



FOURTH SUNDAY OF
ADVENT

December 21, 2025

*First United Church of Christ
207 West Horah Street
Salisbury, NC 28144*

www.1stucc.org



First United Church of Christ- Salisbury

WORSHIP OF GOD
FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First UCC's Mission Statement

“To grow in faith, love and fellowship as we serve God and all of our community.”

† *Indicates when we invite all to stand in body or spirit.*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Lay Reader

Choral Introit: *Emmanuel*

Words & Music by Bob McGee

†Call to Worship

Lay Reader

Leader: Not in the mighty places of power, but in little Bethlehem, in a room out back;

All: The Messiah is coming.

Leader: Not born in nobility, wealth, and power, but of Mary and Joseph, who embodied humble faith and obedient trust;

All: The Messiah is coming.

Leader: Not announced by prophets, priests, and kings, but by two women who were the first to know;

All: The Messiah is coming.

Leader: Nothing will be impossible for God, but when and where we least expect it, look among the straw and the stars;

All: The Messiah is coming.

†Hymn: Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn New Century No. 107



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
 el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and
 world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and
 win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by
 near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the
 free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break
 light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens
 bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der
 forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be
 love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heaven - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
 of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.
 raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

TEXT: Marty Haugen, 1983, alt.
 MUSIC: Marty Haugen, 1983

REJOICE, REJOICE
 9.8.9.8.8.7.8.9

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Lighting of the Candle of Love

The Bernhardt Family

Reader 1: Today we light the candle of Love, remembering that God showed us the greatest love by sending a baby in a manger. We anticipate the birth of the Christ Child, knowing that in him, God's perfect love comes to live among us. This love has no limits, breaks every barrier, and brings healing to a world longing for peace, hope, and joy.

Reader 2: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not fear, for perfect love casts out fear. In the fullness of time, Love took on human form and entered our world as a child.

(Lighting of the Candle of Love)

Reader 1: Let us pray. God of Love, as we await the coming of Emmanuel, ignite within us a love that is bold and compassionate. Help us welcome the vulnerable, embrace the hurting, and live as bearers of Your light. Prepare our hearts to receive the One who is Love Incarnate: Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregational Response: We light this candle to remind us that God's love is for all people -- tender, enduring, and strong. May this love take root in our hearts and flow through us into the world.

†Please stand as we join in the Sung Response found on the next page.

†Congregational Music Response: *Emmanuel*

Unison

Em-man - u - el, Em-man - u - el,

His name is called Em-man - u - el;

God with us, re-vealed in us;

His name is called Em-man - u - el.

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All: Merciful God, in this season of waiting, we confess that our love has often been impatient, our kindness selective, and our compassion conditional. You call us to love as You have loved us—freely, fully, and without fear—yet we have turned inward, protecting our own comfort instead of embracing the needs of others. Forgive us for the times we have spoken without gentleness, acted without grace, or withheld mercy from those who needed it most. Renew our hearts, O Lord, so that Your perfect love might cast out our fear, heal our divisions, and shine through us into a world longing for hope. In the name of Jesus, Love Incarnate, we pray. Amen.

†Silent Reflections

(a short period of silence is observed for silent reflections)

†Kyrie: *O Tender God Have Mercy*

The musical notation is written on four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: O - ten - der God, have mer - cy, for you are for us.
- Staff 2: O liv - ing Christ, have mer - cy, for you will heal us.
- Staff 3: O ten - der God, have mer - cy, for you are for us,
- Staff 4: for you are for us.

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†Our Assurance of God's Pardon

Rev. Anne Tambling

†The Gloria Patri

With spirit

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in 2/2 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is primarily in the Treble staff, with the Bass staff providing a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men, A - men.' The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the

Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the be - gin - ning, is

now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men, A - men.

