



Union Lutheran Church

4770 Bringle Ferry Road
Salisbury, NC 28146
704-636-5092
office@ulcsalisbury.org
www.ulcsalisbury.org



Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022

4:00 p.m. & 7:45 p.m. Candlelight Services

OUR MISSION:

*Christ Centered ~ Mission Driven~ Traditionally-Grounded~
Congregationally Focused (Matthew 28:18-20)*

OUR VISION:

One Relationship at a Time

BE OUR GUEST

Can't wait to see what God can do!



We gather on this Christmas Eve in a more contemplative and reflective manner as we imagine the intimate details that surrounded our Savior's birth.

PRELUDE

Altar Candles and four advent candles are lit at this time by the acolyte.

Still, Still, Still (Ashdown)

Dawn Merrell, Organ

Breath of Heaven (Grant & Eaton)

Jan Huffman & Sonya Mulkey (duet) with Genevieve Baker, pianist

Lo, How a Rose Ere' Blooming (Moklebust)

Belles & Beaus

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sanctuary lights are turned down at this time.

Today, we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The service is one of Scripture and Christmas Carols. The Word of God will be read throughout. The selected Carols and Special Music pieces help tell this story. As you join us in song and prayer, you are participating in this wonderful opportunity of proclaiming Jesus' birth, bringing real hope and sustainable truth into our world. We are glad you came and hope that you are touched by the power of the Holy Spirit.

O Magnum Mysterium (Ramos)

Chancel Choir

O Magnum Mysterium

O great mystery,

Et admirabile sacramentum,

And wonderful sacrament

Ut Animalia viderunt

That animals should see

Dominum natum

the newborn Lord

Jacentem in praeseptio,

Lying in a manger,

O magnum mysterium. Amen

O great mystery. Amen

GREETING

Congregation please stand as able.

The minister leads the congregation in the invocation. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

ADVENT WREATH LITANY *based on Psalm 23*

P Behold, the Lord God comes with might and his arm rules for him.

C **The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.**

P Behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

C **He makes me lie down in green pastures; he restores my soul.**

P He will tend his flock like a shepherd.

C **He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

P He will gather his lambs in his arms.

C **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and staff they comfort me.**

P He will carry them in his bosom.

C You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

P And gently lead those that are with young.

C Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P We come to you wounded and broken.

C Without your power we are lost and alone. We confess to you that we are powerless to save ourselves. We are powerless over sin. We are powerless over death. We are powerless. To you we come, Lord Jesus, for you have invited us to repent and promised to receive us as your children. Powerless we come to you for pardon and peace.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." He hides his power in weakness, in a baby, in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. The power of God is the power to forgive our sins. We are powerless; he is powerful. We are weak; he is strong. We are sinful; he is holy. By this grace of God and by your confession, I therefore declare to you the complete forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sanctuary lights are turned up.

The Congregation is invited to be seated.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

HYMN: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

LBW# 41

- 1** 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.
- 2** For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
- 3** How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
- 4** 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;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

(LBW) Lutheran Book of Worship (green hymnal)
(WOV) With One Voice (blue hymnal)

SCRIPTURE READING

Please remain seated and engage by listening attentively.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. (Micah 5:2 ESV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)

THE ANGELS VISIT MARY AND JOSEPH

HYMN: *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* (stanza 1)

LBW# 50

**1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Please remain seated and engage by listening attentively.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38 ESV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear

to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, (Matthew 1:18-24 ESV)

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Following the message the children return to their parents and guardians.

Congregation please stand as able.

HYMN: *Away in a Manger* (stanzas 1 & 3)

LBW# 67

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
 the stars in the sky looked down where he lay;
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
 close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in your tender care
 and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE READING

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7 ESV)

Congregation please be seated.

SERMON: *The Heart of Christmas*

Pastor Heidi Punt

Congregation please remain seated.

HYMN: *The Hills Are Bare at Bethlehem* (stanzas 1 & 3)

LBW# 61

- 1 The hills are bare at Bethlehem, No future for the world they show;
 Yet here new life begins to grow, From earth’s old dust a greenwood stem.**
- 3 The heart is tired at Bethlehem, No human dream unbroken stands;
 Yet here God comes to mortal hands, And hope renewed cries out: “Amen!”**

THE ANGELS AND SHEPHERD'S RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE READING

Please remain seated and engage by listening attentively.

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:15-20 ESV)

Congregation please stand as able.

NICENE CREED (Romans 10:9-10)

P As the shepherds and angels responded we also get to respond by confessing our faith:

C **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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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

** Or, We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.*

THE PRAYERS

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

After each portion of the prayers:

P Lord, in your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

The Congregation is invited to be seated.

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS (Psalm 116:12-13, 17-19)

The Offering is received as the Lord's Table is prepared. All loose offering received today will go towards a Christmas Offering. During the month of December, the Benevolence focus is on Food for the Poor. If you wish for your giving to go there please specify accordingly.

ANTHEM

Belles & Beaus and Chancel Choir

Jesus, Jesus, Rest your Head (Thygeron)

Congregation please stand as able.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P Let us pray. Merciful Father,

C **we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us-our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.
In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,
that all those who believe in him
should not perish, but have eternal life.
We give thanks to you
for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.
Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,
that we may receive our Lord with a living faith

as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

C 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

The Congregation is invited to be seated.

COMMUNION (Mark 14:23)

As the minister gives the bread and wine, and says these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen

At Union Lutheran Church the Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated each Sunday. All baptized Christians who believe in the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper are invited to commune. All who do not commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. For those who prefer individually sealed units please indicate. Gluten Free wafers and grape juice are also available upon request. Please fill out a communion card located in the pew and hand to the Usher while following their directions to receive Holy Communion or a blessing.

COMMUNION HYMN: *Let Our Gladness Have No End* (stanzas 1 &3) LBW# 57

**1 Let our gladness have no end, Hallelujah!
For to earth did Christ descend. Hallelujah! (Refrain)**

**Refrain: On this day God gave us Christ, his Son, to save us;
Christ, his Son, to save us.**

**3 Into flesh is made the Word. Hallelujah!
He, our refuge and our Lord. Hallelujah! (Refrain)**

COMMUNION HYMN: *Once in Royal David's City* (stanzas 1 & 4)

WOV# 643

- 1** Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.
- 4** Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;
There his children gather 'round, bright like stars, with glory crowned.

COMMUNION HYMN: *I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve* (stanzas 1 & 4) LBW# 69

- 1** I am so glad each Christmas Eve, the night of Jesus's birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth, And angels sang on earth.
- 4** I am so glad each Christmas Eve! His praises then I sing;
He opens now for ev'ry child The palace of the king.

*Communion Hymns will continue until everyone has received the Sacrament or Blessing.
Please stand as you are able.*

After all have returned to their places, the minister may say these or similar words.

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his
grace.

C **Amen**

PRAYER

The following or a similar post-communion prayer is said.

P Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us
through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you
would strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and fervent love
toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

BLESSING

The minister blesses the congregation, using this or another appropriate blessing.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C **Amen**

Sanctuary lights are turned down completely.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The minister lights her candle from the Christ Candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world (Jesus Christ) of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the minister's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle who in turns shares their light with the person next to them. The lit candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.

HYMN: *Silent Night, Holy Night! (Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht)*

LBW# 65

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht
nur das traute, hochheilige Paar. Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.

- 1 **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.**
- 2 **Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**
- 3 **Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

THE STORY OF ANNA

SCRIPTURE READING

³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:37-38 ESV)

The candles are extinguished. Please give a few minutes for the wax to harden before handing to the ushers on leaving.

DISMISSAL

The minister may dismiss the congregation.

- P You have been nurtured in Word and Sacrament and heard
C **that Jesus Christ is born!**
P Union Lutheran Church you are sent in peace
C **to share the Good News.**

Merry Christmas!

*Come join us for Christmas Day service
tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. It will be an explosion of joy and carols!*

POINSETTIAS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

In Honor of:

Sylvia Peeler

Karen and Larry Barringer
Sonya Leazer and Adam Thompson
Sharon Leazer
Wade Leazer

Derrick, Miranda, Dalton, and Wyatt Thompson

Our children and grandchildren

My children, Melissa A. Arey and
David L. Arey, Jr.

Patrick and Melissa Sigmon

In Memory of:

John and Mae Oddie
Pauline Oddie
John Oddie, Jr.
Pauline Leazer

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Merrell
Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Frick
Franz Merrell
Mrs. Elaine Honbarrier

Nancy Shue

**listed in alphabetical order by Giver*

Given by:

Ruth Goodman

Ruby Leazer

Ruby Leazer

William and Doris Page

Debbie Rinehart

Patsy Sigmon

Given by:

Ruby Leazer

Frank and Dawn Merrell

Dick Shue



Those Serving in December

Acolytes: Lucas and Bailey Wilhelm

Altar Guild: Robyn Arey, Mary Hutchens, and Patsy Lyerly

Communion Assistants: Vicki Hunter, Elbert Kluttz, and Franklin Merrell

Lay Readers: Robyn Arey, Scott Curlee, and Micah Nguyen

Ushers: Mike Cauble, Phil Cauble (HU), Elbert Kluttz,
Wade Leazer, and Ronald Vellines

Offering Counters:

Mary Elizabeth Earnhardt, Sonya Mulkey, and Vivian Sprinkle

For unto us
a child
is born,
to us
a son is given
Isaiah 9:6



(LBW) Lutheran Book of Worship (green hymnal)

(WOV) With One Voice (blue hymnal)

Lutheran Book of Worship Setting 2 (pages 77-97)

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