



the good news is...

so good, it catches
us by surprise

February 22, 2026 – 10am

The First Sunday in Lent

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

PRELUDE

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus" arr. Linker

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The good news of the gospel is:

People: manna in the desert, water turned into wine, love after loss, forgiveness after pain.

Leader: The good news of the gospel is:

People: release for the captive, hope for the hopeless, mourning turned to dancing, and strangers turned to friends.

Leader: So come on in. There's no time to waste! This surprising good news is here for you.

People: Let us worship this good-news God.

*Please rise in body or spirit

*HYMN #26

“Earth and All Stars!”



This lively text was written for the 90th anniversary of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Echoing Psalm 98, it is a prime example of a 20th-century hymn style based on phrases rather than complete sentences. The exuberant tune was created expressly for these words.

1 Earth and all stars!
Loud rushing planets!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Hail, wind, and rain!
Loud blowing snowstorm!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
God has done marvelous things.
We too sing praises with a new song!

4 Knowledge and truth!
Loud sounding wisdom!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Daughter and son!
Loud praying members!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
God has done marvelous things.
We too sing praises with a new song!

2 Trumpet and pipes!
Loud clashing cymbals!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Harp, lute, and lyre!
Loud humming cellos!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
God has done marvelous things.
We too sing praises with a new song!

3 Engines and steel!
Loud pounding hammers!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Limestone and beams!
Loud building workers!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
God has done marvelous things.
We too sing praises with a new song!

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION



Loving God, somewhere along the way we picked up the message that in order to be faithful, we have to be serious.

We have to pray on our knees without ceasing.

We have to be somber in worship and quiet in our studies.

We have to check our wiggles and our questions at the door.

But then you say the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed—unruly and untamed.

You turn water into wine—surprising and extravagant.

And all of a sudden, we wonder:

Can we be like that mustard seed?

Can we be faithful and unruly?

Can we be playful and curious?

Can we be messy and still be yours?

We know the answer already.

The Spirit whispers: of course, of course, of course.

Forgive our doubt.

Pull us closer into your embrace.

With faith like a mustard seed, we pray.

Amen.

(Silence for personal confession)

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

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.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord, be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN #188

“Jesus Loves Me”

TALK WITH CHILDREN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

THE FIRST READING

Matthew 13:31-32 (NRSVUE)

We live not by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God.

Thanks be to God.



SPECIAL MUSIC

“The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want” arr. Alex Guebert

THE GOSPEL READING

John 2:1-11 (NRSVUE)

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

SERMON

“The Good News is...so Good it Catches Us by Surprise”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven... (Hymnal p. 35. We say “debts & debtors.”)



INVITATION TO THE OFFERING



***DOXOLOGY #606**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**



***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**



***HYMN #292**

"As the Wind Song"



Reversing the usual order, this hymn began with the music rather than the words. The composer (from Singapore) sent this tune to the author (in New Zealand) to see what text it might inspire from her. She also suggested the tune name, a Maori phrase meaning "Holy Spirit."

1 As the wind song through the trees,
as the stirring of the breeze,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
as the heart made strangely warm,
as the voice within the storm,
so it is with the Spirit of God.
Never seen, ever known
where this wind has blown
bringing life, bringing power to the world,
as the dancing tongues of fire,
as the soul's most deep desire,
so it is with the Spirit of God.

2 As the rainbow after rain,
as the hope that's born again,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
as the green in the spring,
as a kite on a string,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
making worlds that are new,
making peace come true,
bringing gifts, bringing love to the world,
as the rising of the yeast,
as the wine at the feast,
so it is with the Spirit of God.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

Reprise of "As the Wind Song"

Assisting in Worship Today:

Dana Rudmose – Liturgist

Makoto Winkler – Vocalist

Nan Davidson – Campanile Bell Choir Director

Tori Vazquez – Flute

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



"Messianic Secret"
by T. Denise Anderson
Inspired by John 2:1-11

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Bible Study - Wednesday at 1:00pm in the Lounge. Join Bible Study with the QR code.



Preacher from the Pew - Wednesday at 7pm. This Week: Joanne Pratt
Centering Prayer- Thursdays at 8:30am in the Lounge

MARCH 14

The Ukrainian Cultural Association of Ohio is hosting an egg-decorating workshop for adults. Learn about the ancient art of wax batik and decorate an egg to take home.

\$5 - All Supplies Provided
[All proceeds to humanitarian medical aid for Ukraine]



Lenten Breakfast

Saturday, March 7
9:30AM



Speaker: Benjamin Powers

RSVP between services 2/22 or 3/1
or call Estelle Scott

gratitude collage

RSVP LINK

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/
4QHYLZZ](https://bit.ly/4QHYLZZ)

FEBRUARY 28TH
10AM-NOON



SPRING CARE PACKAGES!

Know a student continuing their education beyond high school?

- Please submit the following by 2/27/26
- Student's name
 - Complete mailing address
 - Relationship to Covenant (child, grandchild etc.)

Submit Info to Terri Hayes or Megan in the office!

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

PER
CAPITA 

\$46/ per person



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