

Receiving the Light of God’s Face in the Christ Child

Christmas Eve

Please silence all electronic devices

*Invites the congregation to stand

Gathering Music

J. Noel Lance

Words of Gathering

Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

J. Noel Lance

*Lighting of the Christ Candle

Cushman & McLeod Family

Anna, Alexandra, Julien & Blinn Cushman

Will, Kimberly and Carole McLeod

ONE CANDLE IS LIT (ADVENT WREATH MUSICAL PRAYER) CRADLE SONG

Come, listen, the sounds of God-with-us ring clear,
And signs of a cross in the distance appears.
The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near.
One candle is lit for the Christ-birthday here.

*Christmas Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee, with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.



The Christmas Story

Gospel of Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Anthem

Chancel Choir and Children’s Choir

‘Night of Silence’

Marty Haugen

Cold are the people, winter of life, we tremble in shadows this cold endless night. Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo sunrise. Fire of hope is our only warmth, weary, its flame will be dying soon. Voice in the distance, call in the night, on wind you enfold us, you speak of the Light. Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, rumors of a dawn so embracing, breathless love awaits darkened souls, soon will we know of the morning. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright. ‘Round yon virgin mother and Child, Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace.

All children are invited to come to the front of the sanctuary after this musical offering to join with all children for a message from Rev. Harmon.

Moments with the Younger Church

Rev. Kheresa Harmon



Rev. Haley Blackwell

*Christmas Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth.
Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the joys of highest heaven.
No ear may hear Christ’s coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our God, Emmanuel.

Prayers of God’s Children at Christmas

Rev. Lee Gray

We Bring Our Gifts to the Christ Child

Offertory Anthem

Before the Marvel of this Night

Chancel Choir

Carl Schalk

Before the marvel of this night, adoring, fold your wings and bow;
Then tear the sky apart with light and with your news the world endow.
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace; that fear and death and sorrow cease;
Sing peace, sing gift of peace!

Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed.
Give earth a glimpse of heavenly bliss, a teasing taste of what they miss:
Sing bliss, sing endless bliss.

The love that we have always known, our constant joy and endless light,
Now to the loveless world be shown, now break upon its deathly night.
Into one song compress the love that rules our universe above.
Sing love, sing God is love!

*Presentation of Our Gifts to God

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
Christ the Lord.

The Homily

‘Only Light Can Do That’

Dr. Foust

Gospel of John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

*Christmas Carol Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove,
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

SACRED COMMUNION

St. John’s observes the communion tradition of an OPEN TABLE.

This is the Lord’s Table, and all are welcome here.

No person is excluded from Christ’s inclusive invitation, “Come to me,,”

Serving of the Bread and Cup Deacons and Congregation

*Carol of Proclamation Silent Night
STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin mother and
child, holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly
peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from
heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the
Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light; radiant beams from Thy
holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus,
Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend Thy light; with the angels let us
sing, alleluia to our King; Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ, the Savior, is born.

Merry Christmas!

Thank you for extinguishing your candles and placing
them in the bins by the doors as you exit the sanctuary.

Thank you also for throwing away your communion cups
in the trashcans provided at each exit.

St. John’s Baptist Church

300 Hawthorne Lane
Charlotte, North Carolina 28204
704.333.5428 | www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org

The St. John’s Pulpit

Worship: December 31, 2023, New Year’s Eve
Scripture: Luke 2:22-40 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Message Title: ‘For Such a Time as This’
Proclaimer: Rev. Kheresa Harmon

This Week at St. John’s

Sun., Dec. 24	10:30 am 10:30 am 5:00 pm	No Sunday School Worship (Sanctuary) Together in Christ International Ministries (Chapel) Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Candles, Carols, and Communion (Sanctuary)
Mon., Dec. 25	ALL DAY	MERRY CHRISTMAS! (Church Offices Closed)
Tues., Dec. 26	ALL DAY	Church Offices Closed!
Wed., Dec. 27	ALL DAY	Church Offices Closed!
Thurs., Dec. 28	10:00 am	WOC Spiritual Growth Team (Prayer Room)
Friday, Dec. 29	8:00 pm	Eastway AA (Lasater Hall)
Sat., Dec. 30	6:30 am 8:00 pm	Benton Basketball (Gym) Together We Rise NA (Lasater Hall)

Membership and Ministry

If you would like information on how you can become a member of St. John's, please call the church office (704.333.5428), or fill out one of the “For Our Guests” cards found on the back of the pew and place it in the offering plate. One of our ministers will be happy to reach out to you and answer any questions you may have. Visit our website to find out more information regarding the many ministry opportunities available in the life of St. John's.

