

A SERVICE OF THE WORD
The Seventh Sunday of Epiphany

The United Church of Santa Fe
A United Church of Christ

February 23, 2025
10:00 A.M.

For Reflection:

Love is or it ain't.
Thin love ain't no love at all.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

WE GATHER

(May the first note of the Prelude be a call to prayer and stillness as we prepare for worship.)

Gathering Music

Sacro-Monte, Op. 55, No. 5
Playera, Op. 5, No. 5

Joaquin Turina
Enrique Granados

*Introit

Christ, Be Our Light (2x)
*(*Please rise in body or spirit.)*

Bernadette Farrell

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts, shine through the dark-ness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gath-ered to - day.

Words of Welcome and Breathing in God's Gifts

*Sharing God's Gifts and Regathering in Song ***Christ, Be Our Light*** (1x)

Breathing in God's Gifts Again

Musical Call to Worship

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Hyfrydol

The Call to Worship from Psalm 100 (**congregation in bold**)

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness! For the Lord is good! *Porque Dios es bueno!*

Porque Dios es bueno!

Come into God's presence with thanksgiving.
Enter God's courts with praise.

Porque Dios es bueno!

God's love goes from generation to generation.
God has made us and we are God's. Sing praise!

Porque Dios es bueno!

Let us sing praise to the God of all generations!

Porque Dios es bueno!

*Hymn

17

To You, O God, All Creatures Sing (1-3)

Francis of Assisi/Lasst Uns Erfreuen

WE PREPARE

*A Prayer of Invocation

Almighty and most gracious God,
whose very nature is to be present in good times and bad;
**in warm days and cold, in wind, rain, and sunny life;
in laughter and in pain, in joy and in despair,
in work and in play, and in all those things that are a joy of life,
open now our hearts and our minds to your creation.**

Hear our prayers of thanksgiving for the beauty of the earth.

Hear our prayers of confession for our failure to care for this world and its peoples.

Hear our prayers of hope for your healing power in our lives and for all creatures.

Renew our trust in you and help us to follow in your way of love for all people and all creation.

*A Time of Silent Prayer and the Affirmation of God's Presence

*Our Song of Praise

To You, O God, All Creatures Sing Francis of Assisi/Lasst Uns Erfreuen
*To you, O God, day after day, your planet earth in every way,
sings your praises, alleluia,
As savory fruit and fragrant flower, show forth your glory and your power,
singing praises, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

(During the song, children are invited to Children's Ministry with Maria Navarette and Destiny Muñoz.)

WE ENGAGE GOD'S WORD

The Unnamed Woman with Precious Oil (cong. bold)

Luke 7:30-41; 7:43-49

One of the *líderes religiosos* (religious leaders) asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went *en la casa del líder* and took his place *en la mesa*. *Y una mujer* (woman) in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating *en la casa del líder*, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind Jesus *a sus pies* (at his feet), weeping, and began to bathe *sus pies* with her tears and to dry them with her hair.

Then she continued kissing *sus pies* and anointing them with the ointment. Now when *el líder religioso* who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, **"If this man were *un profeta*, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner."**

Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." **"Teacher," he replied, "speak."** . . . turning towards *la mujer*, he said to Simon, "Do you see *esta mujer*? I entered *tu casa*; you gave me no water *por mis pies*, but she has bathed *mis pies* with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing *mis pies*. You did not anoint *mi cabeza* (my head) with oil, but she has anointed *mis pies* with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown *un gran amor* (great love). But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

Hymn 289

Come Forth, O Love Divine (1-2)

Bianco da Siena/Down Ampney

Sermon

Un Gran Amor (A Great Love)

Silence

Musical Response

Thee Will I Love

Kenneth Jennings

WE RESPOND

Offering Ourselves in Prayer (from a prayer attributed to St. Francis)

(We conclude with the Lord's Prayer and please pray any version.)

Offering the Gifts God has Given Us

El Amor Y La Muerte (excerpt) from *Goyescas*

Enrique Granados

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All that we have and all that we are comes from your gracious hand, O Lord. Bless these gifts we offer this day. Use them and use our lives so that all people might know your love and hope. Amen.

