



**Sunday, December 21, 2025**

**10:00 am Worship Service**

**4th Sunday in Advent**

**Mission Statement:** Compelled by God's love and our faith in Jesus Christ, Unity Church, a diverse people of faith, seeks to realize God's dream for the world through worship, learning, giving, and serving.

**Core Values:** We love children. Serve Christ with courage. Embrace diversity. Nurture community. Be an advocate for justice and peace.

**Vision Statement:** We are called to Reach Up, Reach In and Reach Out

**(302) 658-5288 [UnityChurchELCA@gmail.com](mailto:UnityChurchELCA@gmail.com)**

**2101 Lancaster Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19805**

**[www.unitywilmington.org](http://www.unitywilmington.org)**

*We invite you to contact Unity's staff members:*

**The Rev. Brian K. Sanders, Lead Pastor**

**443-676-2239; [bks0808@aol.com](mailto:bks0808@aol.com)**

**The Rev. Dr. Melissa P. Lemons, Pastor for Community Ministry**

**[melissalemons@gmail.com](mailto:melissalemons@gmail.com); 302-803-8866**

**Office hours: by appointment**

**Norwood Coleman, Jr., PhD, Music Director**

**Mrs. Sharlene Drummond, Choir Director**

**YOU CAN ACCESS US ON SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:00AM ON YOUTUBE, UNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, WILMINGTON, DE WITH THE CURRENT SUNDAY DATE. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, USE LINK BELOW.**

**<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN4vkddPnbKEzTKIFg-Lkvg>**

### **“Enter to Worship”**

\*Those who are able are invited to stand \*\* **Please, no walking or standing during this time. BOLD PRINT:** Congregation responds, P: Presider, A: Assisting Minister/Worship Leader. Where you see a ✠, you are invited to make the sign of the cross.

## **THE GATHERING**

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

### **PRAISE & WORSHIP**

### **RINGING OF THE BELLS**

#### **Introduction**

**A:** Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew’s account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, “O come, O come, Emmanuel,” a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

**OPENING HYMN- “O COME, O COME EMMANUEL” ELW 34**  
**Please Stand**

# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,

un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 teach us your will and guide our way.  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re-joice! Re-joice!

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, O Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heav'nly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
 O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come,  
 O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
 refresh the hearts that long for you;  
 restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 and ransom captive Israel,  
 that mourns in lonely exile here  
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
 Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.  
 Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM (Please Stand)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, alive in the world,  
reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned.**  
**We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.**  
**We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned.**  
**We have turned away from our neighbors.**  
**We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned.**  
**We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,  
in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of  
God through ☩ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

A or P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. **With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## WORD (*Please be seated*)

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

### **First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16**

<sup>10</sup>The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

*The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.***

### **Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

<sup>1</sup>Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

<sup>2</sup>**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.**

<sup>3</sup>Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup>**O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup>**You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

<sup>7</sup>Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

<sup>17</sup> **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup> And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

<sup>19</sup> **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

**Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup> the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup> To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

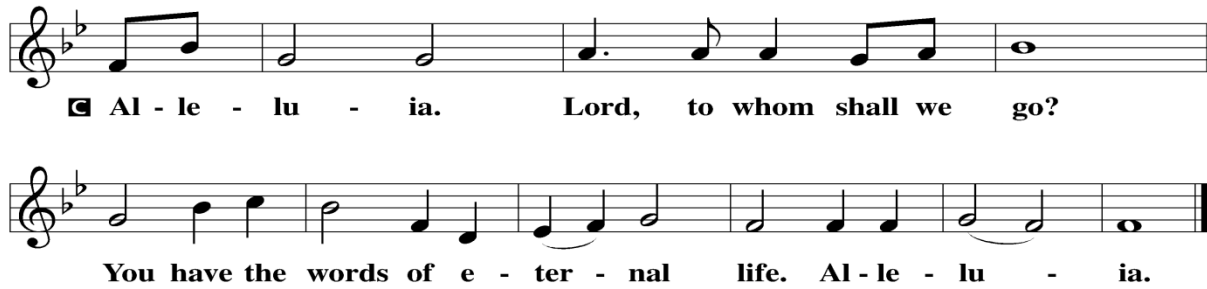
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*The Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God.**

**THE LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE OF ADVENT.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Please Stand)**

**P:** Please stand for the reading of the Holy Gospel.



## GOSPEL

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to: **Matthew 1:18-25**

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

**Pastor Melissa Lemons**

Notes...

