

# Grace Lutheran Church

3020 Grace Church Rd. Salisbury, NC 28147

(704) 857-8641

[www.grace-salisbury.com](http://www.grace-salisbury.com)



## **1st Sunday of Christmas**

December 28, 2025

+ Ministers: The People of Grace +

+ Pastor: the Rev. Joshua Copeland +

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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

#### + GATHERING HYMN

**“Joy to the World”**

**LBW#39**

#### + OPENING LITANY

*Refrain from O, Holy Night (Cantique de Noël) written by Placide Cappeau.*

God proclaims freedom to the captives and brings forth water in the wilderness.

**A thrill of a hope, a weary world rejoices.**

God walks with us in the shadow of our fear and shows us new paths of righteousness.

**A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices.**

Jesus is born of a woman and comes to earth as Emmanuel, God with us.

**A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices.**

Jesus calls out to all who are weary, to come to him. He will give us rest.

**A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices.**

The Spirit intercedes with our hurting hearts with sighs too deep for words.

**A thrill of hope a weary world rejoices.**

The Spirit unites our praise and prayers across the miles and builds us into the faithful, bold, and serving body of Christ.

**A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices.**

We gather for worship in the name of God, Our Holy Parent, + Jesus, Son of God Among us, and the Holy Spirit, Comforter of All.

**Amen.**

### GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

**And also with you.**

Let us pray together.

**O Holy God, the coming of your Son into our world has graced weary hearts with peace and hope. Call us together from all places, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### CHILDREN’S SERMON

#### FIRST READING: Genesis 2.4c-9

**Reader: Kristi Miller**

L: In creating, God designs for people, creatures, plants, and the earth to live in harmony. Humanity’s connection to creation has many implications. One is that the earth groans under the strain of humanity’s greed when we live out of balance with the rest of creation. Another is the seasons’ call to intentional living and reminding us of the cycle of death and new life that is each year. This Christmas and winter, we remember that we are of the earth and that our lives are bound to creation itself. We hope for the healing of creation with creation.

L: A reading from Genesis:

On the day the Lord God made earth and sky—<sup>5</sup> before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the Lord God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being to farm the fertile land,<sup>6</sup> though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land—<sup>7</sup> the Lord God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.<sup>8</sup> The Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east and put there the human that had been formed.

<sup>9</sup> In the fertile land, the Lord God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

**“Angels We Have Heard on High! “**

**LBW#71**

**SECOND READING: Genesis 21.8-21**

**Reader: Leslie Sechler**

L: Hagar was an outcast in every way possible at the time she lived. She was a woman, she was enslaved by Abraham and Sarah, and she was not from their country. Rather than trusting God's promises, Sarah and Abraham abuse Hagar through a pregnancy that she could not consent to. We now read Sarah's contempt for Hagar and her son, Ishmael. Yet God continues to see Hagar and her son and provides for them in the wilderness. Hagar's story gives hope to all those who are outcast today. God sees them and God attends to their needs. Likewise, Hagar shows us that God does hear our individual prayers as well. God sees you and God attends to your needs.

L: A reading from Genesis

[Isaac] grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.<sup>9</sup> But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian [Ishmael], whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac.<sup>10</sup> So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.”<sup>11</sup> The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son.<sup>12</sup> But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you.<sup>13</sup> As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.”<sup>14</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

<sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes.<sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, “Do not let me look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.<sup>17</sup> And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.<sup>18</sup> Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.”<sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

<sup>20</sup> God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.<sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**THIRD READING: Luke 2.1-7****Reader: Dan Roseman**

L: To abide by an imperial command, Mary and Joseph traveled 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem - the ancestral home of Joseph's family. This trip likely took about one month, because they were walking. Walking! Mary was walking 90 miles while 8 months pregnant! (Hopefully she really did have a donkey to ride on, like in so many Christmas images.) The weariness of travel must have been exhausting - in body, mind, soul, and spirit. So many of us are weary in body, mind, soul, and spirit. So many of us carry trauma in our bodies. We carry illness, injury, grief, and pain. We also carry new life and hope. God accompanies us all on our journeys - helping to carry all that weighs us down, just as Mary carried in her body the holy presence of God with us.

L: A reading from Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**FOURTH READING: Matthew 2.1-15****Reader: Debbie Parris**

L: The Holy Family - Mary, Joseph, and Jesus - faced violence and persecution as King Herod reacted to Jesus' birth with fear and fury and sought to destroy Jesus. Fleeing the terror of Herod's massacre of the innocents, the Holy Family lived as refugees in Egypt. People all over the world still face violence, persecution, fear, and terror every day. Many make the hard choice to flee and seek refuge elsewhere. Just as God cared for the Holy Family though the people of Egypt, God continues to care, through those who still provide refuge, for those who must flee their homes.

