

Puzzled by peace

I enjoy puzzles of all kinds—word searches, sudoku puzzles, Rubik’s cubes, and tried-and-true jigsaws. I admire fellow puzzlers who have spent countless hours squinting and head-scratching to complete a challenge—and I equally appreciate people who are puzzled by (yet patient with) loved ones who seem to be puzzle-obsessed.

Whether we are puzzlers or supporters of puzzlers, peace is a beautiful and approachable puzzle for all of us to attempt. We can puzzle our way toward an understanding of peace and a pursuit of peace. While the world seems to operate on what is deserved or earned, the words of Paul and the ways of Jesus reveal that we have already received peace (and, by extension, hope) without having to labor or ask for it. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, through his love and his blood, initiates us into perfect peace with God. We profess this by faith and spend our whole lives trying to work it out. It is, as Paul reminds us on another occasion, “a peace that surpasses understanding” (Philippians 4:7)—thanks be to God.

Some have worked on this puzzle for years, and still squint to see how it all fits together. This is the beauty of peace: we need not fully understand it to experience it. Like every piece in a puzzle, we belong in the family of God and are needed for the work of Jesus—even as we discern exactly where and how.

Ultimately, it seems just fine that the peace of Christ can leave us scratching our heads sometimes. Even when we lack complete understanding, let us pursue peace and enjoy it.

—Matt DeBall
Crystal Lake, Illinois

“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1, NRSVue). **Today’s Bible readings from the lectionary:** Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42.

March 8, 2026, Third Sunday of Lent. Photo © Jim Miner. Used by permission.
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WE HAVE *peace* WITH GOD

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM

March 8, 2026
Third Sunday in Lent

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN GOD?

PRELUDE "What Wondrous Love Is This" (Paxton)

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Diana Shepherd, Worship Leader

One: Come, let us sing a new song to our God. Make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

All: *Let us enter God's presence with thanksgiving. Make a joyful noise with songs of praise!*

One: God is a great ruler, above all other gods. The depths of the earth are in God's hands.

All: *The highest mountains belong to God. The farthest reaches of the universe are God's own.*

One: O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before God our Maker.

All: *We are the people of God's pasture. Today we will listen to God with open hearts.*

***HYMN #71** "Joyful, joyful we adore thee"

[Verse 1]

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love. Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee, praising thee their sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!

[Verse 2]

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heav'n reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, blooming meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.

[Verse 3]

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever bless'd, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in

love are thine. Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

[Verse 4]

Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began. Love divine is reigning o'er us, leading us with mercy's hand. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife. Joyful music lifts us sunward in the triumph song of life!

***OPENING PRAYER**

We come to you. O God, because we are thirsty. Our spirits need the refreshing water of your word, just as our bodies need the refreshment of a cool drink. We worship you with joy, for we can already feel the gift of your presence all around us. Now open our ears that we may hear all that you expect of us. Open our lives to your truth and prepare us to follow Jesus in accepting the unacceptable, challenging the conventional, and joining together in a harvest for your realm. Amen.

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

When we stop to consider the amazing riches God has provided on this planet, how thankful we should be. Good soil and water give us food and abundance. Gifts of the Spirit grant life with eternity in it. Let us express our wonder and gratitude through our offering of tithes and lives.

As we pass the offering plate here in the sanctuary, we also pass a virtual offering plate to those worshiping with us on YouTube Live. We invite you to give by mailing your offering to the church or dropping it off at the church during the week, or by going to the Hagerstowncob website.

Offertory "The Soul That Thirst For God" (Taylor)

***Doxology #119** "Praise God from whom"

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Thank you, God, for all the ways we have benefited from the labor of others. We here offer our best for the sake of brothers and sisters who need the love and encouragement you are eager to share through us. Keep us from being ungrateful as we continue to receive so much more than we stop to realize. When life is difficult, help us to endure and to hope because your love is sure and certain, ours to receive and to give, in Christ's name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

Please remember our worship is also on YouTube and our website.

Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.

An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of living waters, we confess that we have often turned from you and wandered in our own wildernesses of fear and doubt. Our thirst mounts daily, seeking to be quenched by your redeeming love. Yet, when that love is offered to us, we again turn away, unable to truly believe that you would actually heal and love us. We have behaved in very unloving ways. We have chosen to ignore those in need or to deal only passively with them. Our hearts are not placed in service to others, but rather in self-serving motives. Heal us, merciful God. Wash us again in the living water. Help us be faithful servants. Amen.

