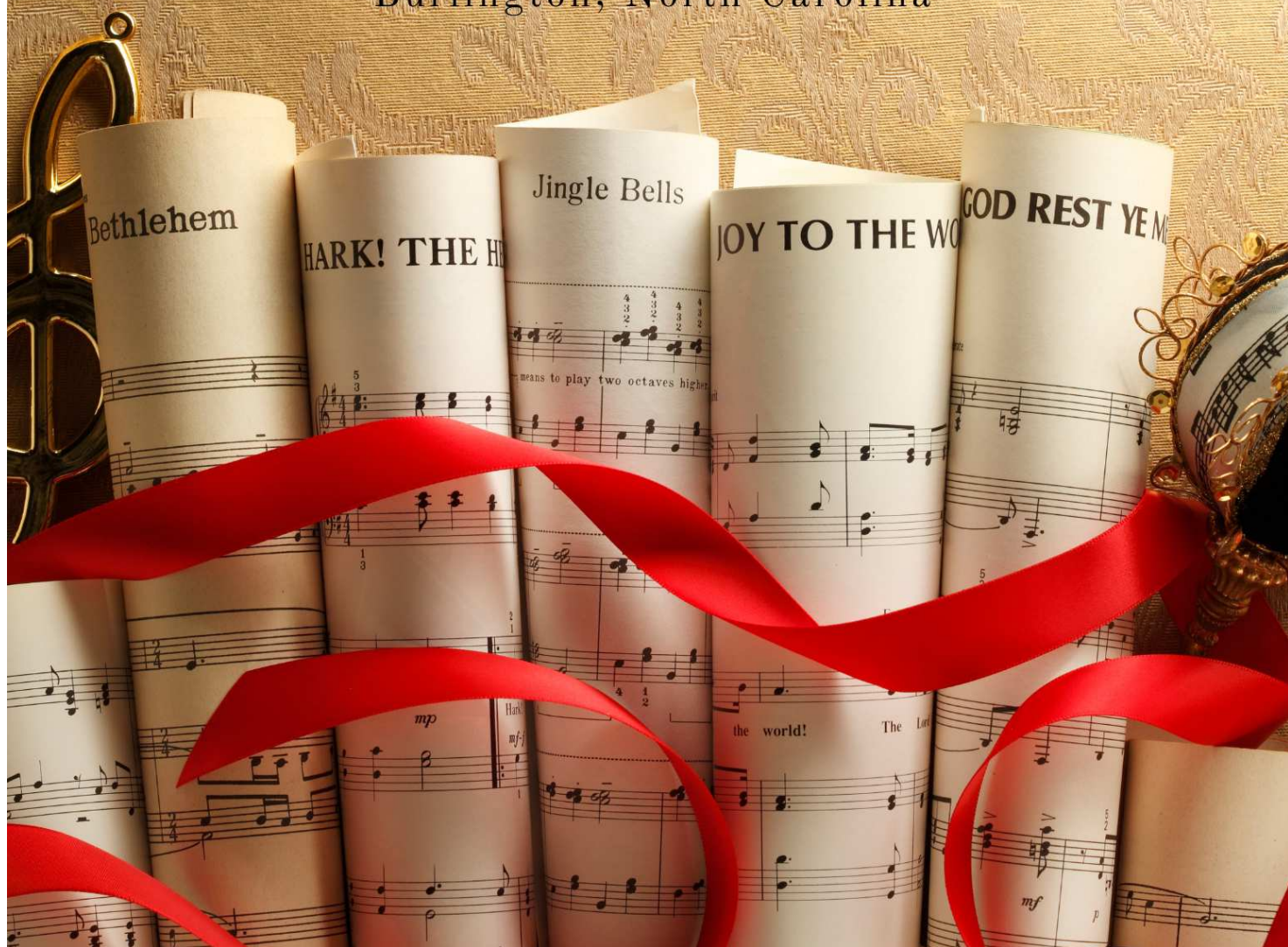


A Festival of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 14

11:00 AM

Front Street United Methodist Church
Burlington, North Carolina



ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome: In 1880 E. W. Benson, then Anglican Bishop of Truro, England, composed a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for Christmas Eve. In 1918 it was adapted for the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote The Bidding Prayer. The service has been edited for United Methodist congregations.

*Please rise in body or spirit.

GATHERING AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

VOLUNTARY

Carillon for Christmas

Brenda Portman

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Ray Warren

Leader: Come and rejoice in God!

People: Sing praise to God who continually blesses our lives!

Leader: In the midst of troubles and stress, God is near, offering compassion.

People: Our hope is in the Lord.

