

March 22, 2026
Fifth Sunday in Lent
10:15 AM

Theme: The good news is...rooted in justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Paragraph for bulletin cover:

As we move toward Holy Week, we acknowledge the ways Jesus' ministry was increasingly at odds with the religious leaders who prioritized loyalty to legality and perceived Jesus' teachings as a threat. While Jesus is teaching in the Temple, some scribes and Pharisees interrupt Jesus to put both him—and a woman caught in adultery—on trial. Their questioning intensifies as they cite Mosaic Law and put the woman's fate in Jesus' hands. Instead of focusing on punishment, Jesus flips the script and invites each person to consider their own sin; Jesus defuses the spectacle by condemning no one. Much of Jesus' teachings were grounded in his understanding of the Torah; however, many of his actions called for reinterpreting the law. As we wrestle with our own rules, we should ask, "What is the most just, merciful, and faithful interpretation?"

+ GATHERING +

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

WELCOME AND GREETING

PRELUDE

Aria - Alice Jordan
Carmela Steyaert, flute

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

This is God's house.

You can make yourself at home here.

Let us worship our God who is just, merciful, and faithful.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 714 O God, of Mercy, God of Light

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Jesus once said to a crowd, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone." Friends, none of us are without sin. None of us get it right all the time. None of us can get by without God's grace. As we come before God in confession, we acknowledge this truth. We put down our stones and turn to God for forgiveness. Let us pray:

Holy God, we love to live our lives by the rules. We love clear answers. We love right and wrong. We love swift justice. We love to pick up stones, but you show us another way. You

welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation. You prioritize mercy over legality. You prioritize people over tradition. You prioritize love over everything. Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters. Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you. Forgive us. Soften our hearts. Root us in mercy, justice, and love. With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray in Your name. Amen.

Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way. Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion, and the same can be said for us. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion.

Our God is a God of grace.

We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

Thanks be to God for yet another second chance.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy One, when you speak, we don't want to miss it. When you bend down and write in the dirt, when you move through the trees, when you wake with the dawn, when you tug on our heart, or whisper into our dreams, we don't want to miss it. So today we pray, clear out the cobwebs in our ears. Quiet the steady stream of thoughts marching through our minds. Open up space in our hearts so that we can receive your word for us today.

With hope we pray in Your name. Amen.

+ WORD +

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

FIRST READING: Matthew 23:23

At the conclusion of the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: John 8:2-11

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 ACS 959 God of Promise, Let These Signs of Grace

Refrain



God of prom - ise, let these signs of grace



kin - dle in our hearts a song of praise.



1 Life - giv - ing wa - ter soak - ing our dry - ness,
2 Word of pro - claim - ing, breath on the wa - ter,
5 Robe of a - dop - tion grow - ing God's fam - 'ly,



drown - ing our sin each day, mak - ing us new—
plant - ing your prom - ise— the voice from a - bove:
wrap - ping our bro - ken - ness in the di - vine—



Refrain

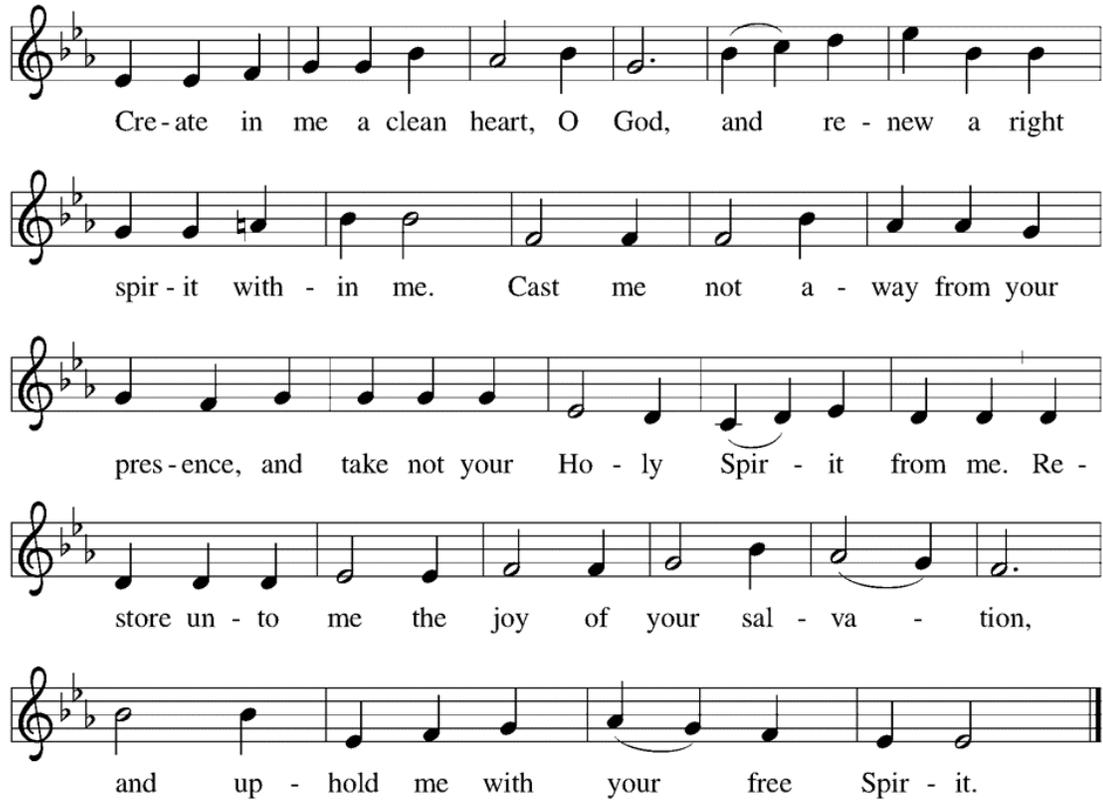
mer - cy come stream - ing from you.
"This is my child, my be - loved."
love be - come sym - bol and sign.

