



**Sunday, October 18, 2026
10:00 am Worship Service
21st Sunday of Pentecost**

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
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 9:30AM 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

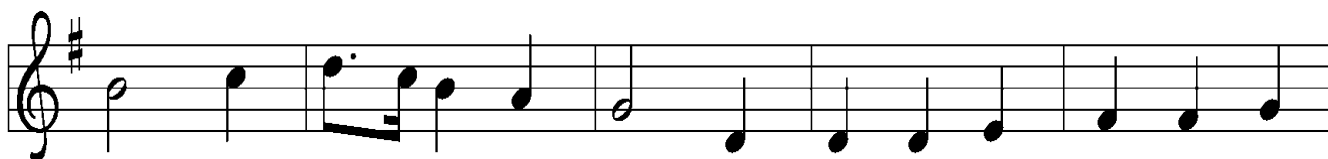
A: In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

OPENING HYMN-“YOU SERVANTS OF GOD” ELW 825 Please Stand

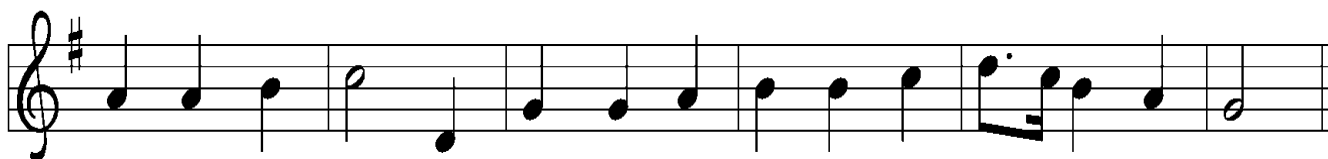
You Servants of God



1 You ser-vants of God, your Mas-ter pro-claim, and pub-lish a -
 2 As-cend-ed on high, al-might-y to save, yet still he is
 3 Sal-va-tion to God who sits on the throne! Let all cry a -
 4 Then let us a-dore and give him his right, all glo-ry and



broad his won-der-ful name; the name, all-vic-to-rious, of
 nigh, his pres-ence we have. The great con-gre-ga-tion his
 loud and hon-or the Son. The prais-es of Je-sus the
 pow'r and wis-dom and might, all hon-or and bless-ing, with



Je-sus ex-tol; his king-dom is glo-rious and rules o-ver all!
 tri-umph shall sing, as-crib-ing sal-va-tion to Je-sus, our king!
 an-gels pro-claim, fall down on their fac-es, and wor-ship the Lamb.
 an-gels a-bove, and thanks nev-er ceas-ing, and in-fin-ite love!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: LYONS, attr. Johann Michael Haydn, 1737–1806

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM (Please Stand)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate God, **we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse.**

**Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.
Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.
Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A or P: Sovereign God, **raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD (*Please be seated*)

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

¹ Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed: ² I will go before you and level the mountains; I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron; ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name; I give you a title, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, ⁶ so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the LORD do all these things.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 96:1-9[10-13] (READ RESPONSIVELY)

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² **Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD; proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

³ Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴ **For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

⁶ **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

⁸ **Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name; bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

⁹ Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

[¹⁰ **Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king! The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

¹² **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³ You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.]

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in

Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

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

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Please Stand)**



GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to: **Matthew 22:15-22**

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

¹⁵ The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said.

¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" ²¹ They answered,

"Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away. The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you , O Christ**

HYMN OF THE DAY – "WHAT A FELLOWSHIP" TFF 220

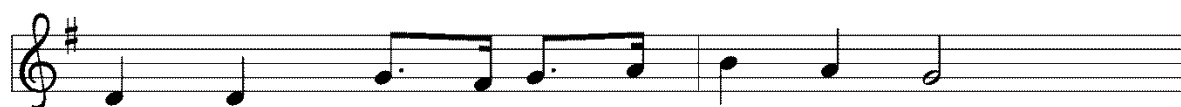
What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*