HYMN #143

"Amazing Grace"

[Verse 1]

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

[Verse 2]

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

[Verse 3]

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

[Verse 4]

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease,

I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.

[Verse 5]

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine;

but God, who called me here below, will be forever mine.

[Verse 6]

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,

we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING ANTHEM "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

(Carter)

Temple Choir

SCRIPTURE READING John 4:5-42

NT 94

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

MESSAGE "Meeting Jesus at the Well" Pastor Twyla Rowe

***HYMN #516** "Just as I am, without one plea"

[Verse 1]

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bid'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[Verse 2]

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of ev'ry blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[Verse 3]

Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[Verse 4]

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[Verse 5]

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[Verse 6]

Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken ev'ry barrier down. Now, to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

***BENEDICTION**

After the Benediction, you may be seated.

Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.

POSTLUDE "He Cares for ME" (Ellis)

(Worship Resources from: Ministry Matters 3/12/23; "Taught by Love", Year A,

Lavon Bayler)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship  
Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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Third Sunday in Lent

Hagerstown
Church of the Brethren
15 S. Mulberry Street,
Hagerstown, Maryland
21740
301-733-3565

Office: Tuesday—Friday
Flexible hours
(appointments welcome/
call ahead)

Morning Praise Worship
at 8:30 AM
Sunday School at 9:30 AM
Worship and YouTube Live at
10:45 AM

www.hagerstowncob.org

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[www.youtube.com/
@hagerstowncob](http://www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

Twyla Rowe
Pastor

Allyson McPeak
Administrative Assistant

Burton Young
Director of
Music Ministries

Don Rowe
Interior Esthetics
Technician

*We welcome you to our church and
Rejoice in your participation with us in
worship. It is our prayer that you will
experience the presence of God's Spirit and
that it will equip you for service and ministry
in the week ahead. Our Pastor, Deacons, and
Cluster Leaders are available after worship
and during the week to listen and assist you in
your Christian pilgrimage.*

THE ANNOUNCER March 8, 2026

If you placed someone on the prayer list and they are now celebrating a recovery and would like their name taken off the list, please contact the church office.

If you or a loved one has surgery scheduled, is hospitalized, or would like a visit from the pastor, please notify the church.

This week please join us in praying for members of our congregation. Please pray for Vince Bourdeau; John & Marsha Boring; Lester & Esther Boleyn; Gloria Benner; and Ted Beachley.

“Take A Moment” Let this be our daily "Take a Moment" prayer beginning Sunday, March 8 - I praise you, O Lord, all the day long. You address all my needs by bringing light to my day, by providing nourishment to my body, and by satisfying my soul's thirst with living water. My imperfections do not keep you from seeking me out in order to draw my heart back to you. Thank you, Holy One, because within my heart, I know I would be lost to sin without you. I pray for those, Lord, who do not know you. They long to be loved and to have meaning in their lives. They do not recognize you standing right next to them...offering them living water that would satisfy their spiritual thirst. Make clear to me the opportunities before me to change that scenario. Fill me with confidence to offer the cup of cold water that will satisfy their thirst. May my whole life point the way for others to find you, now and always. May my life be a testimony for peace which we seek for our world. Amen.

Attendance. Please sign the attendance rosters found at the end of your pew, or possibly in the hymnal rack, and pass it down the row so everyone can sign.

Our thanks to Diana Shepherd for being our worship leader today and to the Temple Choir for our morning anthem.

The flowers on the altar this morning are given to the Glory of God and in memory of my father, Ed Harper, and my brother, Fred White, given by Judy Dahlhamer.

- Lenten Services will be held on March 11, 18, & 25
Our guest speakers are as follows:
- March 11—John Miller—Special Music, Beth Davis-Reinhold
- March 18—Brenda Shane & Becky Jackson—
Special Music—Ed Plank
- March 25—Dennis Browne—Special Music—Wendy Browne

Cookies are also needed for our Lenten services. Sign-up sheets can be found in the west entrance or fellowship hall.



NOTICE—Starting in 2026 Contribution Statements will now be emailed. If you do not have an email on file with the church office, your statement will be mailed or placed in your church mailbox. By doing this, it will help us save money in postage and will be a more convenient way for you to have access to your statements. If you do not have an email on file with the church office and wish to receive your statement via email, please contact Allyson (secretaryhcob@gmail.com or 301-733-3565) and she will add your email to the list.

