



Sunday, March 8, 2026
10:00 am Worship Service
2nd SUNDAY OF LENT

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

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2101 Lancaster Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19805
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

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

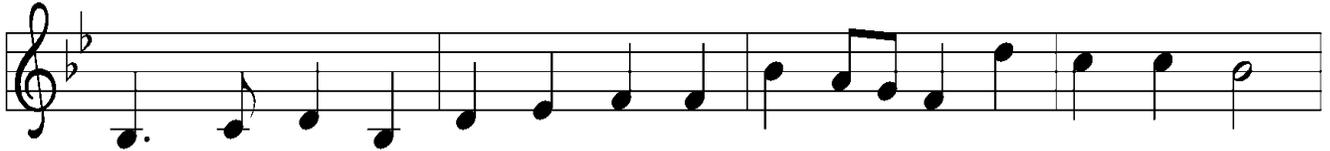
RINGING OF THE BELLS

Introduction

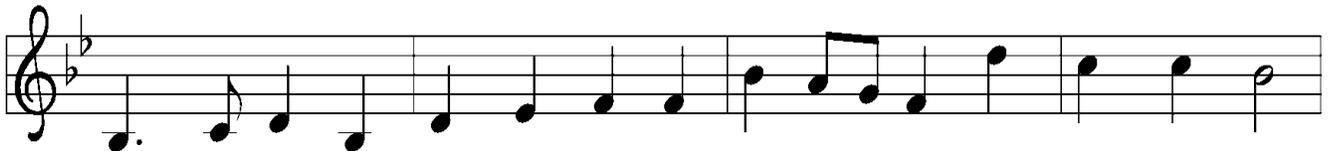
A: During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today’s gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God’s love for all the world.

**OPENING HYMN- “OPEN NOW THY GATES OF BEAUTY” ELW 533
Please Stand**

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



- 1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
- 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
- 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
- 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com-fort in all strife.
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: UNSER HERRSCHER, Joachim Neander, 1650–1680

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM (Please Stand)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God, **have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.

Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A or P: O God, **our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you 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: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1}Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing

good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 32 (READ RESPONSIVELY)

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸ **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you¹ with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you.”

¹⁰ Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

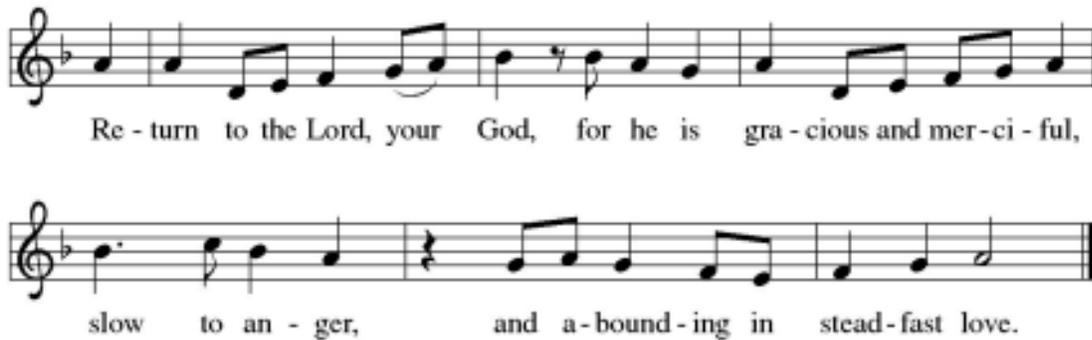
¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

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

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Please Stand)**

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



GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to: **Gospel: MATTHEW 4:1-11**

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' " ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

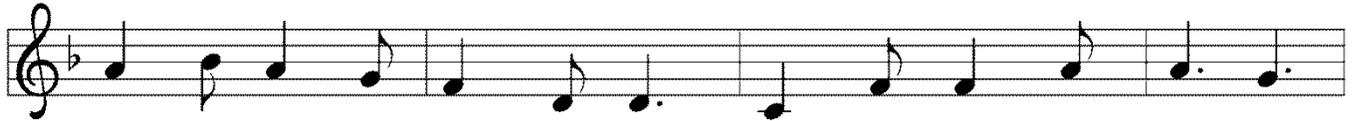
⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

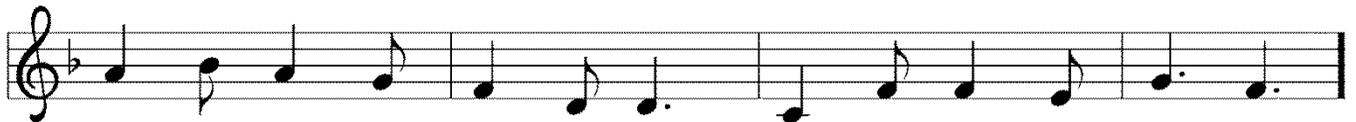
The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY – “JESUS KEEP ME NEAR THE CROSS”
TFF 73