1 What a fel - low-ship, what a joy di - vine, lean - ing on the ev - er -
2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil-grim way, lean - ing on the ev - er -
3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean - ing on the ev - er -



last-ing arms; what a bless - ed - ness, what a peace is mine,
last-ing arms; oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
last-ing arms? I have bless - ed peace with my Lord so near,



lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

Refrain



Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se - cure from all a - larms;



lean - ing, lean - ing, lean-ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839–1929

Music: SHOWALTER, Anthony J. Showalter, 1858–1924

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: Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world. *A brief silence.*

Living and true God, you inspire us to share the message of the gospel. Give your spirit of love to seminarians and those beginning their lives in ordained ministry (*local seminarians or newly called ministers may be named*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the majesty of our oceans. Protect the abundant life within them and sustain all those who work to preserve them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We seek your wisdom in all things. Direct all who hold positions of authority around the world, that they act with compassion, seeking the good of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people who work in dangerous or degrading environments. Grant them safety and courage, and heal all those who are injured, sick, or suffering (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We ask your blessing on those who do the quiet, unseen work of the church (*congregational ministries may be named*). Encourage them in their work of faith and labor of love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We thank you for our ancestors who have been called home to you (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 Offering 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: God of creation, **you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.**

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

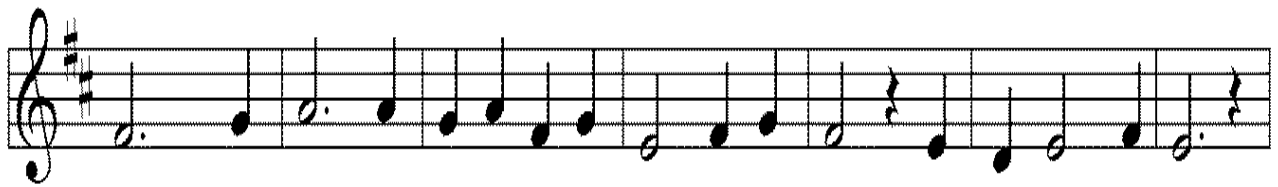
P: Gathered as one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

(Alternate/modern versions of prayer in This Far by Faith p. 3, WOV p. 39)

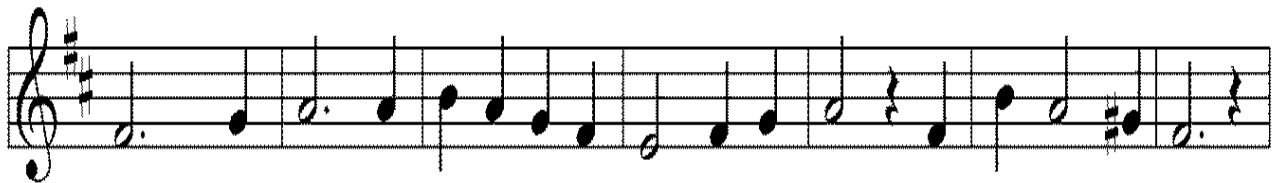
C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

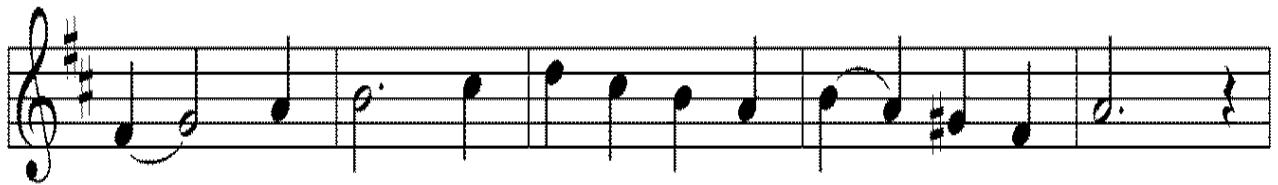
**P: Christ invites you to this table.
All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!**



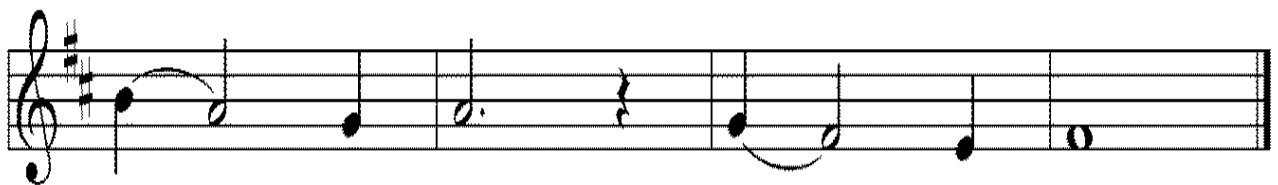
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