Junior Church will be held today for children ages Kindergarten through the sixth grade. **We will gather in the Children's Church Room (Room #203).** (Parents may, of course, opt to keep their child in worship with them especially if the child is uncertain about going.) Parents/grandparents should pick up their children afterward at the stair/elevator area outside the sanctuary in the west entrance. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Tina Mills. **Junior Church is held the second and fourth Sunday of each month.**

Friends in Faith (Widows & Widowers) — This Tuesday, March 10th at 12pm we will be having a luncheon in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish to share and please bring a photo of yourself as a child. A sign-up sheet will be in the west entrance and fellowship hall. Any questions, please contact Nancy Gingrich, Robin Davies, Suzie Wolfe, Ann Platou, or Mary Means.

It's here! Our week to staff the REACH Cold Weather Shelter starts today and goes through next Sunday morning. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help or offered monetary or other donations. We're ready to serve those less fortunate in our community. Pray for a successful week and good weather! - *Sandy Clipp*

Birthday Celebration! Mary Ellen Beachley is turning 100 on March 18th. To celebrate, the family is having an informal open house for people to stop by and say hello. It will be Sunday, March 15th, 2-4 PM at her house. The address is 1345 The Terrace.

The Service & Outreach Team will be collecting the large tissue boxes (9"x4 1/2"x3") for the residents of Fahrney Keedy. We ask that you wrap the tissue boxes in spring colors (no bows or ribbons needed). We ask that the boxes be placed in the designated box in the west entrance by March 22nd.

The Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction will be held this year on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at the Carroll County Ag. Center in Westminster, MD and will start at 9:00 am. The Response Dinner will be held Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 6:00 pm at Bush Creek Church of the Brethren.

Volunteers Needed—The Flower and Altar committee is looking for a volunteer for the month of **January and October**. If you're interested, please contact Cinnamon Shay.

2026 Altar Flowers—Only One Opening Left!—If you would like to place flowers on the altar in memory, celebration, or honor of a loved one, the Flower and Altar Committee has the following Sunday available in 2026: **August 30**. If you are interested, please contact Cinnamon Shay at 301-730-8499 or email cinnamongirl@myactv.net

Cash for Causes/Martin's Gift Card Program. Purchase Martin's gift cards to take to the store to pay for your groceries or gas, and 5% of the face value of the gift card is a donation to the church and goes toward your yearly charitable contribution. To purchase a card, please contact Donnie Maas (240-866-1077). We can make arrangements to leave cards in your church mailbox or mail them to you.

Church mailboxes. Everyone is welcome to use the mailboxes. If you would like to be added or taken off the list, please contact Mary Means. If you have a mailbox, we ask that you be willing to monitor it. Any mail that is left in the mailboxes after a three-month period will be disposed of. The mailboxes are located in the hallway of the church office.

Offering envelopes are located in the pew racks and at other convenient locations around the church. To assist our financial secretary, we ask that you use an envelope and please put your name and envelope number on the outside. Here's a tip - take a few envelopes home and stick one of those return address labels we all get on the outside. Then all you need to add is your number. Having your name and number on the outside of the envelope is a huge help to our offering counters. Thank you!

Deadline for bulletins and newsletters. Announcements for the weekly bulletin need to be given to the administrative assistant before noon on Wednesday. Announcements for the monthly newsletters need to be given to the administrative assistant before the 15th of each month. Let's help her out by meeting deadlines, and also by not asking for special exceptions. Announcements should continue to be emailed to secretaryhcob@gmail.com. Thank you!

If you have changed your email address, and would like to continue to receive the bulletins, eTidings, and other church related news as it happens please send the change to secretaryhcob@gmail.com.

CALENDAR

Sunday, March 8

Junior Church/REACH Week/Daylight Savings Time Starts
8:15 am Parish Nurse Blood Pressure Screening
8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall
9:30 am Spiritual Nurture Meeting/Fellowship Hall
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms
10:15 am Parish Nurse Blood Pressure Screenings
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube (www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

Monday, March 9

Church office closed
1:00 pm GriefShare/Mullendore Room

Tuesday, March 10

REACH
12:00 pm Friends in Faith/Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 11

Admin. Assistant/Work from home
12:00 pm Deadline for bulletin announcement submissions
5:00 pm P&F Meeting/Mullendore Room
7:00 pm Lenten Service/Fellowship Hall_Guest Speaker, John Miller_
Special Music_Beth Davis-Reinhold