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

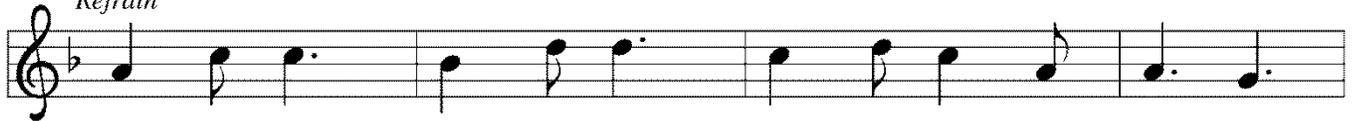


1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,

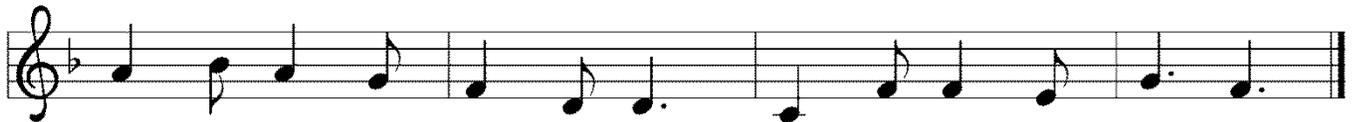


free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.

Refrain



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915
Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

SERMON

Pastor Brian Sanders

Notes...

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 believe 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: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *A brief silence.*

God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all

who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. (*Especially we pray for . . .*) Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **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)

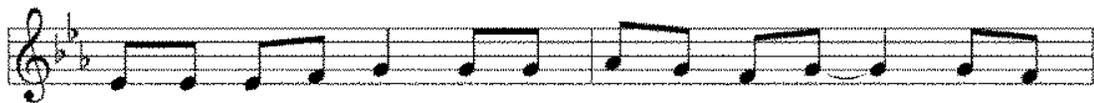
(During the offering, the ushers will pass the offering plates moving from back to front while a musical selection is played. Then the congregation will sing the Offertory hymn printed below.)



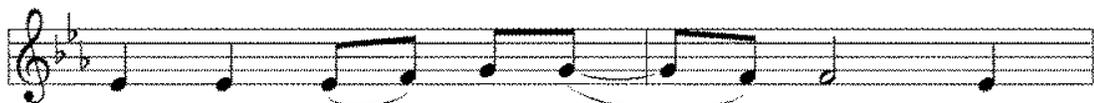
Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -



new a right spir - it with - in me.



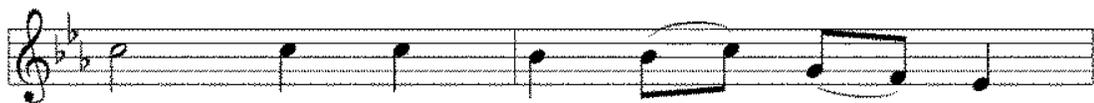
Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take not your



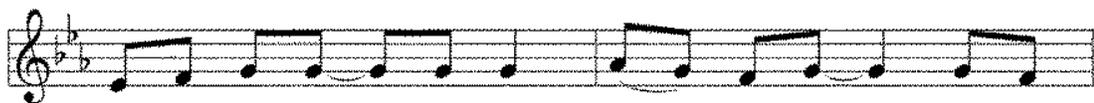
Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -



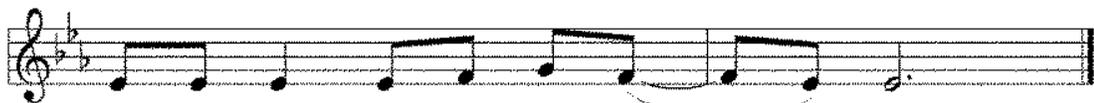
store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up -



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: O God, **maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. 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*)

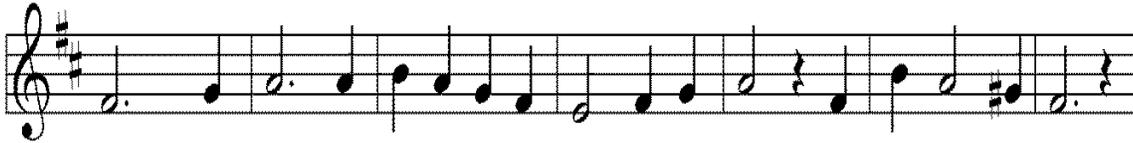
C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.



