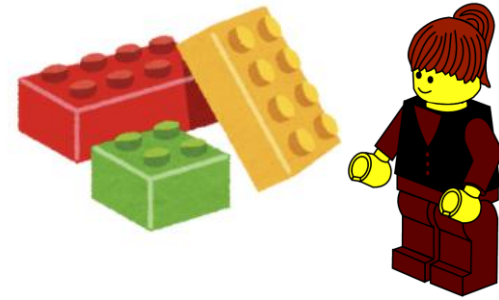


## **Carnival 2026: Build a New World** **Sunday, February 15**

Donuts and Coffee: 9:30am

Worship: 10am

Fellowship Meal: 11:45ish



The last Sunday before Lent, February 15 this year, we gather for worship, to sing, to hear Scripture, to confess. We poke fun at ourselves and some of us wear playful costumes. We add a little magic, a little banter, and we indulge in doughnuts. Sometimes some surprises show up along with balloons.

This year our theme is “Build a new world.” Throughout Epiphany, we tried to find Joy in our weary world. Carnival allows us to voice our fear that it might be better to scrap the whole thing and just start over. Our world is a mess; can we imagine together what a new world might look like? How would we build it? Can we just repair what we have? We long for a world that is more just, more loving, more imbued with God’s image. How do we live into that world even if it doesn’t exist yet?

You may want to consider coming as a builder, a repairer, demolitionist or a Lego brick. What is your role in this new world? Are you more eager to tear things down or draw up plans for something new? Children are welcome to come in any costume they like. We’ll have building supplies throughout the space so that children and adults can build something new (and maybe knock things down) throughout the service.

This year we’ll be beginning with the donuts at 9:30 (worship will begin around 10) and ending our worship with a fellowship meal. This will give folks time to make sign or a prop, eat a donut, and prepare for a service of serious playfulness.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **Will there be scripture, singing and a sermon?** Yes. Just a little different than usual.
- **What about visitors?** Some have stayed and joined right in. Some have come especially for Carnival. Some take a quick look and decide to visit us another Sunday.
- **What if I hate it?** **“Just try one bite.”** Over time some skeptics have even grown rather fond of it.
- **What if I love it?** Great! You’re in good company.
- **Do I have to dress up?** No. Many people choose a symbolic accessory. The point is not the costume, but how it invites reflection on our “shadow side,” or those parts of us we normally assume shouldn’t come along to church.
- **Will I have to do anything embarrassing?** Nope! You choose your level of participation in the activities. Those who feel a little squeamish about diving in themselves are encouraged to buddy up with one of the children, to help them participate in the activities.

**WHY:** There is a centuries-old tradition of feasting, costuming, and role reversals prior to the beginning of Lent. While one aspect of Carnival has been indulgence, Assembly’s celebration has developed somewhat differently. We hold Carnival to create space for the Spirit to do its Lenten work in us, by exaggerating that which we usually try to hide about ourselves, all while in safe company. Humor offers a path to confession and healing. Laughter and play can help us name our illusions. When we can laugh at ourselves, we make space for the Spirit to restore. Laughter can be holy.