Leader: Let all the people praise God.

All: Hallelujah! Amen.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN UMH No. 250

Once In Royal David's City

IRBY

Congregation and Chancel Choir

Cate Hill, chorister

Solo

*Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed;
Mary, loving mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.*

Chancel Choir

*He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall.
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.*

All

*Jesus is our childhood's pattern, day by day like us he grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles like us he knew;
And he feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness.*

All

*And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.*

Beloved in Christ, this Christmas Season it is our duty and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart, let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his people; for peace upon the earth he came to save; for love and unity within the one Church he did build; for goodwill among all peoples.

And particularly at this time let us remember the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (IN UNISON)

(Please feel comfortable praying the words of your tradition.)

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. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Steve and Betty Massey
Drew and Katie Moser, Chase and Bo

Readers: In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to make the world right again, we cling to the truth that God has saved, God is saving, and God will save. So today, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who calls us to live in the joy of the truth of God's salvation.

All: We choose to believe that the day is coming when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

Reader: We light this candle of joy as a sign of the Truth that sets us free to live in joy as we wait and work for the day when all creation will flourish together.

Light the candles of the Advent wreath.

SUNG RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times once gave the law in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

FIRST LESSON

Reader: Suzanne Lambeth, Representative from Epworth Ringers

God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.

Genesis 22:15-18

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

How Beautiful Upon the Mountains

John Stainer

Chancel Choir

Margaret Dalton, soprano

*How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
That publisheth peace, that publisheth salvation,
That publisheth peace, that publisheth peace.*

*How beautiful upon the mountains,
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
That publisheth, that publisheth peace;
That saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth,
That saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!*

*How beautiful upon the mountains,
How beautiful the feet of him
That bringeth glad tidings,
That publisheth peace, peace.*

SECOND LESSON

Reader: Betty Huneycutt, Representative from the Prayer Team

The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.
Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

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. 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. His authority shall grow continually, 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Carol

What Star is This

arr. Richard Shepherd

Chancel Choir

Featuring Epworth Ringers: Lilly Andress, Stephanie Gable, and Suzie Lambeth

*What star is this, with beams so bright,
More lovely than the noon day light?
'Tis sent announcing a new King,
Glad tidings of our God to bring.*

*'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,
"From Jacob shall a star proceed;"
And lo! the eastern sages stand,
To read in heav'n the Lord's command.*

*While outward signs the star displays,
An inward light the Lord conveys,
And urges them, with force benign,
To seek the giver of the sign.*

*O, while the star of heav'nly grace
Invites us, Lord, to seek thy face,
May we no more that grace repel,
Or quench that light which shines so well!*

*To God the Father, God the Son,
and Holy Spirit, three in One,
May every tongue and nation raise
An endless song of thankful praise!*

THIRD LESSON

Reader: Margaret Dalton, A Representative from Chancel Choir

The angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will give birth to God's promised Son whose kingdom shall never end.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Carol

Gabriel's Voice
Chancel Choir

Ian Higginson

*Mother most blessed with arms full of love,
Cradled the Savior sent from above,
Born so that man may always rejoice
At the message delivered by Gabriel's voice,
As He proclaimed before the dawn,
Unto a virgin a child will be born.*

*Warm in a manger there he would lay,
Sleeping so soundly safe in the hay,
Born so that man may always rejoice
At the message delivered by Gabriel's voice,
As He proclaimed after the dawn,
Unto a virgin a child will be born.*

*Shepherds kept watch o'er flocks in the night
Gazing in awe, eyes filled with delight,
Here was the Savior they would rejoice
At the message delivered by Gabriel's voice.
Behold a star above in the sky,
Telling the wise men the Christ child is nigh.*

*Bearing their gifts so precious and rare,
Kneeling in homage in a stable so bare.
Jewels that shone and hearts that rejoiced
At the message delivered by Gabriel's voice.
Amen, Amen on this wondrous morn
Unto a virgin a child has been born.
Amen, Amen, angels herald the dawn.
Unto a virgin a child has been born.*

FOURTH LESSON

Reader: Melissa Miller, Children's Minister

Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.

Luke 2:1-7

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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Carol

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
Chancel Choir

arr. Georgiann Toole

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!

From God that is our maker the blessed angels came,
Unto some certain shepherds with tidings of the same,
That there was born in Bethlehem the son of God by name,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
And with true love and harmony each other now embrace.
The merry time of Christmas is drawing on a pace,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!

