

# Welcome to the Worship of God

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Please turn off all electronic devices*

December 22, 2024

*Ten-Thirty in the Morning*

### THE GATHERING MUSIC

J. Noel Lance, Organist

### THE WORDS OF GREETING

Russell Nelson

### & ANNOUNCEMENTS OF CHURCH LIFE

### PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

J. Noel Lance

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Russell Nelson

ONE: Stop. Pay attention. Love is coming near.

**ALL: We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.**

ONE: The Hope Bringer, Peace Maker, Joy Sustainer grows in a womb, preparing to be born among us.

**ALL: We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.**

ONE: With Mary, we long for the coming of the Child who will transform the world, bringing justice where injustice reigns, fullness where hunger persists, and favor to the ones the world calls lowly.

**ALL: We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.**

ONE: So let us join our voices and our lives in magnifying God, our Savior.

**ALL: We come to wait and to declare the coming of the Love that transforms us. Amen.**

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2023.

### THE ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES

Lighting of the Candle of Love

The Fentress-Bowen Family: Eric, MaeBeth, Ursula, Fae, and Bobbie

### ONE CANDLE IS LIT (ADVENT WREATH MUSICAL PRAYER)

CRADLE SONG

Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play,  
Where evil is banished and faith takes the day,  
A babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.  
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.

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### \*HYMN OF ADVENT, NO. 155

*ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH*

THE CHALICE HYMNAL

GLORIA

### MOMENTS WITH THE YOUNGER CHURCH

Rev. Kheresa Harmon

### READING OF THE GOSPEL

Gospel of Luke 1:39-55

Paula Foust

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

ONE: Through these written words of scripture, we listen for the Living Word of God.

**ALL: Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.**

### THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

Rev. Lee Gray

#### Current Prayer Concerns

Shirley Ballard, Arnold Philemon,  
Bill Roseman, Ken Sanford

#### The 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 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 forever. Amen.

### \*HYMN OF ADVENT, NO. 151

THE CHALICE HYMNAL

*THE FIRST NOEL*

THE FIRST NOEL

### THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Steve Hoffman

### THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES PLUS OFFERINGS

Deaconate and Congregation

### THE CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEM

*ADVENT ECHO CAROL*

Directed by Russell Nelson

Mary Kay Beall

Prophets told it long ago. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
Like a rose, He'll bloom and grow. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
He comes! The powers of earth confounding,  
The joy of peace resounding.  
Truth and justice in His hand. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
Son of God and Son of man. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
He comes! The powers of earth confounding,  
The joy of peace resounding.  
The lame will dance, the blind will see.  
Ransomed souls will be set free. Prepare the way.  
Hills and valleys shout and sing. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
Tribute of our hearts we bring. Prepare the way, O Zion.  
He comes, the powers of earth confounding,  
The joy of peace resounding.

### \*THE DOXOLOGY

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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### THE HOMILY

Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD

'HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?'

### \*HYMN OF ADVENT, NO. 619

THE CHALICE HYMNAL

*MY LIFE FLOWS ON*

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING

### THE COMMISSIONING

Rev. Foust

### THE POSTLUDE

J. Noel Lance

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Room in the Inn Volunteer Signups

For the 2024-25 season, St. John's and our partners at Caldwell Presbyterian Church will again jointly host 8 homeless neighbors vetted by Roof Above within the Room in the Inn program. **Overnight volunteers, drivers, and food prep volunteers are needed.** Use the QR code to sign up as a volunteer.



## The Christmas Card Mailbox for St. John's Neighbors & Friends

The Christmas Card Mailbox for Neighbors and Friends will be up in the Main Entrance foyer (outside the gym) from Sunday, December 8 until Sunday, December 22. A list of 35 Neighbors & Friends, for whom you can write Christmas Cards and put in the mailbox, can be found on the table or in the Family News. You can buy your own cards to put in recipients' mailboxes or use some of the blank cards provided. All cards need to be turned into the mailbox by the end of worship **TODAY**.

## The Advent of God's Gift: Resurrection Living

This Advent, we express our worship to The Living God through the theme, "The Advent of God's Gift: Resurrection Living." This year's devotional booklet (found on our website, and in hard copies around the church) is to help you reflect on the meaning of this season.

- On Christmas Eve, we celebrate God's Gift of Resurrection Living from a manger to an empty tomb. **We will gather for worship in the Sanctuary at 5PM for Carols, Candles, and Communion on Christmas Eve.**

## No Children's Sunday School on December 29

On Sunday, December 29, there will be no Sunday school for children, ages 3+. Nursery will be provided as scheduled.

## Christmas Traditions

The Second Century Tree will again be put up in the hallway behind the sanctuary. If you did not donate a Nativity themed ornament last year, please plan to donate one this year. Even if you or your family donated one last year, if you wish to donate another, please do so. The ornament should be related to the Christmas Story and be identified with your name(s) and the year 2024 on the ornament in some way. You may put your ornaments in a basket to be located beside the tree or give them to Fredda or Linda.

**St. John's Baptist Church**  
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Charlotte, North Carolina 28204  
704.333.5428 | [www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org](http://www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org)

## The St. John's Pulpit

**Worship:** December 24, 2024

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 5:00 pm**

**Sermon:** 'Birth Announcements'

**Scripture:** Luke 2:1-18, John 1:1-5, 10-14 and 1 Peter 1:3-5

**Proclaimer:** Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD

## This Week at St. John's

Sun., Dec. 22	9:15 am 10:30 am 10:30 am	Sunday School Worship (Sanctuary) Together in Christ International Ministries (Chapel)
Mon., Dec. 23		
Tues., Dec. 24	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)</b>
Wed., Dec. 25	<b>ALL DAY</b>	<b>Christmas Day - Church Offices Closed</b>
Thurs., Dec. 26	<b>ALL DAY</b>	Church Offices Closed
Fri., Dec. 27	<b>ALL DAY</b> 5:00 pm 8:00 pm	Church Offices Closed Room in the Inn (Gym & Lounge) Eastway AA (Broach Hall)
Sat., Dec. 28	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

Senior Minister.....Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD  
Minister for Congregational Care .....Rev. Lee Gray  
Minister for Children and Their Families..... Rev. Kheresa Harmon  
Minister for Worship and Music.....Russell Nelson

## Church Staff

Media Coordinator .....Mallory Brown  
Children's Music Director .....Chloe Hall  
Weekday School Assistant Director.....Kristina Hartzell  
Organist .....J. Noel Lance  
Handbell Director.....Jacquelyn McAbee  
Church Administrator..... Amanda Morrison  
Custodian.....Chris Mullis  
Weekday School Director.....Lydia Olmsted



**Fourth Week of Advent**  
**Sunday, December 22, 2024**  
**10:30 AM Worship**  
**St. John's Baptist Church**