

Grace Lutheran Church

3020 Grace Church Rd. Salisbury, NC 28147

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www.grace-salisbury.com



4th Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

- + Ministers: The People of Grace +
- + Pastor: the Rev. Joshua Copeland +
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- + Secretary Terri Brown +
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- + Director of Music Lynn Lippard +
- + Director of Children & Youth Choirs Emily Copeland +
- + Accompanist for Children & Youth Teresa Yost +
- + Accompanist for Chancel Choir Becky Lippard +
- + Pastor Emeritus Rev. Gene C. Bost +

+ *Those who are able please stand.*
(Congregation responses are printed in bold type)

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

THE ROAD HOME

+ **CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who makes a way in the wilderness, who walks with us on the road, who welcomes us home.

Amen.

On the road of life, we often carry burdens too heavy to bear. We stumble, we wander, we lose our way. But God meets us with mercy and grace. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

Merciful God,

we confess that we have lost our way. We have traveled paths of selfishness and fear. We have carried baggage of anger and regret. We have failed to see the signs of your love along the way. Forgive us. Lighten our load. Guide our steps back to you, so that we may walk in hope, peace, joy, and love. Amen.


Hear the good news: God does not leave us wandering. Christ comes to meet us on the road and bring us home. In the name of Jesus, + you are forgiven, freed, and welcomed.

Amen.

+ **GATHERING HYMN**

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"


WOV#632



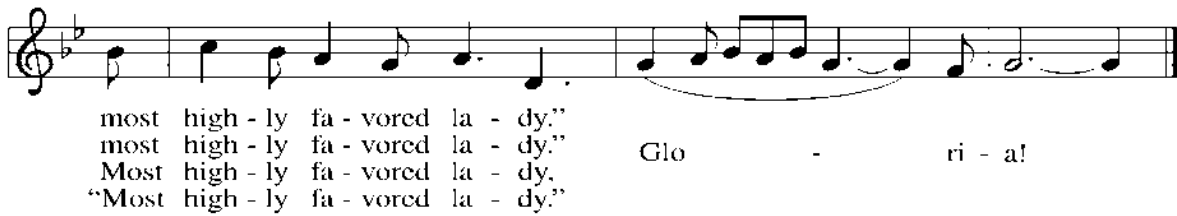
1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



+ GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

+ LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Love: Welcome Home

Reader: *"The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory... full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). On this road of Advent, we light the candle of love, for Christ has made a home with us.

Love is the doorway, open wide to welcome us in.

God's love makes a home with us.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, giving thanks that Christ is our home.

Christ is our light and our home.

(Light all four candles.)

+ ADVENT HYMN

Melody: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

verse 1-4

1. Come, God of Hope, and li - ght our way, and guide us on the ro - ad to - day.
 2. Come, Prince of Peace, and sh - ow us signs so we may foll - ow wh - ere love shines!
 3. Come, Gift of Joy, our hea - rts re - new and fill our souls with li - ght so true.
 4. Come, Ho - ly Love, and le - ad us home! Through wind - ing ways, we're ne' - re a - lone.

Help us to leave all fe - ars be - hind, and walk with you in pea - ce of mind!
 Your peace will calm our wand' - ring hearts, your gui - ding light our streng - th im - parts!
 Your joy sus - tains through tri - als we face, so lead us on with stead - fast Grace!
 You call us on to li - ght the way, So oth - ers find your care a - long the way.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall lead the way, O Pil - grims of God!

Text: Rev. Joshua Lewis Copeland 1995-

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, French Processional 15th Century

+ SALUTATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

+ PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together ...

God of steadfast love, you open the doorway wide and welcome us with grace upon grace. Make our hearts your dwelling place, that we may love as we have been loved. Draw the whole world home to you, through Jesus Christ, love made flesh. Amen.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³ Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

+ GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Melody: "Go Tell It On the Mountain")



Sing Al - le - lu - ia! Our Sav - ior comes to set us __ free!

Sing Al - le - lu - ia! Re - joice for Christ is near!

Re - joice! The Lord is co - ming! God lights our path a - head.