Ministers

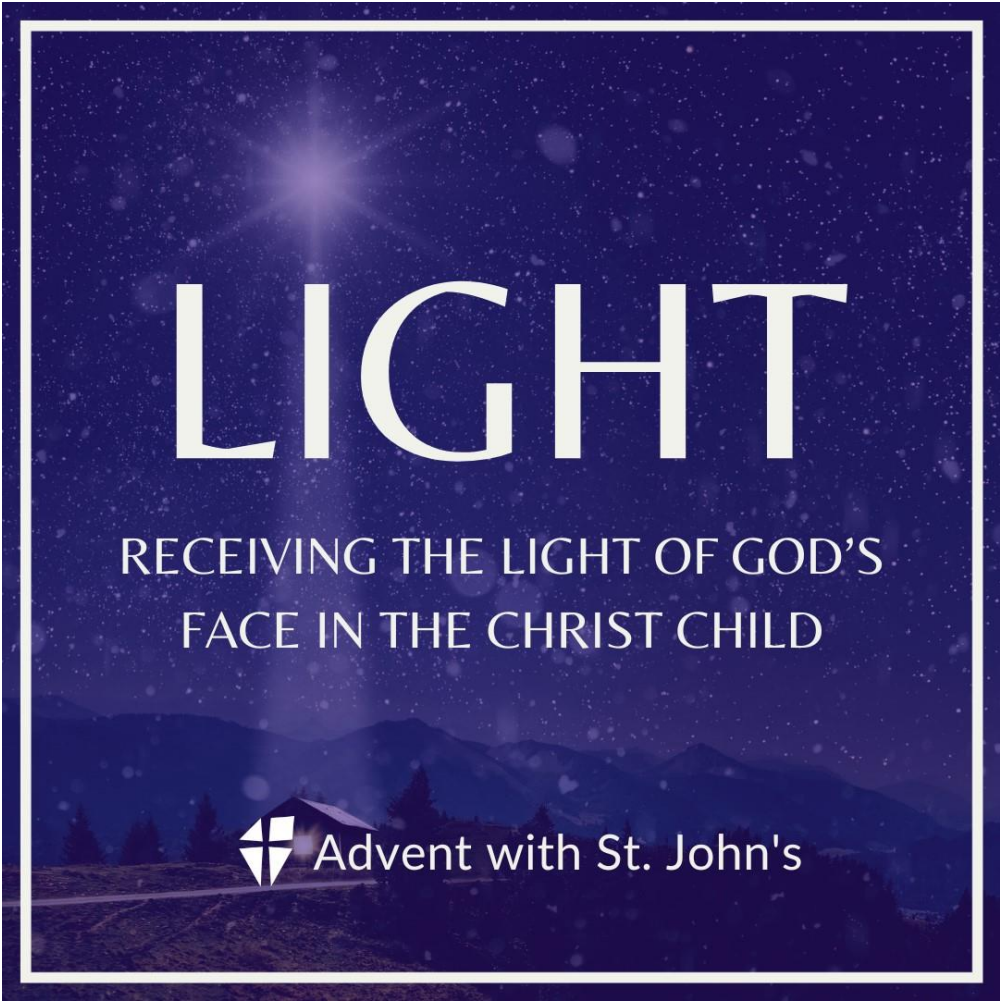
Every participant in God’s Servant Church

Equipping Ministers

Minister for Youth and Young Adults..... Rev. Haley Blackwell
Senior Minister.....Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD
Minister for Congregational CareRev. Lee Gray
Minister for Children and Their Families..... Rev. Kheresa Harmon
Interim Minister for Worship & MusicDr. Lillian Quackenbush

Church Staff

Academy of the Arts Director.....Jessica Borgnis
Media CoordinatorMallory Brown
Children’s Music DirectorChloe Hall
OrganistJ. Noel Lance
Associate Organist..... Dr. Matthew Manwarren
Custodian..... Chris Mullis
Church Administrator..... Amanda Morrison
Weekday School Director.....Lydia Olmsted



Candles, Carols, and Communion

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

5:00 PM Worship

St. John’s Baptist Church

Charlotte, North Carolina