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

As the Deer - setting by Stan Pethel
Carmela Steyaert, flute

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 606 Our Father, We Have Wandered

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

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This morning we are celebrating the baptism of Samson John Skyrm at the 10:15am worship this morning. He is the son of Alexander and Sara (Barndt)Skyrm.

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, Will Morgan, Richard Mitchell, David Wargo, Kate Umstead, Barry Long, Jim Martin and Mike Wolf.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 23	5:30 Lenten Soup and Study 7pm Great Songs of Faith Choir rehearsal 7:30pm Executive mtg
Wednesday, March 25	7pm Mid Week Worship at Palm, Schwenkfelder
Sunday, March 29	no 8am Worship 9am Sunday School 10:15 Worship Salad, Soup & Egg Stuffing Event

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!

March 25 – Who do you say that I am?

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

Readers Needed for Palm/Passion Sunday Palm/Passion Sunday is March 29, 2026 - we will worship at one service at 10:15 AM. The service will include the reading of the passion interspersed throughout worship. Readers are needed to participate in the reader's theater-style presentation of the passion.

There will be a rehearsal the day before, Sat. March 28, at 10 AM to run through lines and the movement of readers (when to read, where to stand, when to sit, etc.).

Family Bathroom We are adding a family bathroom to meet the needs of some of our members. It's a big job. I believe the job itself has been blessed. The architect provided our plan pro bono. The supplier of most of the fixtures for the bathroom has discounted their products in exchange for some advertising opportunities. They even donated the sink! It's still an expensive project. We are in search of grants. Grants aren't easy. But, we're doing our best. If you know of one that might help us please let the office or a Church Council member know. In the mean time, if you feel it in your heart, we have a designated fund for donations. As you know, many hands make the lift easier! Just write "Family Bathroom" on an envelope. Thank You!

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!



**Candy donations
needed**
by Sunday,
March 29 for the
Soup, Salad & Egg
Stuffing event

A BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY AWAITS
In a quiet monastery,
silence is broken...

THE NEXT BOOK GROUP GATHERING
Join us as we explore
The Beautiful Mystery by Louise Penny.
All are welcome!

Saturday, April 25 at 9:30 AM
St. John's Lutheran Church, Sumneytown
Light breakfast served.

**EASTER
EGGstravaganza**
Saturday,
April 4 at 10 AM
St. John's Lutheran Church
3104 Main Street
Sumneytown
Free for all - donations for Open Link's food pantry are welcome!

EGG HUNT
Take a
selfie with
the Easter
Bunny

For children up to age 12 - story time, egg hunt, craft bag & cookies
www.stjsumneytown.org

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 29
Sunday School at 9 AM
Worship 10:15 AM - beginning outdoor in the circle
Soup, Salad and Egg Stuffing Celebration after worship

MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 2
Dinner church in Fellowship Hall at 6 PM
Concluding in the sanctuary with altar stripping

GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 3
12 Noon worship at New Goshenhoppen UCC
followed by cross walk
7 PM Service of Tenebrae at St. Mark's, Pennsburg

EASTER VIGIL - APRIL 4
8 PM worship at New Goshenhoppen UCC

EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 5
6:30 AM Sunrise Service in Friedens Union Cemetery
Pancake breakfast to follow at Friedens Fellowship Hall
10:15 AM Festival Worship at St. John's