FIFTH LESSON

Reader: Dr. Matt Estes, Music Minister

The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:8-16

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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child
Epworth Ringers

arr. Cathy Moglebust



SIXTH LESSON

Reader: Daniel Polito, Discipleship Minister

The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.
Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, 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 wise men 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 at its rising, 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Carol

Soon and Very Soon
Children's Choir

Andre Crouch

Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
We are goin' to see the King!

No more cryin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
No more cryin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
No more cryin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
We are goin' to see the King!

No more dyin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
No more dyin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
No more dyin' there, we are goin' to see the King!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
We are goin' to see the King!

Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
We are goin' to see the King!
Hallelujah!

CALL TO PRAYER

Rev. Ray Warren

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

O Come All Ye Faithful
Epworth Ringers

arr. Catherine McMichael

*DOXOLOGY UMH NO. 94 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

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!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*CLOSING HYMN UMH NO. 246

Joy to the World

Antioch

Congregation and Chancel Choir

*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 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.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.*

*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.*

*PRONOUNCEMENT OF BLESSING

May the Christ who by his Incarnation gathered into One things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go forth in peace and joy.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Loud Night! Holy Night!

Emma Lou Diemer

WELCOME! We're glad that you have chosen to worship with us today. Following this service, there is a gathering in the Heritage Center for fellowship and refreshments. Our hosts this week are Kay Farlow and Carol Old.

YOUNG DISCIPLES: Today, there will be no children's church. Children are encouraged to stay in the sanctuary and enjoy the beautiful music. The nursery will be available to any child birth-first grade.

THE ALTAR GREENERY is given to the glory of God and in honor and appreciation of Dr. Matt Estes by Mr. and Mrs. Gary Harris.

THE ROSEBUD is given to the glory of God and in honor of Grace Leigh McFalls, daughter of Chance and Laura Beth McFalls, born December 8, 2025.

MEMBERS OF THE ALTAR GUILD serving in December are Mary Ellen Cross, Marie Crissman, Beth Kelley, and Margaret Pardue.

WE THANK the following for serving as acolytes during our worship service: Wesley Gable and Chase Ward.

THE PRAYER REQUEST CARDS in the pews may be placed in the offering or in the Prayer Request Boxes in the reading area and the narthex area, or you may email the Prayer Ministry Team at prayer@frontstreetumc.org. We thank team members Gene and Elizabeth Fonville, who will be in the Prayer Room on our behalf at noon to pray for requests given on the Prayer Request Cards.

AT THE TABLE: be sure to watch and share the latest *At the Table* video premiering Friday mornings at 6:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook.

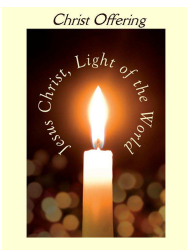
DECEMBER FOOD LIST FOR BACKPACK MINISTRY

In December, we are collecting the following items: canned meat, canned vegetables, granola bars, oatmeal/grits packs, and peanut butter in plastic jars (16 oz.). Please deposit donations on the bottom shelf of the Donation Center located in the Reading Area.

CHRIST OFFERING

The Advent season is a time when we live somewhere between the fact of darkness and the hope of light. As a faithful supporter of the ministries of Front Street United Methodist Church, you play an important role in seeing that light wins over darkness. Your faithful support helps us to battle the darkness of this present age.

As the end of the year approaches, we ask that you help us finish our "second mile" and participate in our Christ offering. This offering assures that we not only meet our obligations for the year, but that we testify to the light which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Offering envelopes are provided in the pew slots for your gift. Just indicate "Christ Offering" on the envelope. Please give generously **today**.



FRESH MOBILE MARKET | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2:00-3:30 P.M.

Volunteers are needed to pack food, load cars, and direct traffic at our Fresh Mobile Market. Visit www.frontstreetumc.org/FMM to learn more. Thank you for helping to get food in the hands of the hungry!

INVITATION TO SING WITH THE CHANCEL CHOIR ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Please join the choir for Christmas Eve. This is a one-time only special. Do you have children, grandchildren, or guests visiting? Anyone who can make the **Tuesday, December 23, 7 p.m.** rehearsal is invited to sing with the choir. Let Matt Estes, music minister, know if you want to sing Christmas Eve at matthew@frontstreetumc.org.

TREES OF LOVE

This holiday season, share the love of Christ with our neighbors by participating in Trees of Love.

