



## Worship Resources for *Steeple's Ad Run* – Fall 2008

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**Luke 22:20**

### Good News for All the People

Covenant is a road we travel together. We are bound to one another with ligaments [Ephesians 4: 16] that connect us internally, that keep us from becoming disjointed, that allow us to grow and flourish as we walk together in all God's ways—known, or to be made known to us.

Covenant is a love story. It began in that most ancient call to relationship, “I will be your God; you will be my people.” [Jeremiah 7:23]

Covenant is a record of commitments made and promises kept. “The Almighty, your God, is a merciful God, and will neither abandon you nor destroy you; the Most High will not forget the covenant with your ancestors...” [Deuteronomy 4: 31]

Going beyond what is expected, making commitments that are neither required nor customary, placing relationship higher than personal inclination, and collective well-being above all else—these are the traits of covenant.

Jesus says, “The cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” [Luke 22: 20]. And right about here, when we start with the blood talk, I begin to experience some spiritual queasiness. And when we get into the accounts of Jesus' torturous death, made more horrific by the awful fear that he has been forsaken by the very One Who's been striding around the heavens all these ages saying, “I will never abandon you” I'm left gasping to gain some sense of balance on the tightrope of theology. The questions give me vertigo. How is this Good News or new covenant?

Jesus came to us. In a massive and magnanimous materialization of covenant the Almighty walked around among us, “wasted” time with children, addressed women as full and competent moral agents and theologians, healed the unclean, said outlandish things like you poor folk—you're blessed; you who make peace are blessed; love one another; love your enemies; you must lose your life to gain life. And Jesus meant it. God meant it.

Jesus' life was a tornado of covenant, swirling us up to dance with the Most High. A rushing outpouring of love that knew no boundaries; that refused to categorize people as enemy or alien, that sought to liberate all people from their bondage.

Is that Linda Ronstadt's voice, drifting in with Van Morrison's lyric, “You give me love, love, love, love, crazy love?” This truly is *crazy* love. Extraordinarily nutso. By any rational standard. And this is news. Late-breaking. Just in. Live, not pre-recorded.

“The cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” It is not the covenant of law. It is not chiseled in stone, nor encased in bylaws, but pulses through your body and mine in the diastolic and systolic rhythm that means life. Drink of this cup, Jesus says, drink of this cup that contains my life. Live as I have lived. Collide with the mighty. Collude with the needy. In league and in love with this hodgepodge humanity. It's the *new* covenant. And it's Good News, for all the people.