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

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

THE SENDING

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

BLESSING

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit. **Amen.**

The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN– “THANK YOU, LORD” TFF 293 Please Stand

Thank You, Lord

1 Thank you, Lord, thank you, Lord,
 2 Been so good, been so good,
 3 Love you, Lord, love you, Lord,

thank you, Lord, I just want to thank you, Lord.
 been so good, I just want to thank you, Lord.
 love you, Lord, I just want to thank you, Lord.

Text: traditional

Music: THANK YOU, LORD, traditional

DISMISSAL

A: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **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	CAROL EGAN
JOAN MILLER	AL SHOLLENBERGER
JAMES SPAMER	HARRY WILLIAMS
ROBERT OLIVER	TANYA BIRCH
DONA RODRIGUES AND SON DANIEL	
ALICE COLEMAN	MICHAEL JACKSON
CURTIS & MICHELE JACKSON	
MARY ELLEN BANE	CLAIRE GARNETT
ARIELLE KEYSER	LEE REISER
CAROL REISER	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.*

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 October, we will meet on Sunday, October 18th, immediately following morning worship. Please join us!

ZUMBA CLASSES will be held at 9:15am for ½ hour on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of each month. This is a fun way to get in some exercise. All are invited to attend.

NOVEMBER 1ST is All Saints Sunday. All who wish to acknowledge the loss of loved ones can have their name published in the bulletin. Separate envelopes are available at the back of the church for your use in your loved ones honor. All donations will go towards the building fund.

HOMECOMING/FAMILY & FRIEND DAY – Sunday, November 8th. Our theme will be “Growing from the Inside Out”. Lunch will be served following worship. Let’s all start inviting friends, relatives, neighbors, everyone for this special day!!

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE will meet again on Sunday, October 25, immediately following morning worship in the Weiser Room.

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE will meet on Sunday, November 1st, immediately following morning worship in the Weiser Room.

OH HAPPY DAY! – Saturday, October 24th, 9:00am-1:00pm. Wellness for mind, body and spirit. Please join Unity Church for joy, education and movement:

- 1) “Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus”
 - Christ-centered – Breathing exercises, meditation, prayer and chair-yoga movement.
- 2) “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good”
 - Healthy cooking demonstration and education led by professional chef.
- 3) “Order my steps in your word”
 - Line dancing session for all ages led by a professional instructor.

Sign-up sheet is at the back of the church.

COME AND BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!! REGISTER TODAY! EVERYONE IS WELCOME. For more info – see Pastor Sanders.

ST PHILIP’S LUTHERAN CHURCH is holding their 2026 Fall Women’s Retreat on Saturday, November 7th 8:30am-1:00pm including lunch. The theme is “Angels – Messengers of Love”. We are all invited.

SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR/FELLOWSHIP will resume regular activity on November 1st. In the interim, feel free to bring any contributions, along with utensils needed. Then please stay to take home leftovers and any utensils brought. If anyone is interested in hosting after November 1st, please contact Rev. Lorraine @ (302) 383-9755.

DONATIONS FOR THE HOMELESS are being accepted by Kim Williams from October 18th until December 20th. Kim is gratefully accepting hats, gloves, scarfs, washcloths, soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste, deodorant, & socks for men and women to be given out by Kim on Christmas Eve. Please leave all donations in the box in the Narthex.

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.

REV. LORRAINE has been appointed by Council to oversee any rentals of our building. If you or anyone you know might be interested in renting space in our building, please contact Rev. Lorraine at (302) 383-9755 (cell) via text and/or email: evangelldryden@yahoo.com.

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

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 will resume on Wednesday evening, September 16, 2026. It 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

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

Meeting ID: 872 0605 2414

Passcode: 717690

