

St. Paul's UMC, Ithaca

“A Compassionate Community Led and Transformed by the Spirit”

February 18, 2026 at 7pm Ash Wednesday

“Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News This Lent”

Gathering Music

“Sarabande”
by Arcangelo Corelli”

Molly MacMillan, piano

Greeting & Welcome

Centering Music

“Be Thou My Vision”
(trad)

Molly MacMillan, piano
Grace Demerath,
French horn

***Call to Worship**

If God threw a party,
all would be invited.

If God hosted a dinner,
there'd be a seat saved for each of us.

If God prepared a banquet,
a cheer would go up when you arrived.

This is the good news:

God is throwing a party.

God is hosting a dinner.

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

Let us worship this invitational God.

***Opening Hymn** “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

UMH #348

Prayer of Confession

**Loving God, you invite us
deeper into faith,**

**deeper into relationship,
and deeper into community.
You invite us to your table,
but we cling to the wall.
We RSVP “Maybe.”
We come up with excuses for why we can’t attend.
Forgive us for doubting the invitation,
and forgive us for doubting our worth.
Show us how to respond to you with confidence instead of hesitancy,
and joy instead of doubt.
With gratitude we pray,
amen.**

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.**

Special Music

“Set Me As a Seal”
by Eleanor Daley

Molly MacMillan, piano

Scripture Reading

Luke 14: 15-24 (CEB)

Jami Breedlove Crouch

The Parable of the Great Dinner

When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus’ remarks, he said to Jesus,
“Happy are those who will feast in God’s kingdom.”

We believe in the good news of the gospel, which reminds us
**that all are welcomed, all are celebrated,
all are loved, and all are claimed.**

Pull up a seat at God's table.

There is good news to be shared here. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

“Something Beautiful”

UMH #394

***Benediction**

Postlude

“La Caroline”
by C.P.E. Bach

Molly MacMillan, piano

Worship Service “Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.”

348 Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

1. Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing,
 2. Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing,
 3. Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing,
 4. O for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised,

call - ing for you and for me; see, on the por - tals he's
 plead - ing for you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and
 pass - ing from you and from me; shad - ows are gath - er - ing,
 prom - ised for you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has

wait - ing and watch - ing, watch - ing for you and for me.
 heed not his mer - cies, mer - cies for you and for me?
 death - beds are com - ing, com - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cy and par - don, par - don for you and for me.

Refrain

Come home, come home; you who are
 Come home, come home;



wea-ry, come home;

ear - nest-ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call-ing, call-ing, O sin-ner, come home!



1. For ev - ery-one born, a place at the ta - ble, for
 2. For wom - an and man, a place at the ta - ble, re -
 3. For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble, a
 4. For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble, a -
 5. For ev - ery-one born, a place at the ta - ble, to



ev - ery-one born, clean wa - ter and bread, — a shel - ter, a
 vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share, — with wis - dom and
 voice to be heard, a part in the song, — the hands of a
 bus - er, a - bused, with need to for - give, — in an - ger, in
 live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be, — to work, to speak



space, a safe place for grow - ing, for ev - ery-one born, a
 grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er, for wom - an and man, a
 child in hands that are wrin - kled, for young and for old, the
 hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy, for just and un - just, a
 out, to wit - ness and wor - ship, for ev - ery-one born, the

Refrain



star o - ver - head. —
 sys - tem that's fair. —
 right to be - long. — And God will de - light — when
 new way to live. —
 right to be free. —



we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and joy, — yes, God will de -



light — when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice, —



jus - tice and joy! —

Something Beautiful

394

Some - thing beau - ti - ful, some - thing good;

all my con - fu - sion he un - der - stood;

all I had to of - fer him was bro - ken - ness and

strife, but he made some-thing beau-ti-ful of my life.

WORDS: Gloria Gaither, 1971
 MUSIC: William J. Gaither, 1971

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL
 Irr.