**Return Soup Mason Jars:** If you purchased soup from the souper bowl sale we invite you to return the mason jars to be recycled for next years' soup making!

**Women's Lenten Retreat:** We are hosting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Woman's Retreat at HCLC **NEXT Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 9 am-3 pm.** All women are invited to come explore a Lenten journey this winter about self-care. The day includes Pastor Peggy as our keynote speaker, worship, music, workshops and meditation. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is a recommended **donation of \$15** for building use. Please **RSVP** to the office (office@hc-lutheranchurch.org) **ASAP** if you'd like to attend. We already have over 20 people registered! See Kathy Heeren or Pam Kucks with any questions.

**Cluster-wide Grief Study:** There are 2 more sessions of our cluster **4-week series** on grief. Topics left include: Coping Strategies; and The Spiritual Dynamics of Grief. Join us on **Zoom from 7-8pm on Thursdays (2/5-2/26).** It's okay if you can't make it every week. All are welcome!

**Lenten Bible Study:** Adult Ed will pause their current book study during Lent for a bible study titled ***Journey to the Resurrection***. This is a 6-week series inviting you into a deeper exploration of Lent and your faith. All are welcome to attend the **Wednesday Zoom sessions at 10am or at 7pm from THIS Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>.** Please **let Pam Kucks know** you'd like to participate so she can get you a book. Books are \$14, grants available.

**Lighten Your Load: Lent & Lament:** Pastor Peggy will be offering a Lenten evening of releasing our laments and receiving hope through the remembrance of our baptism. Join her in the Sunday School classroom on **Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> from 7-8pm.** Pastor Peggy is looking for **1 more volunteer to bring soup.**

**District Meeting-Church Delegates Needed:** Our NJ Synod District meeting will gather from 10am-1pm **THIS Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Succasunna (about an hour drive),** with coffee and registration beginning at 9:30am. Lunch is provided. We are looking for delegates from Holy Counselor to attend. **Our new Bishop will be in attendance to listen and meet you as well!** Please email Pastor Peggy for more information or with questions.

**Chili Cook-off:** **NEXT Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> following worship will be our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Chili Cook-off!** Prepare your best chili to be voted on or come with your appetite and opinions to vote on the best chili!

**Pajama Sunday:** **Pajama Sunday is March 8<sup>th</sup>!** Donate \$5 per person or \$20 for the whole family to support Lutheran Disaster Response and wear your PJs to church. This is Daylight Savings morning, so wearing pajamas is one less step to get ready for church!

**Corned Beef and Cabbage Meals to Go:** **Following worship on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> we will have Corned Beef and Cabbage meals to go.** Please call the office or **sign up** on the sheet with **how many meals** you would like so that we can plan accordingly. **Free will donations**, suggested donation of \$15-20! Lots of love goes into the preparation, so you can always give more.

**Loaves & Fishes:** Loaves and Fishes (our young adults and young families group) will gather for **game night** at church on **Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 5-6:30pm**. Dinner will be provided! **Let Pastor Peggy know if you plan to come** so we have enough food. Come join the fun and **bring your favorite game** to share!

**Food Pantry:** **Food items to help restock:** boxed cereal, boxed oatmeal pouches, scanned stew, canned chili, canned corn, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper, liquid dish soap, & toothpaste. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!





**Holy Counselor**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Church Office (973) 827-5251  
www.hc-lutheranchurch.org

The Reverend Peggy Ludlow: [pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org](mailto:pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org)  
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### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*As Children of God,  
we are called to share and serve  
Christ's love and bring God's word to all.*

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Pastor** Rev. Peggy Ludlow  
**President** Nancy Knecht  
**Vice President** Frank Urbaniak  
**Treasurer** Claire Speroni  
**Recording Secretary** Dawn McCormick  
**Financial Secretary** John Heeren  
**Outreach Coordinator** Francine Vince  
**Nurture Coordinator** Fred Schoenagel  
**Administration Coordinator** Diane Rossi  
**Youth Representative** Kevin Drache

### **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Kristina Heeren  
Pam Kucks  
Matt Moller  
Aileen Donovan

*Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.*