- Tree of Grace: Support the **Pastor's Discretionary Community Relief Fund**, which assists community members experiencing financial hardship by helping cover essential expenses such as electric, gas, and water bills. New this year: our knitting and crocheting group has added handmade toboggans to the Tree of Grace. You may select a toboggan from the tree and make a donation to the Discretionary Fund.
- Tree of Hope: Help bring Christmas joy to clients of the **Alamance County Family Justice Center**, which supports survivors of domestic abuse and their children. Your gifts will help make their holiday season brighter.
- Tree of Life: Contribute to **Congregations for Children (C4C)**, a United Methodist Church initiative serving children living in poverty. Through our partnership with Eastlawn Elementary School, we provide food through the Backpack Ministry and other vital support for students and families in need.

How to participate: Take an ornament from one of the Trees of Love and return the item listed on the back, **unwrapped**, to the designated tree outside the church office by **Sunday, December 21**. *Monetary or gift card donations should be delivered directly to the church office.*

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

December 24 at 2:00 p.m. in Aldersgate Hall (Family)

Children and grandchildren can dress up as angels, shepherds, sheep, donkeys, cows (costumes provided or bring your own), and can participate in worship at the Prayground, Stable, sing songs, and celebrate the birth of Jesus! Arrive at 1:45 p.m. to get dressed up.

December 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary (Traditional)



CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

A Christmas Eve offering will be taken. This year's Christmas offering will go towards the general budget and missions.

OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed **December 24, 25, and 26** for Christmas and **January 1 and 2** for New Year's Day. Merry Christmas and happy new year!

2025 CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE

A friendly reminder from the Church Office: in order for contributions to be included as a contribution towards your 2025 statement, please have mail postmarked or dropped at the church office **NO LATER THAN December 31**. All contributions received after December 31 will be applied to your 2026 statement.

Please note: when you provide a check as payment, you authorize us either to use information from your check to make a one-time electronic fund transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction.

UPPER ROOM

The January-February issue of the Upper Room is available. Copies are located in the Narthex and Welcome Center.

ALTAR FLOWERS 2026

The following dates are available to place flowers in the Sanctuary in honor or in memory of a loved one: **January 4, 18, and 25, 2026**. Please contact Linda Paul at 336-543-5081 or kpaul5@triad.rr.com for details or to sign up.

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 14, 2025

Sunday, December 14

9:00	Aldersgate Contemporary Worship	Aldersgate Hall
9:45	Sunday School	Classrooms
10:00-10:15	Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Sanctuary
10:15-10:30	Epworth Ringers	Sanctuary
10:30-10:45	Children's Choir	Sanctuary
11:00	Service of Lessons and Carols	Sanctuary
5:30	Youth Christmas Party	Huneycutt's Home

Tuesday, December 16

7:00	Epworth Ringers	Bell Room
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Wednesday, December 17

8:00	Youth Breakfast Club	Biscuitville, 669 Huffman Mill Road
2:00	Fresh Mobile Market	Northside Presbyterian Church
7:00	Chancel Choir	Choir Room

Thursday, December 18

9:30	Prayer and Meditation	John Wesley Room/ Zoom
10:00	Prayer Shawl Ministry	Room 405
10:00	Knitting and Crocheting Group	Bride's Room
1:00	Genealogy Workshop	Room 402

Saturday, December 20

10:00	Knitting and Crocheting Group	Bride's Room
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Sunday, December 21

9:00	Aldersgate Contemporary Worship	Aldersgate Hall
9:45	Sunday School	Classrooms
11:00	Worship Service	Sanctuary

LIVE-STREAMING

We are pleased to be able to live-stream our 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. worship services each week for the benefit of those who are not able to be physically present. For those who would prefer to not be on camera, we endeavor to make the back half of the sanctuary a non-video zone. If you have any questions about this service, please feel to speak with Pastor Ray.

**FRONT STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MUSIC MINISTRY, FALL 2025**

Chancel Choir

SOPRANO

*Margaret Dalton

ALTO

Mariana Brook
Marty Crank
Bertie Mims
Jan Peach
Marti Strickland

TENOR

Doug Brook
Gene Fonville
William Inabnit

BASS

David Hoxie
Jim Phillips

Dr. Matt Estes, conductor

*Denotes section leader.

Epworth Ringers

Lilly Andress
Stephanie Gable
Carol Hoxie
David Hoxie
Betsy Huneycutt

Beth Kelley
Suzie Lambeth
Paula Reardon
Erin Rodriguez

Dr. Matt Estes, conductor

Pastors
Rev. Ray Warren
Rev. Marshall Old, Interim

Discipleship Minister
Daniel Polito

Children's Minister
Melissa Miller

Worship and Family Minister
Josh Abraham

Youth Minister
Chris Huneycutt

Visitation Minister
Leslie B. Peavy

Director of Music Ministry
Dr. Matt Estes

Front Street United Methodist Church
345 W Front Street
Burlington, NC 27215