



## **Saint Peter's Lutheran Church**

**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**2570 St. Peter's Church Road, Salisbury, NC 28146**

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**Pastor Sue Lynn White**

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## **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

\* Indicates to stand as you are able. P=Pastor, C=Congregation, A=Assisting Minister, L=Lector

### **WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*PRELUDE—Robert White, solo*

*“Angels Gather Here”*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

\*P: Tonight the long road of Advent brings us to a place of light. Our Advent journey ends, and yet our true journey begins here, with Christ born among us.

**\*C: We come to the place where hope breaks open the night and grace takes on flesh.**

\*P: For weary feet that have walked in shadows, a soft light begins to grow. For hearts that have waited for mercy, grace appears in the most ordinary of places, a stable full of wonder with a child who gathers the world in love.

**\*C: At Christmas, we celebrate that the road has led us here, to God’s gift of life that changes everything.**

\*P: The manger is not a temporary stop, but the very heart of home. And in Christ, that home is wide enough for every traveler who comes seeking peace.

**\*C: So we come with joy and open hearts. Christ is born, and we are home.**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

\*P: Blessed be the Holy One, the fountain of life, the light in our darkness, the One who gathers us home.

**\*C: Amen.**

\*P: On this night, as our journey brings us to the manger, we remember the waters of baptism that mark our place in God’s story. Christ is born among us tonight, and we are renewed in grace.

\*P: Christ has traveled with us through this whole season,

**\*C: teaching us to pack light, to set down what we do not need.**

\*P: Christ has shown us signs along the way,

**\*C: pointing us toward hope when we needed direction.**

\*P: Christ has given us rest stops and surprises,

**\*C: moments that renewed our strength and opened our eyes.**

\*P: And now we stand on the threshold, where God has placed a welcome sign on the front porch, and invites us in with warmth and joy. Through the waters of Baptism, Christ brings us inside and we are home at last. Here at the manger, God welcomes us fully, and our journey through life truly begins.

**\*C: Through the waters of Baptism, we are embraced, forgiven, and restored, and for the first time, we can truly say: we are home at last! We give thanks for the waters that refresh us, reshape us, and welcome us into God's household of love. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, and let the angels sing of your glory.**

**GATHERING HYMN:**

**O Come, All Ye Faithful**

**ELW 283**

### **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

\*P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**\*C: And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

\*P: Let us pray. Holy God, tonight the road ends in a manger and the journey begins again with joy. In Christ you have come to live among us, to make your home with us, and to bring light into our darkness. Dwell with us now and always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **\*C: Amen.**

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:**

#### **Christ Candle: Home at Last**

P: *"The Word became flesh and lived among us... and we have seen his glory" (John 1:14). "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).* Tonight we light the Christ candle, for the road has led us home. In Jesus, God makes a home with us. Our waiting is over! Our journey ended!

**C: Christ is born!**

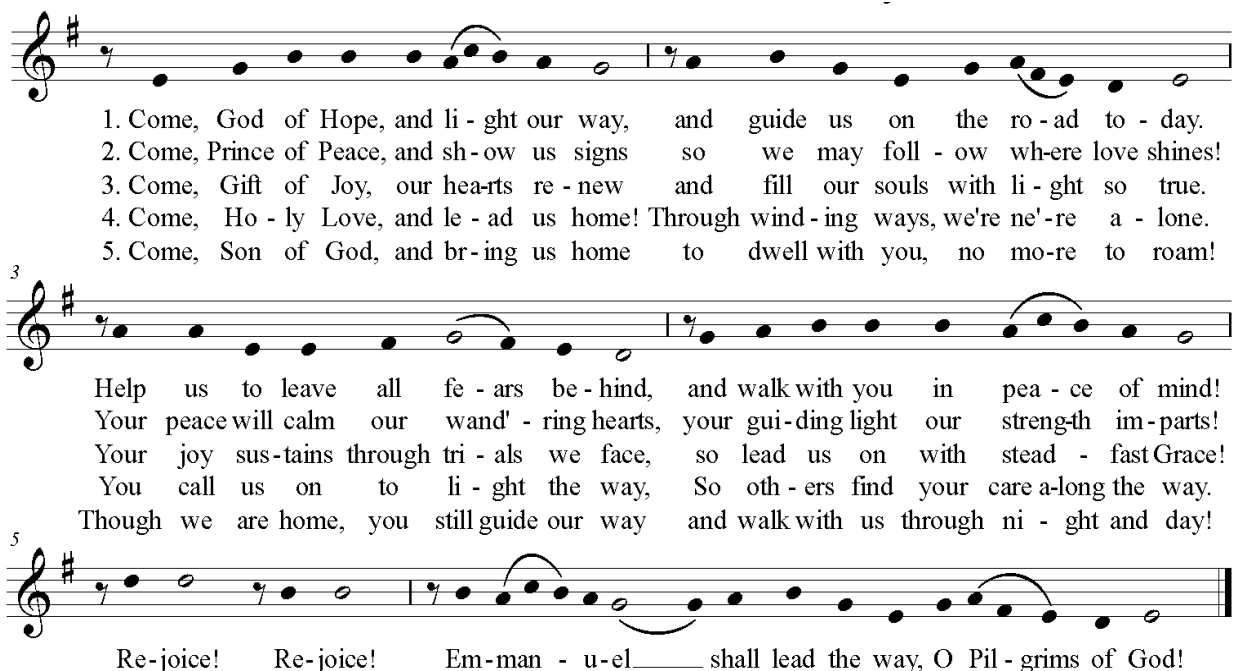
Tonight we light the Christ candle, the light of the world, the home of our hearts.

