



the good news is...

all are invited

February 18, 2026 – 7pm

Ash Wednesday

Covenant is an accepting, welcoming community sharing the glory of God's love with all.

PRELUDE

"Savior, When in Dust to You" arr. McKibben

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: If God threw a party,

People: all would be invited.

Leader: If God hosted a dinner,

People: there'd be a seat saved for each of us.

Leader: If God prepared a banquet,

People: a cheer would go up when you arrived.

Leader: This is the good news:

People: God is hosting a dinner.

**God is preparing a banquet,
and all are invited.**

Leader: Let us worship this invitational God.

*Please rise in body or spirit

This hymn from a noted New Zealand hymnwriter affirms that God's hospitality transcends the barriers erected by human society and that we who have been created in God's image are called to live in ways that reflect our Creator's values: justice and joy, compassion and peace.

1 For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

Refrain:

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

2 For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair,
(Refrain)

4 For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live, (Refrain)

Refrain:

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

5 For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free,
(Refrain)

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Gracious God,
you invite all of us to your table:
the faithful and the doubting, the restless and the hopeless, the addicted
and the lonely, the lost and the confused. You invite all of us, regardless of
who we are or where we've been, but we fail to do the same. When given
the opportunity, we are guilty of casting judgment on our neighbors.**

**We draw lines, assume the worst, create cliques, and accept exclusion.
Forgive our harmful ways. This Lent, show us how to love others the way you
love us.**

With hope we pray, amen.

(Silence for personal confession)

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, no matter how many times we mess up,
no matter how many times we lose our way,
no matter how many times we decline God's invitation,
God will never stop inviting us to the table.
There is and always will be a seat saved for you.
So join me in these good news words:

**We are forgiven, again and again.
We are invited, again and again.
We are loved, from beginning to end.
Thanks be to God, our Inviter. Amen.**

HYMN #750

“Goodness is Stronger Than Evil”

Recognizing that this text arose from the years of apartheid in South Africa adds depth and resonance to its already confident language. Yet these words can also be read as a summary of Christ's death and resurrection, the true basis of our hope that good will triumph over evil.

Goodness is stronger than evil;
love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness;
life is stronger than death.
Victory is ours; victory is ours,
through God who loves us.
Victory is ours, victory is ours,
through God who loves us.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

THE GOSPEL READING

Luke 14:15-24 (NRSVUE)

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

MEDITATION

“The Good News is...All Are Invited”

IMPOSITION OF ASHES & THE LORD'S SUPPER

 See the back page of the hymnal

At Covenant, we believe the Lord's Supper is for everyone. From newborns to our most mature, all are welcome at this table. The Presbyterian Church teaches, “The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding” (Book of Order, W-3.049).

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

“Touch Me With Ashes” by Stacey Nordmeyer

***HYMN**

“You Belong”

1 In our light, in our darkness,
In our hopes, in our fears,
You have purpose here.
In our highs, in our lows
In our joys, in our sorrows,
In our rights, in our wrongs,
When we're weak and when we're strong,
In our story, in our song, you belong.

Refrain:

You belong just as you are,
Here in this place.
You are the image of God.
You belong, come raise your voice,
Come hear the word,
Listen to God, and know that you belong.

2 In your prayer, in your silence,
In your grief, in your tears,
God will hold you near.
In your strength, in your weakness,
In your storm, in your peace,
When you give all you can,
When you question where you stand,
When you hate what you see,
Growing pains have made you weak,
You are still given grace, you are justified by faith.
You still have a gift and song, you belong. (Refrain)

3 We on earth have no sorrow
That God cannot feel;
God will help us heal.
We are called in this place,
In our hearts, and in our faith;
To tell the story and the song; we belong.
Tell the story, sing the song; we belong.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Reprise of “For Everyone Born”

† From Prayers for an Inclusive Church by Steven Shakespeare. New York: Church Publishing, 2009.

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Assisting in Worship Today:

Allie Garner – Vocalist

Katie Wynkoop – Organist/Pianist & Assistant Director of Music

Cherie Brooks – Director of Music & Technology

Brian Biller – Media Production Specialist

Erin Wise – Director of Children’s & Youth Ministries

Rev. Joel A. Esala – Pastor

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

PALM SUNDAY | MARCH 29

MAUNDY THURSDAY | APRIL 2 7PM

GOOD FRIDAY | APRIL 3 7PM

EASTER SUNDAY | APRIL 5 10AM

PREACHER FROM THE PEW | WEDNESDAYS 7PM
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 25



“There Is Still Room”
by Lauren Wright Pittman
Inspired by Luke 14:15-24



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