WE GO IN PEACE

*Hymn *Lord, You Give the Great Commission* Jeffery Rowthorn/Hyfrydol

*Benediction

*Musical Benediction *Kyrie Eleison* Ukrainian Orthodox Chant
Kyrie eleison *Christe eleison* *Kyrie eleison*

The United Church began singing the Ukrainian *Kyrie Eleison* as our musical benediction at the beginning of Lent 2022, shortly after the February 22nd invasion of Ukraine by Russia. We sang it to express solidarity with the people and leaders of Ukraine. We thought we might need to sing it through Lent of that year. Three years later, as another Lent is about to begin, Russia's war on Ukraine continues, and we are still singing it.

WELCOME TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE!

We're glad you've joined in worship this morning, and we hope you found both the service and the community engaging and enriching. We invite you also to join in the weeks ahead as together we "love God, Neighbor, and Creation." For more information about United, please visit our website unitedchurchofsantafe.org. Again, welcome!

Sharing leadership are Rev. Talitha Arnold, Pastor; Guest Pianist Mary Ann Ybarra; Janet Vrudny, Guest Conductor; Blanca Surgeon, Liturgist; Elijah Marquez, Social Media Coordinator with volunteer Frank Wilbanks, Videographer; and Greeters Blanca Surgeon, Margy Maira, Diane Darby, Karen Wilbanks, and Sunday Aide Luis Zapata.

Kids United Celebrate Caring for Others (10:00)

United's Kids begin the service with the congregation, then go to Children's Ministry to "Celebrate Caring for Others" and decorating cookies for the firefighters up the street, with Maria Navarette and Destiny Muñoz.

Congregational Mid-Winter Budget Meeting – Today (11:15 am)

Join the Congregational Budget Meeting! Learn how United funds all of our ministries, from children and youth to worship and music to outreach and maintaining the building and grounds. We'll also discuss (and hopefully, approve :-)) the proposed 2025 United Ministries Budget (copies available in the Community Room). Thank you in advance for your participation!

Help Close the Deficit

Due to unforeseen challenges (increased insurance, new accounting firm) and great opportunities (a full-time Director of Family, Youth and Children's Ministries; special musical events), the 2025 proposed budget has a deficit, even with "borrowing" from the church's cash reserves and endowment. You can help! Join with the Church Council and Finance Team by increasing your 2025 pledge by 4% to 5%, or whatever amount you can. Together we can close the gap!

Day of Centering Prayer and Shared Silence – Saturday, March 1 (9:30-3:00) at United

Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico hosts a day of centering prayer and silence in the Education Wing. Silence, solitude, solidarity and service are the cherished depositions that Centering Prayer practitioners aim to embrace. Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico is part of a world-wide network striving to bring this ancient Christian prayer practice out of the monastic milieu to those in our contemporary society. More info at centeringnm.com.

Let the Light Shine!

Mardi Gras Sunday (March 2)

Grab your beads, find your feathers and toe-tapping shoes, and bring a friend as Jazz Pianist Andy Kingston blesses us once again in the 10:00 Mardi Gras Service. The scriptures tell of Moses' and Jesus' mountaintop experiences (Exodus 34:29-35; Luke 9:28-43) and how they brought God's Light to others. Good reminders for our often-shadowed time. (8:30 Contemplative Communion)

Adult Forum Series: *Reading Bonhoeffer in 2025 America* Concludes Next Sunday, March 2 (11:15 – Education Wing)

This Forum, led by Bonhoeffer Scholar Larry Rasmussen, continues the discussion of Bonhoeffer's essay, *After Ten Years*, his account of German fascism and what its resisters learned. Handouts available in the Community Room and at unitedchurchofsantafe.org/additional-forum-material.

Into the Deep – 2025 Lenten Daily Devotional Booklets Available

To deepen your own journey of Lent, please pick up a copy of the Lenten Daily Devotional Booklet, published by the national United Church of Christ that includes reflections from UCC leaders around the country (including ones by Talitha Arnold). Then join with others in Lent's daily walk to Easter's new life.

