

**A Warm Welcome to
Solomon's United Church of Christ**

Sunday, February 22, 2026 9:00 am

Rev. Julia L. Brown, Pastor

Church Website: www.mysolomonsucc.org

WORDS OF WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ORGAN PRELUDE & SILENT MEDITATION

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Then the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.

Many: Come, beloveds, into the wilderness of our heartbreaking and troubled days.

One: In the midst of our hunger for comfort, provoked by lies of scarcity,

Many: this Lent journey promises bread and abundance.

One: In the midst of our longing for safety, enticed by promises of security,

Many: this Lent journey promises angels and costly solidarity.

One: In the midst of our clinging to power, lured by the ease of complicity,

Many: this Lent journey promises prayer and turning around.

One: The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.

Many: Come, beloveds, to worship, venturing deeper and deeper into the wilderness of our broken and beautiful world. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

“O God, How We Have Wandered”

Black # 202

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)**

In the wilderness and the wandering and the weariness, lead us, Holy Spirit. In the hungering and the holding and the humbling, accompany us, Holy Spirit. In the tempting and the testing and the turning, move us, Holy Spirit. In the resisting and the refusing and the recognizing, guide us, Holy Spirit. Ground in us, as we ground in you. Breathe with us, as we breathe with you. Turn with us, as we turn toward you. As the new way emerges, we pray. Amen.

MOMENT of QUIET PRAYER and PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION

One: Our worship today invites us to dwell with the story of Jesus' 40-day journey in the wilderness struggling with demons, one of the origin stories for the Christian season of Lent. In this story, the adversary uses scripture to try and provoke Jesus into going against his calling to embody radical love. Throughout history, many have used Christian sacred texts to justify and provoke unChristian actions, from the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the enslaving of people of African descent, to the oppression of queer and trans folks and the demonizing of immigrants and refugees. So in this moment, as we seek transformation and new life, as we practice repentance or turning around, let us nurture accountability for the ways we and others have used our scriptures for unloving and unjust ends.

One: For the ways our faith has told unChristian stories of Christian nationalism, and the ways they shape us,

Many: God, have mercy.

One: For the ways our scriptures have told unjust stories of white supremacy, and the ways we perpetuate them,

Many: Christ, have mercy.

One: For the ways our traditions have told unloving stories of xenophobia, and the ways we have embodied them,

Many: God, have mercy.

One: Compel us to learn and tell the truths of our Christian lineages.

Many: Turn us around, Holy One. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

God's story of love surpasses even the most powerful human distortions. God forgives us and frees us and continually invites us to take up our role in the unfolding story of redemption and new life. Thanks be to God! Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Black #775

*And God will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of God's hand.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

OLD TESTAMENT READING **Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7**

EPISTLE READING **Romans 5:12-19**

HYMN **"God Loved the World"** **Black # 208**

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

SERMON

PASTORAL PRAYER & OUR LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

The season of Lent invites us to take stock of and deepen our spiritual practices. How might God be inviting you to deepen your spiritual practice of generosity in this season? Let us offer whatever gifts we have to resist the adversary's lies of scarcity and turn toward abundant life and flourishing for all.

***PRESENTATION & OFFERING RESPONSE** **Black # 785**

*We give you but your own / Whate'er the gift may be
All that we have is yours alone / We give it gratefully*

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION (unison)**

Generous God, help us to resist the lies of scarcity by remembering that we do not live by bread alone, but also by every word that comes from your voice. Bless these gifts that we and those who benefit from them might know abundance in your kingdom. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** **"God Marked a Line and Told the Sea"** **Black # 568**

BENEDICTION

One: In the midst of our hunger for comfort, provoked by lies of scarcity, may this Lent journey bless us with bread and abundance.

In the midst of our longing for safety, enticed by promises of security, may this Lent journey bless us with angels and costly solidarity.

In the midst of our clinging to power, lured by the ease of complicity, may this Lent journey bless us with prayer and turning around.

May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit be with you and go with you always. Our Worship Service is ended,

Many: May our service never end. Amen.

ORGAN CHIMES AND POSTLUDE

Liturgies adapted from UCC Worship Ways. Originally written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema.