

Welcome to the Worship of God

Second Sunday of Advent

We invite you to silence your electronic devices so we can fully share this time together.

An asterisk () invites the congregation to stand as you are able.*

December 7, 2025	<i>Ten-Thirty in the Morning</i>
GATHERING MUSIC	Jesse Roberts
GREETING AND OUR LIFE TOGETHER	J. Noel Lance
Recognition of Service for Lydia Olmstead	Rev. Kheresa Harmon
*PASSING OF THE PEACE	Congregation
CALL TO WORSHIP	Kathy Bragg
Leader: In this sacred season, we gather as family—joined by hope, drawn by light.	
People: Our hearts are ready, our hands are open. We come to prepare the way of the Lord.	
Leader: The greens we hang, the candles we light, the songs we sing—all proclaim: God is near!	
People: In the midst of winter’s waiting, Christ brings peace and promise.	
Leader: Let every heart make room for the Holy Child.	
People: Come, Lord Jesus, dwell among us anew.	
PRAYER OF ANTICIPATION	Kathy Bragg
*HYMN OF ADVENT, NO. 125	<i>Come, O Long-Expected Jesus</i>
Chalice Hymnal	HYFRYDOL
THE ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES	<i>Lighting the Candle of Peace</i>
	Kevin and Kathy Turner
ADVENT WREATH MUSICAL PRAYER	Children’s Choir and Congregation
<i>Hope, Peace, Joy and Love</i>	Mark Edwards

(The Children’s Choir will sing once,
and the congregation is invited to join the second time)



THE GREENERY	Ken and Debby Benton, Jason and Becky Benton Jordan and Liz Benton, Taylor and Mindy Vergakis
HANDBELL CAROL	St. John’s Handbell Choir
<i>The Holly and the Ivy</i>	arr. Kevin McChesney

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2: 1-12

Amanda Morrison

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

‘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.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 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.” When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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 POINSETTIAS AND AMARYLLIS	Scott Kerley, Chris Lavender Ellen Smith, Rod and Kathy Spence, Selina Swofford
CAROL, NO. 160	<i>Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming</i>
Chalice Hymnal	ES IST EIN ROS
THE CHURCH AT PRAYER	Rev. Lee Gray
CURRENT PRAYER CONCERNS	
Mary Jo Breckenridge, Carol Drye, Norman Fortson Dale Johnson, Fredda Kimball, Anne Sutton	
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.	
CAROL, NO. 163	<i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i>
Chalice Hymnal	W ZLOBIE LEZY
SONG OF THE SHEPHERDS	Children’s Choir
<i>Shepherd’s Arise</i>	Dan R. Edwards

THE CHRISMON TREES	Whitney Crowder
*CAROL	<i>O Chrismon Tree</i> Traditional German Carol
O Chrismon tree! O Chrismon tree! Thy leaves are so unchanging; O Chrismon tree! O Chrismon tree! thy leaves are so unchanging; not only green when summer's here, but also when 'tis cold and drear. O Chrismon tree! O Chrismon tree! thy leaves are so unchanging!	
MOMENTS WITH THE YOUNGER CHURCH	Rev. Harmon
THE CRÈCHE	Suzanne Taylor
*CAROL, NO. 162	<i>What Child Is This</i>
Chalice Hymnal	GREENSLEEVES
OFFERTORY PRAYER	Phil Vavra
OFFERTORY	Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir
<i>Antiphonal Noel</i>	Stacey Nordemeyer
*DOXOLOGY	ADESTE FIDELIS
O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!	
SERMON	<i>The Secret of Christmas</i> Rev. Dr. Don Gordon
*CAROL, NO. 139	<i>All Earth Is Waiting</i>
Chalice Hymnal	TAULÉ
*COMMISSIONING	Rev. Gordon
*POSTLUDE	Jesse Roberts

Today’s bulletin cover art is a beautiful contribution from **Jan Kerley**, whose creativity adds a special touch to our worship this morning.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

TODAY - Lydia's Legacy: A Retirement Celebrating a Lifetime of Love
Hosted by the Weekday School Family, please join us in Broach Hall TODAY, Sunday December 7th from 4:00 to 5:30, for a drop-in honoring Lydia Olmsted and the lifetime of love she has dedicated to the Weekday School. Current families, previous families, as well as St. John's members are invited to join in the celebrations! Light refreshments will be provided. If you feel led to contribute to a Love Offering for Lydia, you can give online through Realm, please select the "Love Gift" fund.

St. John's Christmas Cantata

Joy Sunday – December 14 at 10:30 AM
Join us for a truly uplifting morning of worship as our **Chancel Choir**, together with members of the **Charlotte Symphony**, presents Lloyd Larson's beautiful Christmas cantata, "**Joy Has Dawned.**" This musical celebration will fill the sanctuary with the hope, wonder, and radiant joy of the season. Come and bring a friend as we share in this inspiring service and prepare our hearts for Christmas.

PJs & Pancakes Parents' Night Out

Children, babies through 12 years of age, are invited to join us on Friday, December 19, 6-8:00 p.m., for PJs & Pancakes. Wear your favorite Christmas pajamas and get ready to play, bounce, and eat pancakes! The cost is only \$15 per child. Register by December 15.

Room In the Inn 2025-2026

Join us for the Room In The Inn 2025 season where we'll be hosting our unhoused neighbors for 8 nights between December - March. We are in need of volunteers for a variety of positions such as bag lunch prep, van drivers, and overnight hosts. Please scan the QR code to sign up and access more details. We hope to see you there!.



Real Estate Task Force Zoom Listening Session

Join the Real Estate Task Force (RETF) for a Zoom update on Wednesday, December 10 at 6pm. If you missed our in-person session on November 16, this meeting will cover the same topics. We value your input and look forward to your participation —see the Zoom link found in this past week's Family News. A separate email with the Zoom meeting information will be sent out on Tuesday Dec. 9.

Brotherhood of the Biscuit

Young men of all ages are welcome to join us for the **Brotherhood of the Biscuit** on Friday, December 19th at 6:30 am in the church lounge. Pablo Fernando will share some of his life's story with us that morning and biscuits, coffee, and orange juice will be there for all who join us. Please email Lee Gray @ LGray@sjcharlotte.org if you would like to participate.

The **St. John's Neighbor Christmas Card Box** is down in the gym foyer. Please turn in all cards before worship on December 21st.

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 14, 2025 | Third Sunday of Advent
Christmas Cantata

This Week at St. John's

Sun., Dec. 7	9:15 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
	10:30 am	Together in Christ International Ministries (Chapel)
	11:30 am	Nativity Play & Churchwide Lunch (Broach Hall)
Mon., Dec. 8	11:00 am	Faith Journey Book Study (Lounge)
	12:30 pm	Women of the Church Board Meeting (Lounge)
Tues., Dec. 9	10:00 am	Staff Meeting/Worship Planning
Wed., Dec. 10	5:45 pm	Handbell Rehearsal (Handbell Suite)
	7:15 pm	Choir Rehearsal (Choir Suite)
Thurs., Dec. 11	10:00 am	Needle Ministry (Lounge)
Fri., Dec. 12	8:00 pm	Eastway AA (Lasater Hall)
	5:00 pm	Communities in Schools Holiday Event (Broach Hall)
Sat., Dec. 13	6:30 am	Benton Basketball (Gym)
	8:00 pm	Together We Rise NA (Lasater Hall)

Membership and Ministry

If you would like information about the church or 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. You can also scan the included QR code to fill out the guest card online. 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

Interim Senior Minister.....Rev. Dr. Don Gordon
Minister for Congregational CareRev. Lee Gray
Minister for Children and Their Families.....Rev. Kheresa Harmon
Minister for Worship and Music.....J. Noel Lance

Church Staff

Stratus Custodians.....Pray & Thomas Chanwal
Office Assistant.....Stephen Davis
Weekday School Assistant Director.....Kristina Hartzell
Church Administrator.....Amanda Morrison
Weekday School Director.....Lydia Olmsted
Custodial/Maintenance Associate.....Herb Parrott
Children's Music DirectorChloe Salmeron
Media Coordinator.....Liza Wade



Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 7, 2024

10:30 AM Worship

St. John's Baptist Church