Soup's On! – All Church Family Supper

Friday, March 7 (5:30 pm)

We begin Lent with an “All Church Family Supper” Friday, March 7—and a chance to meet United's new Family, Youth and Children's Director (via Zoom). Parents, kids, youth—plus other adults—break bread together and then meet Dana Bender (who starts Palm Sunday). Also bring family-size cans of soup or stews for the Food Depot. Please sign up in the Community Room or at unitedchurchsf@gmail.com.

***Sacred Nature: Restoring Our Ancient Bond with the Natural World* by Karen Armstrong**

Lenten Book Study: 5:30 pm, Wednesdays (Mar. 12, 19, 26, Apr. 2, 9)

Historian of religion Karen Armstrong shows how recognizing our connection to—not separation from—nature is essential to taking effective action to care for creation. We'll read and discuss the importance of finding ways to experience nature imaginatively and aesthetically, rather than only scientifically and rationally, to help us meet modern challenges by changing our hearts and minds. Sign up in Community Room. (Joan Snider 505-424-3732)

Extend United's Welcome as Greeters or Ushers

Come at 9:30 for the 10:00 service and be the first in line to welcome people to United. It's simple—and it's central to who we want to be as a church community. Sign up on Sunday morning or contact Membership Development Chair Diane Darby (816-260-0127). Thanks!

AT UNITED, WE SEEK TO “LOVE GOD BY LOVING NEIGHBOR” . . .

Support for California Fire Relief, hope for Ukrainian, Gazan and Sudanese refugees, reducing our carbon impact, emergency funds for our Diné/Navajo neighbors, and more! Unitedchurchofsantafe.org has ways to help. Thank you!

AND TO LOVE GOD BY LOVING CREATION. . .

Nuclear Disarmament Study and Action Group Meeting – Monday, Feb. 24, 2025 (6:00 pm)

Santa Maria de la Paz and United Church of Santa Fe – Our Lady of Peace Room

Join with members of Santa Maria de la Paz, United Church, and others to learn more about what the group is doing and to discern if God is calling you to this work of peace. For more info, please contact: Fr. Earl Rohleder (505-690-9302, earlrohleder@yahoo.com) or David Denny-Frank (505-795-1398 or dennyfrank@gmail.com).

Care for Creation and Offset Your Carbon Use

United's “Carbon Offset Program” helps plant trees and advocates for policies to address climate change. Track your car mileage and/or plane flight hours, then donate through United to *NM Interfaith Power and Light* and *Tree New Mexico*. Info: unitedchurchofsantafe.org/creation-care.

Compost Collection – It's a Miracle!

United contracts with Reunity Resources to turn compostable products (e.g., food waste, meat scraps, etc.) into life-giving compost. Pick up compostable garbage bags at church (**NO** plastic bags, please), fill at home, and bring back to put in the green bin in back. (Also at church, **please put coffee cups and napkins in compost cans in the Community Room.**)

Can You Help Hang a Banner? Arrange Flowers? Carry a Ladder?

If your answer is “yes,” the Sacred Space Team welcomes—and needs—you! They're the great group who arrange the Sanctuary. They welcome your help either monthly or seasonally. Let them know you'd like to help! (Donna Clark, 505-490-9840; Chisty Jones, 505-204-6867, Cindy Knox, 620-966-1822)

COMING UP THIS SPRING

A Place Called Home

New Mexico Premiere of Bradley Ellingboe's Dramatic Cantata

with Lyricist Tony Silvestri

Sponsored by the United Church of Santa Fe

Saturday, April 12 – 4:00 pm at the Lensic

Peter Marty, Publisher of *The Christian Century*

Saturday, May 3 – Sunday, May 4

Rev. Peter Marty, Editor and Publisher of *The Christian Century*, an international journal devoted to shaping America's conversation about religion and faith in public life, is United's special guest the weekend of May 3-4. A close friend and Yale Divinity School colleague of Talitha Arnold, Rev. Marty is known for his lively prose and creative insight, as a writer, editor, and nationally known preacher. More details later, but save the date now.