Thursday, March 12

REACH
5:30 pm Praise Band Rehearsal/Fellowship Hall
6:30 pm Brethren Bells/Choir Room
7:30 pm Temple Choir/Fellowship Hall

Friday, March 13

8:00 am Bulletin prep/Church office
11:30 am Celebration of Life Service_Bea Van Norden
1:00 pm Islamic Center/Use of Parking Lot (1-3pm)

Saturday, March 14

Pastor Twyla's day off/REACH
8:00 am Community Breakfast/Fellowship Hall(Doors open to the public at 9:00AM)

Sunday, March 15

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube (www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)
12:00 pm Newsletter Deadline

You may mail your offering to
15 S. Mulberry Street,
Hagerstown MD 21740
OR
you can make a secure offering
donation on our website using
Breeze www.hagerstowncob.org

The church calendar is online at
www.hagerstowncob.org.
Click the calendar tab.

Remember our weekday schedule is subject to rapid change.



We grieve many things in life, but the loss of a loved one is probably the most devastating. As a result, the grief journey is a painful and lonely one. GriefShare is an international faith-based ministry that provides valuable tools to anyone who has lost a spouse, parent, child, sibling or other family member or friend, even if that loss is not recent. Our HCOB team offers a safe, welcoming space where people understand the heavy emotions of grief and where participants can find support in the company of others also on their grief journeys. If you or someone you know has lost a loved one, please share this information and consider attending. We encourage you to bring a family member or friend so they can better understand your loss and become an even greater support for you.

Our spring session of GriefShare began on Monday, Feb. 16, and will continue each Monday afternoon through May 11, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in the Mullendore Room. Cost of the session is free, but we gladly will accept a \$10 donation toward materials. You may join the group at any time during the 13 weeks, but we ask that you commit to attending at least 3 consecutive weeks. GriefShare recommends repeating the 13-week course a second time to absorb even more of the content, so if you have participated in GriefShare before and wish to attend again, we welcome you.

Register at www.griefshare.org. If you have any questions about the program, see Pastor Twyla or Debbie Nycum.

The Novel Bunch presents...

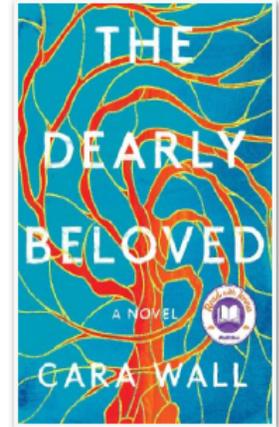
The Dearly Beloved

by Cara Wall

"This gentle, gorgeously written book may be one of my favorites ever."
—Jenna Bush Hager (A Today Show "Read with Jenna" Book Club Selection)

"The best book about faith in recent memory."
—Entertainment Weekly

This book is a character study about friendship, family, and faith. Charles and Lily & James and Nan meet in Greenwich Village in 1963 when Charles and James are jointly hired to manage the historic Third Presbyterian Church through turbulent times. However, their personal differences threaten to tear them apart. Charles is destined to follow his father as an esteemed history professor at Harvard until an unorthodox lecture about faith leads him to ministry. So, how can he fall in love with intellectual Lily after she tells him that she never will believe in God? And yet, how can he not believe?



James, the youngest son in a hardscrabble Chicago family, spent much of his youth angry at his alcoholic father and avoiding his nervous mother. James's escape from his desperate circumstances leads him to Nan, the devout and beloved daughter of a Mississippi minister and debutante. Despite James's guarded optimism, Nan's gentle, constant faith changes the course of his life. *The Dearly Beloved* follows these two couples through decades of love, friendship, jealousy, forgiveness, and commitment. Against the backdrop of conflict and change facing the city and the church's congregation, these four forge improbable paths through their evolving relationships as each struggles with uncertainty, heartbreak, and joy. This book is a moving reflection on faith and reason, and the ways we find meaning in our lives.

Date: Saturday, April 25

Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Place: Fellowship Hall

*This is a book for men and women alike, so we encourage the men of the congregation to attend and offer their perspectives.

Light refreshments to follow.

NOTE: If you have any questions or need assistance acquiring the book, call Jenny Ferguson at 301-964-1779. Please return the section below if you plan to attend.

NAME _____ I plan to attend _____ YES

Preferred contact information: Phone _____ OR Email _____

Book Club Team: *Jenny Ferguson, Kristal Bricker, Debbie Nycum, Judy Williams, Jan Young