L: A reading from Matthew.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

**“What Child is This”**

**LBW#40**

**FIFTH READING: John 21:4-14**

**Reader: Angela Lippard**

L: Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus eats with and feeds thousands. Yet this seaside fish breakfast following his resurrection is a meal like no other. Jesus comes to the disciples who are weary with grief and uncertain of what comes next. They eat and then Jesus gives Peter the command to love and feed his sheep. Likewise we come weary with grief and uncertainty to Christ’s table, to God’s holy word. Jesus nourishes us with his word and himself when we share communion. We may not know what the next chapter of faith looks like for us as individuals or us together as a church, but we trust that God is with us. God will show us the way.

L: A reading from John.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” <sup>6</sup> He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. <sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup> When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**SIXTH READING: Isaiah 35****Reader: Lynn Lippard**

L: The prophet Isaiah speaks words of hope to the people of Israel who are living as exiles in Babylon. The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. There is no need for fear - God is coming to save! God's coming reign brings hope not just for humanity but also for creation. All earth is hopeful: God's renews creation, the desert will flow with water, the land will rejoice with blossoms. God's recreation is hope for the restoration of humanity, creatures, and all of creation.

L: A reading from Isaiah.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**NICENE CREED**

We confess our faith together in the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Heavenly Father, we are your children, formed and created for love.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Father, hear our prayers offered in the security of your love and grant them not as we desire but as may be best for us.

**Amen.**

## **+ LORD'S PRAYER**

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray together...

**Gracious God, your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth. As we offer ourselves and these your gifts, prepare us to receive the grace and truth you offer at this table and renew in us the song of your salvation, in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

L: The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.

**Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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*Refrain*

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

*Refrain*

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

## PRELUDE



## **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*), Larry Crowell (*Emily Weddington*)

### **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 and families

This Week's Giving 12/21/2025		Needed Weekly	
Category	Amount	Per Spending Plan	Difference
Current	\$ 6,471.00		
Sunday School (Attendance 225)	\$ 50.00		
Poinsettias	\$ 15.00		
Property Fund	\$ 75.00		
Altar Flowers	\$ 50.00		
Benevolence	\$ 35.00		
World Hunger	\$ 50.00		
Total Current	\$ 6,746.00	\$ 7,815.00	\$ (1,069.00)
Margie Martin Memorial - Fish Fry	\$ 825.00		
Barbara Miller Memorial	\$ 25.00		
Van Fund	\$ 520.00		
Senior Citizens	\$ 200.00		
Paving	\$ 500.00		
Boy Scouts	\$ 40.00		
Quilters	\$ 200.00		
Fish Fry	\$ 400.00		
Facility Rental (Capital Improvement Fund)	\$ 105.00		
Youth of Grace	\$ 100.00		
Kids of Grace	\$ 15.00		
Total Deposit	\$ 9,676.00		

# Useful Information

<u>Serving 12/28/2025</u>		<u>Serving 1/4/2025</u>	
<b>Organist</b>	Teresa Yost	<b>Organist</b>	Becky Lippard
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Lynn Lippard	<b>Children's Sermon</b>	Randy Basinger
<b>Children's Sermon</b>	Starr Atwell	<b>Lector</b>	Marcus Reynolds
<b>Readers</b>	Kristi Miller, Leslie Sechler, Dan Roseman, Debbie Parris, Angela Lippard, Lynn Lippard	<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Greg Hartsell & Nicole Ritchie
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Nicole Ritchie, Michael Miller	<b>Acolyte</b>	Maggie Stirewalt
<b>Acolyte</b>	Kelsey Sloop	<b>Security Team</b>	Randy Basinger, Duane Nolan
<b>Security Team</b>	Michael Miller, Matt Sechler	<b>Sound System</b>	Chad Rivers
<b>Sound System</b>	Luke Bame	<b>Teller Team</b>	Greg Hartsell, Gary White
<b>Teller Team</b>	Wendy Diggs, Mary Sloop, Kristina Martin	<b>Ushers</b>	
<b>Ushers</b>	Mike Stout, Donnie Stout, Randy Basinger & Lynn Aldridge		

**THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR TODAY** are given to the glory of God and in honor of our family by Monty and Terri Brown.

**CIRCLE OF HOPE** will meet in the Parish Hall on Thursday, January 8th at 6:30pm for their annual soup supper.

## Fish Fry Recipient Nomination Form

The Fall Fundraising (Fish Fry) committee is at work planning this year's event. The date will be Saturday, October 10. The committee is seeking nominations for a recipient for the fundraiser. This information needs to be submitted before **February 1st**. If you know of someone who would benefit from this event, please send the following information to the Church. You may email [gracesecretary.salisbury@gmail.com](mailto:gracesecretary.salisbury@gmail.com) or mail the information to Grace Church, 3020 Grace Church Rd, Salisbury, NC 28147.

Nominee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Parent name (if under 18 yrs) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Home Church (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: why is this person being nominated? Financial need?

(attach additional information)

Your information Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_