

Clifton Presbyterian Church is a welcoming Christian Community driven by compassion, generosity, resilience and service to others.

Breath Prayer:

INHALE: Faithful God, EXHALE: keep me true.
INHALE: Forgiving God, EXHALE: grow my trust in your grace.



Dmytro Koplyk on [Unsplash](#)

March 15, 2026
9:45 AM *Prayer and Care*
10:00 AM *Worship*

4th Sunday of Lent

WE GATHER TOGETHER TO WORSHIP GOD

*Words in **BOLD** indicate the congregation reading together. Words of the worship leader are in PLAIN type. An asterisk * indicates that the congregation may stand, as you wish.*

Gathering Song

[Lay Me Low](#)

One: Lay me low, **All: Lay me low,**
One: where God can find me. **All: where God can find me.**
One: Lay me low, **All: Lay me low,**
One: where God can hold me. **All: where God can hold me.**
One: Lay me low, **All: Lay me low,**
One: where God can bless me. **All: where God can bless me.**
One: Lay me low, **All: Lay me low,**
One: oh, lay me low. **All: oh, lay me low.**

Time of Prayer and Care

Prelude

***Call to Worship** *Psalm 17*

One: The psalmist writes: "I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words."

All: We gather this day recognising that our desire to serve and our success in serving sometimes lie far apart.

One: "Wondrously show your steadfast love O Savior of those who seek refuge..."

All: We seek to come closer to you, in humility and frailty, that you might gird us with strength and compassion.

One: Let us worship God.

***Presbyterian Hymnal 383 My Faith Looks Up to Thee** *vv 1, 2*

**My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray; take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day be wholly thine!**

**May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!**

Prayer of Confession

One: Our God, made us and knows us through and through. Best, and most amazingly of all, God loves us—no matter what. Not only is there no point trying to pretend with God, there is no need. Confident of God's love, let us confess how we are caught up in the ways of sin. Let us pray.

All: Holy God, you know all the secrets that we try to hide; you also know the goodness and generosity in us that we tend to discount. Not only do you see what we have done or failed to do, but you also understand the reasons why, as even we ourselves do not. You know whether it is bravado or anger, anxiety or awkwardness that makes us open our mouth and say words we wish could be unsaid. You know why we keep silent and said nothing, a word of comfort or apology, an offer of help or a declaration of support might make all the difference to someone. And still... yes, still you love us. Draw close to us now in the silence, we pray, as we take the risk—as much as we dare— of opening ourselves to the gentle, thorough scrutiny of your spirit. Shine your light into the dark and shady places of our lives, and speak your word of peace. (Silence) Amen.

Assurance of Grace

One: Jesus said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." In Christ, God has set us free from guilt and shame for what is past; set us free from whatever it is that makes us most likely to fail again; set us free to be who we already are: beloved children

of God, called into the service of Christ Jesus the Son, equipped by the Holy Spirit to continue faithfully to the end. Believe this good news.

All: Thanks be to God for this gracious gift of life.

Presbyterian Hymnal 579

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen

The Peace of Christ

One: ...The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Those in the worship space are invited to greet those around you.

Those on zoom are invited to offer greetings in the chat.

Offering our Gifts and Prayer of Dedication

For those who would like to make a physical offering, the offering plates are available in the middle of the sanctuary. Donations can also be made online. www.cliftonpc.org

One: Let us offer gifts from what we have been given, and dedicate our lives to the service of God. Let us pray.

All: Living God, we offer you our gifts, asking for the courage that we will need to make good on our promises. We promise to stick with you, wherever that journey may lead us, and we ask for courage to keep going to the end. We promise to be authentic when we speak about you, and ask for courage not to hide either our convictions or our uncertainties. Much as we would like to, we cannot promise never to let you down, but we promise that when we do, we will allow you to heal and restore us. We ask for courage to admit to our failings, and humility to rely on you to help us remain true. Amen.

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

Open My Heart *by Ana Hernández*

Open my heart, open my heart.

Open my heart, open my heart.

First Scripture Reading Psalm 17:1-7 (NRSVUE)

¹ Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

² From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.

³ If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;

my mouth does not transgress.

⁴ As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

⁵ My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.

⁶ I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.

⁷ Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

Second Scripture Reading John 18:12-27 (NRSVUE)

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." ²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³ Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶ One of the slaves

of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

One: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

On the Threshold with Jesus: At the Courtyard Door *Diane Walton Hendricks*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD AND ARE SENT TO THE WORLD

Presbyterian Hymnal 322 I Danced in the Morning *vv 1, 3-5*

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth.

At Bethlehem I had my birth.

(Refrain) Dance, then, wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame.

The holy people said it was a shame.

They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
and left me there on a cross to die. (Refrain)

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black.

It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.

They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on. (Refrain)

They cut me down and I leapt up high. I am the life that will never, never die.

I'll live in you if you'll live in me, I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. (Refrain)

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

All: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Celebrating Ministries

Ringing of the Bell, Charge, and Benediction

Benediction Response Presbyterian Hymnal 535 Go With Us, Lord
Go with us, Lord, and guide the way through this and every coming day,
that in your Spirit strong and true our lives may be our gift to you.

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We can be reached at office@cliftonpc.org

Prayers adapted from Spill the Beans Worship Resources

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from

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Thanks to those leading us in worship

Hosts: Karen Williams and Kimberly Davis

Deacon Note Taker: Sara Caparelli

Liturgist: Bill Watts

Technical Team: Mark Lorey

Nursery Volunteer: Chris Martin

Mission Elder: Kimberly Davis

CPC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Diane Walton Hendricks, Pastor

John Kim, Music Director | Hannah Harris, Lead Vocalist

Debbie Kilpatrick, Office Administrator | Kate Trussell, Preschool Director

Rev. Dr. Lynn Stanton-Hoyle, Pastor Emerita