He comes to lift up our hearts and ban - ish fear and dread! __ *Refrain*

+ GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

“Love: Welcome Home”

+ HYMN OF THE DAY

“The King Shall Come”

LBW#33



- 1 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light tri - um-phunt breaks,
- 2 Not as of old a lit - tle child, to bear and fight and die,
- 3 Oh, bright - er than the ris - ing morn when Christ, vic - to - rious, rose
- 4 Oh, bright - er than that glo - rious morn shall dawn up - on our race
- 5 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light and beau - ty brings.



when beau - ty gilds the east - ern hills and life to joy a - wakes.
but crowned with glo - ry like the sun that lights the morn-ing sky.
and left the lone-some place of death, de - spite the rage of foes.
the day when Christ in splen-dor comes, and we shall see his face.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your peo - ple pray: come quick-ly, King of kings.

+ APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in hope and trust, we confess our faith.

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 to the dead. 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 catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

+ PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Loving God, you know our needs more deeply than we can ever know them ourselves.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Hear now our prayers and fulfill them as may be best for us and all of this we ask through your Son, our Lord and advocate, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

+ SHARING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

ANTHEM

“Love Has Come!”

Chancel Choir

+ OFFERTORY SONG (Melody: “Blessed Be the God of Israel” WOV#725)

**A weary world now summons us
to labor, love, and give;
to make our life an offering
to God, that all may live.
The church of Christ is calling us
to make the dream come true:
a world redeemed by Christ-like love;
all life in Christ made new.**

+ OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray ...

Gracious God, you provide signs of hope along our journey. **We bring our gifts with hope.**

You make peace where the world is restless. **We bring our gifts for peace.**

You surprise us with joy in unexpected places. **We bring our gifts with joy.**

You welcome us home with love beyond measure. **We bring our gifts with love.**

Receive these offerings, O God, and use them to guide all people home to you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

+ GREAT THANKSGIVING (Melody: O Come All Ye Faithful!)

The Lord be with you.

And with you, his servant.

Oh, come, let us lift our hearts unto the Lord.

With hearts uplifted,

Thanks to him we render:

With joy we come before him

In gratefulness implore him

With thankful hearts adore him,

Evermore!

+ PREFACE

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. Long ago you set your people on a journey, guiding them through wilderness and exile, promising a home where justice and mercy would dwell. Through prophets and messengers, you gave signs along the way, stirring hope, peace, joy, and love in waiting hearts. In these last days you have made your home with us in Jesus, the Word made flesh, the light that shines in our darkness, the road that leads us safely home to you. And so, with all travelers on the way, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

+ SANCTUS (Melody: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
God of Hosts, by heav'n adored!
Heav'n and earth cannot contain
All the glory of your name!
Hail, Hosanna, God most high!
Blest is He who now draws nigh!
In the name of God the King
Halleluias glad we sing:
Hail, Hosanna! Praises due
Be forever, Lord, to you!**

+ WORDS OF INSTITUTION

+ LORD'S PRAYER (Melody: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear)

**O Father, Lord, on Heav'n's high throne
Most holy be your Name.
Your Kingdom come. Your will be done.
On earth, in Heav'n - the same.
Give us this day the food we need;
Forgiven may we be
Into temptation do not lead;
From evil set us free.**

**Yours is the Kingdom; unto you
In grateful love we bow;
And yours the pow'r, Lord, let us view
Your gracious presence now.
The glory yours; Your praise be sung
By angel hosts and then
In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue
Forevermore! AMEN.**

+ INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**Taste and see that the Lord is good!
Thanks be to God.**

LAMB OF GOD (Melody: Away in a Manger)

**O, Lamb of our Lord God, the most holy Son,
This world needs your mercy, your love and
your grace.
Draw near to us, dear Lord, bring liberation!
Have mercy upon us and grant us your peace!**

**O, Lamb of our Lord God, the most holy
Son,
You came to this dark world to lead us from
night!
Have mercy upon us and bring us your light!
And grant to the whole world your peace.
Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION – All of God's children are welcome at the table for communion. Come forward in two lines to receive the bread from the pastor and wine/grape juice from a communion assistant.

+ TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you always in his grace.

Amen.

+ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together....

God of the journey, we give you thanks for this holy meal, where Christ meets us on the road and strengthens us for the way ahead. Send us now with hope, peace, joy, and love, that we may be signs of your welcome and witnesses of your light, until all your children find their home in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

+ BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you on the road of faith.

The Lord's face shine upon you and guide your steps with hope.

The Lord turn toward you in peace, and surprise you with joy.

And the blessing of God — Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit — go with you now and always, as you find your home in Christ.

Amen.

+SENDING HYMN

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

+ DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is with you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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<u>Serving 12/21/2025</u>	
Organist	Becky Lippard
Children's Sermon	Sarah Stirewalt
Lector & Advent Wreath	Eric Storey Family
Communion Assistant	Nicole Ritchie & Michael Miller
Acolyte	Hudson Sechler
Security Team	Zach Moore & Cody Ritchie
Sound System	Finn Basinger
Teller Team	Wendy Diggs, Mary Sloop & Kristina Martin
Ushers	Mike Stout, Donnie Stout, Randy Basinger & Lynn Aldridge

<u>Serving 12/28/2025</u>	
Organist	Teresa Yost
Children's Sermon	Starr Atwell
Lector	Debbie Parris
Communion Assistant	Nicole Ritchie & Michael Miller
Acolyte	Kelsey Sloop
Security Team	Michael Miller & Matt Sechler
Sound System	Luke Bame
Teller Team	Wendy Diggs, Mary Sloop & Kristina Martin
Ushers	Mike Stout, Donnie Stout, Randy Basinger & Lynn Aldridge

THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR TODAY are given to the glory of God and in memory of Dewey & Minnie Aldridge and Vivian & Fred Diggs by children and grandchildren.

Christmas Eve Services will be at 5:00pm and 10:00pm

In lieu of Christmas Cards, a donation has been made to the Kid of Grace in honor of all members of Grace. Merry Christmas, Barry & Sharon Nesbitt

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION will meet on January 4th and the program will include Pastor Gloria Ross of Southside Community Outreach. All members of Grace are invited, as Grace has supported this mission in the past. Breakfast will begin at 8am with program to follow. Please fill out below and drop in collection plate if you will attend.

attending _____

Prayer List

Immediate needs:

Alice & Michael Baglio, Arlene Wise, Irene Miller, Bob Howard, Ava Jean Kirkman

Community Concerns:

Scout & Skylar Harmon (*Fish Fry Recipients*), Debbie Everhart (*Vicki Morris*), Pat Kluttz (*Pam Roseman*)

Comfort:

Ongoing Needs:

John Miller, Bobby & Barbara Sloop, Mary Miller, Kari Overcash, Janice Gray, Janis Eury, Allen & Lynn Sloop, Sophie Hooks, Louise Vaughn, Judy Copeland, Diane Bouk, Arlene Wise, Hazel Miller, Ronnie Gorman, Earl Thomas, Danny Benfield, Jesse Martin, Alice & Michael Baglio, Jerry Heilig

Those who serve others

Active Duty Military personnel and families; First Responders

This Week's Giving 12/14/2025		Needed Weekly	
Category	Amount	Per Spending Plan	Difference
Attendance 178			
Current	\$ 6,837.00		
Sunday School (Attendance 91)	\$ 74.00		
Property Fund	\$ 50.00		
Altar Flowers	\$ 50.00		
Benevolence	\$ 335.00		
World Hunger	\$ 50.00		
	\$ 7,396.00	\$ 7,815.00	\$ (419.00)
Margie Martin Memorial - Fish Fry	\$ 50.00		
Ray Peeler Memorial	\$ 100.00		
Lewis Moose Endowment Fund	\$ 100.00		
Van Fund	\$ 50.00		
Building Fund	\$ 100.00		
Facility Rental (Capital Improvement Fund)	\$ 180.00		
Youth of Grace	\$ 125.00		
Kids of Grace	\$ 300.00		
Total	\$ 8,401.00		

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online giving.