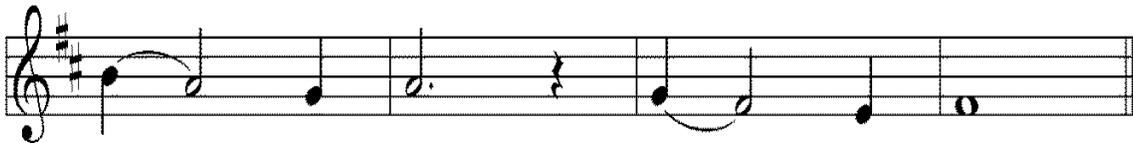
☩ Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



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 of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE SENDING

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

BLESSING

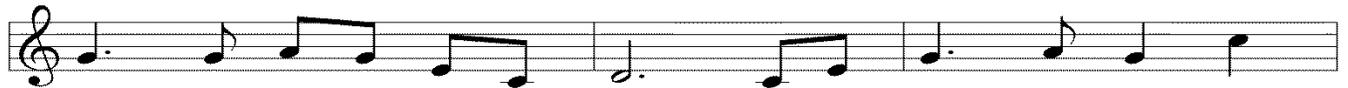
P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✝ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN– “THERE IS A FOUNTAIN” TFF 78 Please Stand

There Is a Fountain



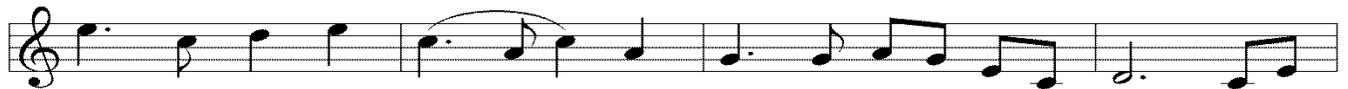
1 There is a foun - tain filled with blood drawn
 2 The dy - ing thief re - joiced to see that
 3 Thou dy - ing Lamb, thy pre - cious blood shall
 4 E'er since by faith I saw the stream thy
 5 When this poor, fal - t'ring mor - tal tongue lies



from Im - man - uel's veins; and sin - ners, plunged be -
 foun - tain in his day; and there have I, though
 nev - er lose its pow'r till all the ran - somed
 flow - ing wounds sup - ply; re - deem - ing love has
 si - lent in the grave, then in a no - bler,



neath that flood, lose all their guilt - y stains: lose
 vile as he, washed all my sins a - way: washed
 church of God be saved, to sin no more: be
 been my theme, and shall be till I die: and
 sweet - er song I'll sing thy pow'r to save: I'll



all their guilt - y stains, lose all their guilt - y stains; and
 all my sins a - way, washed all my sins a - way; and
 saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more; till
 shall be till I die, and shall be till I die, re -
 sing thy pow'r to save, I'll sing thy pow'r to save; then



sin - ners, plunged be - neath that flood, lose all their guilt - y stains.
 there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins a - way.
 all the ran - somed church of God be saved, to sin no more.
 deem - ing love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
 in a no - bler, sweet - er song I'll sing thy pow'r to save.

Text: William Cowper, 1731–1800
 Music: CLEANSING FOUNTAIN, North American, 19th cent.

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news. **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	PASTOR BRIAN SANDERS
HARRY WILLIAMS	PASTOR CLARENCE PETTIT
REV. LORRAINE	RUTH JOE
FRAN RODRIQUEZ	ROB FISHER
JOAN MILLER	MARLENE SMITH
JAMES SPAMER	HARRY WILLIAMS
TODD FISHER	TANYA BIRCH
AL SHOLLENBERGER	
DONA RODRIGUES AND SON DANIEL	

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.

PUB THEOLOGY – is held on the third Sunday of each month. We meet in the Weiser Room and hold a lively discussion centering around

everyday life. It is quite interesting and everyone is invited is invited to attend. In March, we will meet on March 15, 2026.

EASTER LILY - You will have the opportunity to purchase a lily in memory of or in honor of a loved one, which will be placed on the altar for Easter. Deadline to purchase is March 22. The cost of each lily purchased is \$15.00. Envelopes are at the back of the church.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE is asking anyone willing to donate an Easter Basket. You can build your own or buy one. We are hoping to get 25 baskets which will be donated to needy families prior to Easter Sunday. See sign-up sheet located on table in back of the church sanctuary. Deadline: March 22, 2026. For more info, call or text Rev. Lorraine (302) 383-9755.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!! Our semi-annual spring giveaway will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Please donate all small household items, toys, shoes, and clothing and bring to the church. We need many volunteers on Friday, May 1 to organize donated items and we also will need many volunteers on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Please prayerfully consider helping. For more info, call Joan Lygate (302) 563-6464.

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.

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

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 Mazzone. 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

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 SURVEY – Please take a copy of the Bible Study Survey which is at the back of the church and fill it out to aid Pastor Sanders in best way to approach weekly Bible Study and fulfill the needs of those attending the Bible Study.

Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, January 14th and will be held every Wednesday evening at 7:00 via Zoom. Please access Zoom as follows:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87206052414?pwd=cWxnSnJodFE5S3hObzQrVGdMWGwwUT09>

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 872 0605 2414

Passcode: 717690