**C: Christ is our light and our home.**

*(Light all 5 candles.)*

## COME, GOD OF HOPE

Sing verse 5 only



1. Come, God of Hope, and li - ght our way, and guide us on the ro - ad to - day.  
2. Come, Prince of Peace, and sh - ow us signs so we may foll - ow wh - ere love shines!  
3. Come, Gift of Joy, our hea - rts re - new and fill our souls with li - ght so true.  
4. Come, Ho - ly Love, and le - ad us home! Through wind - ing ways, we're ne' - re a - lone.  
5. Come, Son of God, and br - ing us home to dwell with you, no mo - re to roam!

Help us to leave all fe - ars be - hind, and walk with you in pea - ce of mind!  
Your peace will calm our wand' - ring hearts, your gui - ding light our streng - th im - parts!  
Your joy sus - tains through tri - als we face, so lead us on with stead - fast Grace!  
You call us on to li - ght the way, So oth - ers find your care a - long the way.  
Though we are home, you still guide our way and walk with us through ni - ght and day!

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall lead the way, O Pil - grims of God!

Text: Rev. Joshua Lewis Copeland 1995-

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, French Processional 15th Century

## GOD SPEAKS TO US

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

L: A reading from Isaiah the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter

- <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.
- <sup>3</sup> You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.
- <sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- <sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders,  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup> Great will be his authority,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.  
L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN                      It Came Upon the Midnight Clear v.1**

**ELW 282**

**Psalm 96**

<sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.  
<sup>2</sup> **Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**  
<sup>3</sup> Declare God's glory among the nations  
and God's wonders among all peoples.  
<sup>4</sup> **For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**  
<sup>5</sup> As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.  
<sup>6</sup> **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**  
<sup>7</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.  
<sup>8</sup> **Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**  
<sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;  
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.  
<sup>10</sup> **Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!  
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will  
judge the peoples with equity."**  
<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

<sup>12</sup> **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,**  
**for you come to judge the earth.**

<sup>13</sup> You will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with your truth.

**HYMN                      O Little Town of Bethlehem v.1 & 3                      ELW 279**

Second Reading Titus 2:11-14

L: A reading from Titus the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

L: The word of the Lord    **C: Thanks be to God**

**HYMN                      Hark! The Herald Angels Sing v.1-2                      ELW 270**

\*P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

**\*C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

\*The Holy Gospel Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar 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 in the guest room.

<sup>8</sup> Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> 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: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

[  
15 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." 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, 19 and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.]

**\*P: The Gospel of our Lord.      \*C: Praise to you, O Christ**

**HYMN                      Hark! The Herald Angels Sing v.3                      ELW 270**

## Children's Sermon

**The Sermon** Pastor Sue Lynn White

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**      *Away in a Manger*      **ELW 277**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

\*A: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*(Silence for reflection)*

Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**



Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares (*especially in . . . specific instances of conflict may be named*). Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**

Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. We especially pray for Guy & Betty Puckett, Jim & Phyllis Cornelison, Jerry Sides, Ernie & Linda Cooper, Phil & Carol Boyette, Brenda H. Trexler, Judy Peeler, Lynn DeBerry, Marcia Ritchie, Jean Holshouser, Phyllis Trexler, Sue Misenheimer, Thelma Barger, Buddy Waller, Amy Cozart, Jaxon Webster, Ronnie Pierce, Mary Miller, Friends of St. Peter's, and those we hold in our hearts or lift before you now... (*Pause so names can be said out loud*). Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**

Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God.

**\*C: Your mercy is great.**

\*P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**\*C: Amen.**

## **PEACE**

\*P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**\*C: And also with you.**

\*P: Let us share the peace with one another.

## **THE OFFERING**

**Anthem**

**Messiah**

**PSL & Robert White**

**Offering Hymn**

**Angels From The Realm of Glory**

**ELW 275**

**OFFERING PRAYER**



\*A: Let us pray. Gracious God, you provide signs of hope along our journey.

**\*C: We bring our gifts with hope.**

\*A: You make peace where the world is restless.

**\*C: We bring our gifts for peace.**

\*A: You surprise us with joy in unexpected places.

**\*C: We bring our gifts with joy.**

\*A: You welcome us home with love beyond measure.

**\*C: We bring our gifts with love.**

\*A: Tonight Christ is born, the light of the world and our true home.

**\*C: We bring our gifts to celebrate Christ.**

\*A: Receive these offerings, O God, and use them to guide all people home to you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**\*C: Amen.**

## MEAL

### PREFACE DIALOGUE

\*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, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Long ago you set your people on a journey, guiding them through wilderness and exile, promising a home where justice and mercy would dwell. Through prophets and messengers you gave signs along the way, stirring hope, peace, joy, and love in waiting hearts. In these last days you have made your home with us in Jesus, the Word made flesh, the light that shines in our darkness, the road that leads us safely home to you. And so, with all travelers on the way, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HYMN

### Love Has Come v.1

ELW 292

## EUCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: On the night he was betrayed,  
Our Savior Jesus, bowed and prayed,  
With his disciples he is speaking to us  
He took the loaf and broke the bread,  
Held it high and then he said  
This is my body, remember me, Hallelujah.

**C: Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.**

P: After the meal, the cup was raised,  
The Father's name again he praised  
This is my blood poured out for your forgiveness.  
A promise given and fulfilled, though I am taken away and killed  
Remember me, I am with you, Hallelujah.

**C: Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.**

P: So, gathered as His body here,  
Refusing to give in to fear  
And all the powers of death that seek to lead us.  
We stretch our hands, we cry and sing and tell the world HE is our King  
We cannot help but claim this Hallelujah!

**C: Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.**

P: (Spoken) Eternal God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that Christ may be present as we share this meal. This is the body of Christ and the cup of mercy given for you. Gracious God, fill us with your life and grace.

**C: That we may always be a people sharing your grace and love in the world. Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

\*P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught.

**\*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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

\*P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

\*C: Thanks be to God.

## COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Special Music—Robert White, solo

How Many Kings?

HYMN

What Child is This?

ELW 296

Angels We Have Heard On High

ELW 289

## COMMUNION BLESSING

\*P: The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. Amen.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

\*A: Let us pray together. **God with us, in this holy meal we have tasted your presence and shared in the joy of Christ's birth. As you have made your home among us tonight, send us out to carry your light into the world. Fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love, that all may know the good news: Christ is born, our Savior and our home.**

\*C: Amen.

## THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION (*Brian: Lights Off*)

*The minister lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world 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. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.*

## A Reading from John 1:1-14

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

**6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own,<sup>[c]</sup> and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,<sup>[d]</sup> full of grace and truth.

### **Hymn of Light: Silent Night, Holy Night!**

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, heav'nly 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 your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

## **SENDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

### **BLESSING**

\*P: The grace of our newborn Savior, Christ Jesus, the love of God who makes a home with us, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit go with you now and always. Go in peace, rejoicing in the gift of Christ, our light, our hope, our joy, and our home.

**\*C: Amen.**

### **\*SENDING HYMN**

**Joy to the World**

**ELW 267**

### **THE DISMISSAL**

\*A: Rooted in the love of Christ

**\*C: We grow in grace and joyfully branch into a broken World!**

\*P: Go in peace. God is with you.

**\*C: Thanks be to God.**

*\*Silent Prayer and Chiming of the Trinity Postlude*