Children's Message

Rebecca Wrights

†Hymn: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Blue Hymnal No. 90

Scripture Lessons

Lay Reader

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

Leader: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Sermon

Rev. Anne Tambling

†Statement of Faith

The Apostles' Creed

All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Anne Tambling

Leader: May the Spirit of God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

The Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Anne Tambling

The Lord's Prayer (debts, debtors)

Congregation

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer Response

pp Devoutly

The musical score is written for two staves, treble and bass clef, in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and homophonic, using mostly quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Hear our prayer, O Lord; Hear our prayer, O Lord;

Hear our prayer, O Lord, And grant us Thy peace. A-MEN.

Offertory Invitation

Lay Reader

Leader: Let us now receive our morning offering.

Offertory Anthem

†Doxology: *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, in a 3/2 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of five systems of music, alternating between Unison and Harmony sections.

System 1 (Unison): The melody is simple and direct. The lyrics are "Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise".

System 2 (Harmony): The melody continues with a more complex harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are "God, all crea-tures here be - low: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -".

System 3 (Unison): The melody returns to a simple line. The lyrics are "lu - ia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise".

System 4 (Harmony): The melody continues with a complex harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are "Je-sus Christ, whose power up-lifts! Praise the Spir - it, Ho-ly Spir - it!".

System 5 (Unison): The melody concludes with a final, simple line. The lyrics are "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!".

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†Blessing

Lay Reader

Leader: Almighty and loving God, you flood our lives with your many blessings of food, shelter and love. Use these our gifts and our lives to enrich the lives of others, bringing your Kingdom on earth. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

†Hymn: *Joy to the World*

Blue Hymnal No. 87

†Benediction

Rev. Anne Tambling

Choral Benediction:

May the Road Rise to Meet You

Austin C. Lovelace

Postlude

Assisting in Today's Worship

Rev. Anne Tambling, Intentional Interim Minister

Nathan Bowman, Organist/Accompanist/Choir Director

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Desiree Artz, Tyler Bernhardt, Rev. David Crook, Gerri D. Crummett (Donna Odrosky's sister), Maggie Derby (great granddaughter of Jim Weaver), Emily Faust, Emily Hauze (Linda Hauze's daughter-in-law), Sarah Locklear, Jim Lyerly, John Marion, Shirley McNeil, Eddie Meeker, Dan Morgan, Paul Paxton, Glenda Shrewsbury, Patty & Mark Shuping and family, Bobbie Troutman and family, Tom Troutman, John and Sandy Wagoner, Barbara Waller, Waylon Ward, Janette Yost.

If you know of anyone who should be added or removed from our prayer list, let the office know.

Announcements

Sunday, December 21, 4th Sunday of Advent

11:00 a.m. Worship at 207 W. Horah Street
2:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling | Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 23

10:30 a.m. Meals on Wheels
5:30 p.m. Rowan Helping Ministries Meal

Wednesday, December 24

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 28

11:00 a.m. Worship at 207 W. Horah Street

To access the **Nursery**, exit the Sanctuary through the left side door, go up the steps, and the Nursery is the door directly ahead. We invite children to participate in the service with all of their wiggles and giggles. Worship Service Busy Bags are located in the Narthex. Children are excused to the Nursery after the Children's Message, during the singing of the second hymn. Parents are asked to accompany their child(ren) to the Nursery up the inside stairs to the left of the sanctuary. Please leave your name and cellphone number with the Nursery Attendants, so they may reach you if necessary. The children remain in the Nursery until their parents pick them up immediately after worship.

Worship Schedule for Fall 2025

Worship at First United Church of Christ 207 W. Horah Street at 11:00 AM.

Dec 21 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec 21 | Christmas Caroling

Dec 24 | Christmas Eve Service

Dec 28 | Sunday Worship

WOW Bible Study will meet again January 14th, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall with a study on the book of Romans, using the text *In the Grip of Grace* by Max Lucado.



**Scan the QR Code with your camera to make a contribution to
First United Church of Christ.**

As we journey through this Advent season, we also remember that giving is an expression of our gratitude and faith. If you feel led to give today, you may place your offering in the **offering plate** or you can give electronically by using the **QR code provided above**.

Your generosity makes a real difference. Every gift—large or small—helps support the ministries of our church, care for those in need, and share Christ's love in our community. Thank you for giving faithfully and joyfully.