**HYMN OF THE DAY- "SOON AND VERY SOON" TFF 38**

**SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, WE'RE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING!**

**NO MORE CRYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
NO MORE CRYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
NO MORE CRYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, WE'RE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING!**

**NO MORE DYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
NO MORE DYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
NO MORE DYIN' THERE WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, WE'RE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING!**

**SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
SOON AND VERY SOON WE ARE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING,  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, WE'RE GOIN' TO SEE THE KING**

**APOSTLES CREED (Please Stand)**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I be-**



**lieve in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

\*Or, “he descended to the dead,” another translation of this text in widespread use.  
From sundaysandseasons.com.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Please sit, stand or kneel)**

A: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *A brief silence.*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah’s coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## **PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always

**C: And also with you.** Please share a sign of Christ's peace.

## **OFFERING**

(God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:7, 8)

*(During the offering, the ushers will pass the offering plates moving from back to front while a musical selection is played. Then the congregation will sing the Offertory hymn printed below.)*

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 to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up -

hold me with your free Spir - it.

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -

new a right spir - it with - in me.

## OFFERING PRAYER

A: Nourishing God, **you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.** Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,

**that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

**PLEASE BE SEATED.**

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*All are welcome to communion*

P: The Lord be with you

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. We remember and proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in Christ's death and resurrection. We look with hope for the Lord's coming and ask... **Come, Lord Jesus. Come Holy Spirit. Amen**

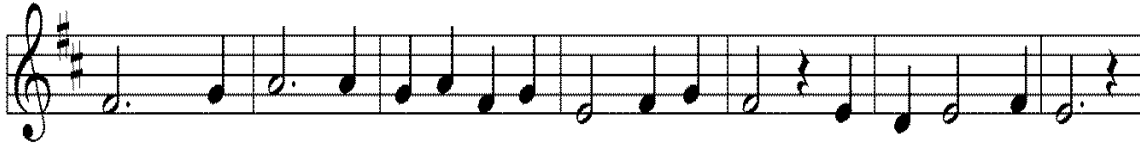
## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**P:** Gathered as one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:  
(*Alternate/modern versions of prayer in This Far by Faith p. 3, WOV p. 39*)

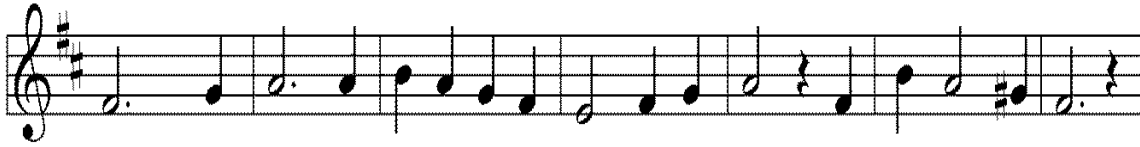
**C:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**P:** Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.



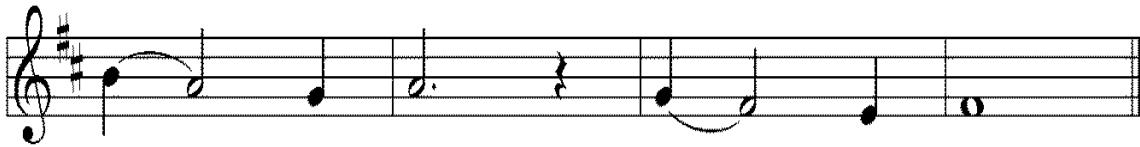
☞ Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**A & C:** God our host, **at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

## THE SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us to minister to the world.*

## **BLESSING**

P: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light,  
God, our hope for the journey, ✝ bless and keep you now and forever.  
Amen.

