

February 22, 2026
First Sunday in Lent
10:15 AM
Baptism
Theme: The good news is...so good it takes us by surprise

Paragraph for bulletin cover:

John's Gospel doesn't begin with a temptation story but instead opens Jesus' ministry with a wedding miracle. It may feel a bit lavish to start the season of Lent with a wedding banquet, but the good news begins with joy. This week we focus on the subversive and playful nature of the good news. The kingdom of heaven is so good it should catch us by surprise! Like a mustard seed, the good news can grow from the smallest seed into the tallest tree. Like an unruly weed, or fine wine saved for last, the good news is abundant and cannot be contained. As we sink into Jesus' teachings throughout the season, we may not always be comfortable, but we can trust that these teachings are good, rooted in love, and worthy of celebration.

+ GATHERING +
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME AND GREETING

PRELUDE Prelude on the Kyrie - Jean Langlais

CALL TO WORSHIP

The good news of the gospel is:

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

The good news of the gospel is:

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

So come on in.

There's no time to waste!

This surprising good news is here for you.

Let us worship this good-news God.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 312 Jesus, Come! For We Invite You

CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS

You may have heard, "All is fair in love and war," or "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But God says, "Forgive seventy times seven." God says, "I am slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." God says, "Turn the other cheek." God's mercy catches us by surprise. So with wonder and gratitude, let us go to God in prayer. Let us be surprised by God's grace all over again. Friends, let us pray:

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.

God's grace is wild and unruly. God's mercy is abundant and surprising. God's love is expansive and unending. So if you ask, "Holy One, am I forgiven?" the answer is and always will be: of course, of course, of course. This is the good news of the gospel.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

PRAAYER OF THE DAY

Holy One, it is easy to see the mustard plant and forget to marvel at the seed. It is easy to taste good wine and not appreciate it. It is easy to miss the holy that is in our midst. So as we turn to your word today, we pray, surprise us. Speak to us. Move through us. Draw us closer to your good news. We wait with bated breath. **In the Your name we pray. Amen.**

+ WORD +

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Matthew 13:31-32

At the conclusion of the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: John 2:1-11

At the conclusion of the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM pg. 227

BAPTISM HYMN ELW 448 This is the Spirit's Entry Now

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

Adoramus Te Christe - Theodore Dubois
 Kevin Schanely, tenor

Translation:

*We adore You O Christ
 and we bless You
 because by Your Holy Cross
 You have redeemed the world*

OFFERTORY

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
 spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
 pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
 store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
 and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation and your good news is for all people. May the gifts we offer be used to spread the good news into the world, in the name of One who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

+ SENDING +
God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

As you leave this place,
when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.

**For the good news of the gospel is
love and justice for all.**

**It is joy that surprises,
and nonviolence that transforms.**

The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,
so go forth speaking it,
in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.
For if you won't, then who will?
Thanks be to God
for this good, good news.
Amen.

SENDING SONG ELW 326 Bless Now, O God, the Journey

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

There will be no postludes in Lent.

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PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: Bob Moran, Leonard Gibeon, David Mounts, Ed & Billie Schanely, Steve Keyser, Andrew Breuninger, Renee Fels, Rebecca Jellen, Richard Ditzler, Joy Miller, Alyson Harvey, Audrey Sell, Marie Wolfe, Erik Ockenlaender, Mary Eberle, Brandon Blanchard, Gladys Kazalonis, Elizabeth Brossett and family, Paige Seasock, Tanner Antalosky, Bob Schanely, Will Morgan, Richard Mitchell, David Wargo, Kate Umstead, Barry Long and Jim Martin.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, Feb. 23	5:30 Lenten Soup and Study 7pm Great Songs of Faith Choir rehearsal 7:30pm Executive Meeting
Wednesday, Feb. 25	7pm Mid Week Worship at Friedens UCC
Saturday, Feb. 28	5-7pm Roof Fundraiser Spaghetti Dinner
Sunday, March 1	8am Worship 9am Sunday School 10:15 Worship

Sunday Morning Coffee Bar is BACK! Join us at the coffee bar at the back entrance for coffee, hot tea, breakfast treats and conversation starting at 8:30AM. Volunteers are needed to cover the coffee bar each week - which means set up, bring treats to share and clean up. The sign up sheet is available outside Pastor Becky's office - please sign up to help!

RISE Against Hunger Event is March 22nd. The new sign up is available outside of Pastor Becky's office.

Cemetery Clean Off is Saturday, March 7th this year

It would be appreciated if you have any Christmas decorations on your cemetery lots to please remove prior to then. Also note that the cemetery does not maintain the roads in the winter. This is all weather permitting. All are welcome to come out and help.

First Communion Workshop Saturday, March 21 9:30-11:30 AM

Any 2nd-5th grade student who has not received communion is welcome to attend this spring's first communion workshop. A parent/grandparent must attend the workshop with each student. Students who attend will receive their first communion on Sunday, March 29 at the 10:15 AM service - a luncheon with cake will be held after worship to celebrate with our first communion recipients. Sign up link on Monday's weekly email or contact Pastor Becky.

Mid-Week Lent Worship 2026

Mid-week Lenten worship will be held on Wednesdays at 7 PM followed by a time of fellowship and food. We hope you'll join us!

February 25 – Why are you anxious?

Worship at Friedens UCC, Sumneytown; preacher Pastor Steve Myren

March 4 – What do you live for?

Worship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Red Hill; preacher Pastor Stephanie Thompson

March 11 – Who will you love?

Worship at Pennsbury UCC, Pennsbury; preacher Pastor Kevin Compton

March 18 – What are you looking for?

Worship at St. John's Lutheran Church, Sumneytown; preacher Pastor Serena Sellers

March 25 – Who do you say that I am?

Worship at Palm Schwenkfelder Church, Palm; preacher Pastor Becky Schanely

Easter Flower Order Forms are available in the narthex and in the parlor. The order forms will be due Wednesday, March 18th.



Save The Date!

The Heavenly Helper Spaghetti
Dinner Roof Fundraiser
has been rescheduled for
Saturday, February 28
5:00-7:00 PM

Dessert donations will be needed!





Soup & Study – Lent 2026

A Different Way to Journey Through Lent

Where Faith Finds Color

Mondays in Lent | 5:30–7:00 p.m.

Begins Monday, February 23, 2026

St. John's Lutheran Church, Sumneytown

We'll share a simple meal, meaningful conversation, and time to reflect together using Coloring Lent. This group invites us to talk and color side by side, creating space for reflection, discussion, and quiet moments along the way. The book will also serve as a personal devotional guide throughout Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

Book: Coloring Lent: An Adult Coloring Book for the Journey to Resurrection

Books are available for \$10

from Pastor Becky, St. John's (pastorbecky74@gmail.com)

or Pastor Stephanie, Friedens (pastor.friedensucc@gmail.com)



Please bring your own coloring supplies to the Monday gatherings:

**crayons, markers,
or colored pencils.**

No artistic experience needed.

All are welcome.