**SENDING HYMN– “JOY TO THE WORLD” ELB #267 Please  
Stand**

# Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872



## DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Share the harvest. **Thanks be to God.**

**“Let us exit to serve”**

*We are called to reach up, reach in, and reach out.....*

**IF YOU HAVE ANYONE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD TO THE PRAYER LIST, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE @ 302-658-5288. NAMES WILL REMAIN ON THE PRAYER LIST FOR 3 MONTHS, UNLESS YOU REQUEST LONGER. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE to MAKE ADDITIONS – (302) 658-5288.**

**THIS WEEK WE ASK THAT YOU KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:**

**UNITY CHURCH  
DEBBIE SWAN  
NORMAN GARRETT  
TYLER ALEXANDER  
BILL ELLSWORTH  
REV. LORRAINE  
DRANE JONES  
FRAN RODRIQUEZ**

**PASTOR BRIAN SANDERS  
PASTOR CLARENCE PETTIT  
SPENCER DRUMMOND  
CURTIS JACKSON  
NANCY ELLSWORTH  
RUTH JOE  
ROB FISHER  
BONNIE FISHER**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS – Birthdays, Anniversaries, Visitors**  
**WE WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL VISITORS TO UNITY THIS MORNING.**  
**IT IS SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU AND PLEASE COME AGAIN.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE** – Our Christmas Eve here at Unity will be held at 3:00 pm.

**CHRITMAS POINSETTIAS** – will be available for purchase for \$15.00 each and will be used to beautify the sanctuary during the Christmas

holiday. Deadline for purchase is TODAY. Envelopes for this purpose are at the back.

**ON DECEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>**, we will have a testimony service. We welcome everyone to share with us on that Sunday.

**ALSO ON DECEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>**, we will have a special offering to allow all to give generously on the last Sunday of the year, giving thanks and praising our Lord for all our blessings. There are blank envelopes at the back of the church for your use in making the special year-end donation. Thank you!

**KIM WILLIAMS** is collecting hats, gloves, scarves, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant to be given away on Christmas Eve. All donations are accepted. Please leave your contributions in the Narthex for Kim. Deadline is Sunday, December 21, 2025.

**CHRISTMAS LIST 2025** from the Neighborhood House has been posted on the wall at the entrance to the Weiser Room. Please sign up to donate a toy and/or clothing items to children from the Neighborhood House who would otherwise get no gifts for Christmas. Deadline for bringing the gifts into the church is TODAY. Thank you to all those who contributed. Your donations are sincerely appreciated.

**SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR/FELLOWSHIP** is held in the Narthex immediately following morning worship and all are invited to attend. If anyone is interested in hosting one Sunday, please contact Rev. Lorraine @ (302) 383-9755.

**PUB THEOLOGY** – Through a generous donation, we will be able to resume Pub Theology on the third Sunday of each month. In December, we will be meeting TODAY, in the Weiser Room, after you have had some of the delicious breakfast goodies. Please join us!! ALL ARE WELCOME!!

**PRIVATE PRAYERS** – If you would like extra prayer time, you are welcome to stay at the altar after you have had communion.

**WEEKLY ZUMBA CLASSES** – These classes are held in Luther Hall immediately following morning worship. Please come and participant. Everyone is invited to attend for a fun, healthy activity, and there is a free-will offering.

**Dementia Caregiver Support Group:** 2nd Thursday of the month, 6-7:30pm. Contact Rev. Brain Sanders for more info.

**Prayer:** Anyone interested in 30 minutes of presenting prayer leads is invited to join our Prayer Line every Monday evening at 6:30-7:00 pm. Dial 1-240-591-0390, 315-704#.

**Volunteers needed:** Readers (lectors), Assisting Ministers (Worship leaders), Communion Assistants and Altar Guild. Please consider helping out in this capacity. Also, we need a volunteer liaison for the Boy Scouts to replace Bob Mazzoni. See Carol Egan for more info.

**Council Vacancies:** There are several open positions on Unity Church Council – volunteers needed to oversee Education, Hospitality, and Stewardship Committees; as well as anyone with accounting or bookkeeping skills to assist the Treasurer. See Rob Snowden or Pastor Sanders.

**Offering/Giving:** An alternative way to contribute to Unity is to set up VANCO on your mobile phone by texting (844)794-0738 and follow directions to donate by credit card. There is a “donate now” button on our Website which is [www.unitywilmington.org](http://www.unitywilmington.org)

**Spiritual Direction/Companionship:** If you’d like to talk individually about your faith life and how God shows up for you, contact Pr. Melissa. Sessions are free for Unity members (normally \$50 per hour). Companions usually meet once a month.

**Bible Study** meets every Wednesday evening at 7:00 via Zoom. Please access Zoom as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87206052414?pwd=cWxnSnJodFE5S3hObzQrVGdMWGwwUTo9>

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,87206052414#.....0#,,717690# US (Wash, DC)

**Meeting ID: 872 0605 2414**

**Passcode: 717690**

