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

WE THANK the following for their service during our worship service:

Acolyte: Sarah Moran Lay Reader: Julia Huneycutt

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, or you may email the Prayer Ministry Team at prayer@frontstreetumc.org. We thank team member Vickie Sykes, who will be in the Prayer Room on our behalf at noon to pray for requests given on the Prayer Request Cards.

DECEMBER FOOD COLLECTION FOR EASTLAWN BACKPACK MINISTRY

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

TREES OF LOVE

Thank you to everyone who has adorned our Trees of Love to share Christ with our neighbors this season. Please return all items (unwrapped) to the trees by **today**. Note: if you are donating money or gift cards, please return them to the church office.

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.

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! Come early to get dressed up and enjoy some Christmas treats!

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!

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL DECEMBER 28 HOT COCOA & HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Join us for a cozy and joyful Children's Sunday School gathering on Sunday, December 28! We'll meet in Room 302 at 9:45 a.m. for a special time of (semi) hot cocoa, conversation, and connection.

As we sip our cocoa, children will have a chance to share about their Christmas celebrations and talk together about their hopes and dreams for the new year. It's a warm, welcoming way to reflect on the joy of the season and look ahead with excitement and faith. We hope to see you there for this sweet start to the day!

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.

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 21, 2025

Sunday, December 21

9:00 Aldersgate Contemporary Worship
 9:30 Children's Choir
 9:45 Sunday School
 11:00 Traditional Worship Service
 Aldersgate Hall
 Choir Room
 Classrooms
 Sanctuary

<u>Tuesday</u>, <u>December 23</u>

7:00 Chancel Choir Choir Room

Wednesday, December 24 - Church Office Closed

2:00 Family Christmas Eve Service Aldersgate Hall7:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Sanctuary

Thursday, December 25, 26 - Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 28

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

ACOLYTES IN 11:00 A.M. WORSHIP

Acolytes serve each week in the 11:00 a.m. worship service, offering children a meaningful way to participate in worship and grow in their faith through leadership and service. Acolyte service is open to children in 4th grade and older, and training is provided. Please consider signing your child up to serve. Questions? Contact Ms. Melissa or Lizzie Hill.

UPPER ROOM

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

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

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 and February 1**, **8**, **15**, **and 22**, **2026**. Please contact Linda Paul at 336-543-5081 or kpaul5@triad.rr.com for details or to sign up.

FAITHFUL FAMILIES

Parents/guardians of children and youth are invited to join Faithful Families, a Sunday School Group aiming to build Christian community that takes seriously going deeper in our relationships with God and one another. Starting **February 8**, Faithful Families will gather in Room 301 from 9:45 a.m.-10:45a.m. on Sunday mornings. Children are invited to join Children's Sunday School or Nursery on the 3rd floor, while youth (6th-12th grade) are invited to Room 303 as they build Christian community together. Contact Daniel Polito with any questions!

LIVE-STREAMING

We are pleased to be able to live-stream our 11:00 a.m. worship 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 free to speak with Pastor Ray.

FRONT STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our Mission:

Knowing Christ • Growing in Christ • Sharing Christ



Pastors

Rev. Ray Warren Rev. Marshall Old, Interim

Discipleship MinisterDaniel Polito

Children's Minister Melissa Miller

Worship and Family Minister Josh Abraham

> Youth Minister Chris Huneycutt

Visitation Minister Leslie B. Peavy

Director of Music MinistryDr. Matt Estes

PO Box 2597 Burlington, NC 27216 Church Office: (336)-227-6263 www.frontstreetumc.org

Follow Us







THE WORSHIP OF GOD DECEMBER 21, 2025 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Welcome to the traditional worship service of Front Street! Please take a moment to fill out the attendance pad found at the end of each pew. You can receive a digital worship kit by texting "Worship" to 833-337-8517. During the worship service we invite you to stand as you are able (indicated by *) and join your voice in reading, singing, or praying the **bold** text. As you prepare for worship please feel encouraged to say hello to your neighbors, or spend a moment in solitude with God.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

GATHERING AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

PRELUDE What Child is This? arr. Steve Calderone

CHORAL INTROIT Christmas Day (Song 46) Orlando Gibbons

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We, the unsuspecting and unlikely, are drawn here together by a promise.

People: He is coming.

Leader: The angel's promise interrupted a bridegroom's private doubts and insecurity.

People: He is coming.

Leader: An unwed pregnant teenager's fears diminished with the angel's promise.

People: He is coming.

Leader: A baby in a womb leapt for joy at the sound of her voice and promised.

People: He is coming.

Leader: An old man died at peace and an old woman prophesied redemption at a baby dedication with the fulfillment of this promise.

People: He is coming.

Leader: Two thousand years ago, from the depths of a people's memory, the words of a promise resounded.

People: He is coming.

Leader: I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'

All: He Came. He Is Come. He Is Coming.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN UMH No. 240 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing MENDELSSOHN

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Larry, Melissa, Mac, and Luke McCauley

Reader: Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary's womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

All: With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of love instead of responding in fear to the world's judgment.

Reader: We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

Light the candles of the Advent wreath.

SUNG RESPONSE UMH No. 211 (vs. 4)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy; you have asked us to believe what is true! Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us when we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe. Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin—the one who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

* THE APOSTLES' CREED

UMH No. 881

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

* GLORIA UMH No. 238 Angels We Have Heard on High (VS. 2) GLORIA

Children ages 4 – first grade may depart for Children's Church in Room 309.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Our saving God, long ago you sent your Son Jesus among us, but we have been little aware of his presence. Lord, as we read and hear your word, wake us up, help us to recognize and respond to the Messiah, that he may be the light of our lives and that we may lead people to him. Help us to respond to your Son and your word that we may be participants in your kingdom come on earth; a kingdom of hope, peace and joy where we serve you and one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE Psalm 146:5-10

(Please read the bold aloud with the lay speaker.)

Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.

* NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-14

NT Page 91

SERMON

"Unwrapping His Name: Word in Flesh?"

Rev. Ray Warren

HYMN OF RESPONSE UMH No. 217 Away in a Manger

AWAY IN A MANGER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

(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.

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of the church. If you would prefer to make your contribution via Text-to-Give, just text your offering amount to FSUMC's dedicated number, 336-489-GIVE (4483).

OFFERTORY

Away in a Manger Epworth Ringers arr. Cathy Moklebust

* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

All Singing: 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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* CLOSING HYMN UMH No. 230 O Little Town of Bethlehem

n ST. LOUIS

* BENEDICTION

Postlude Christmas Day in the Morning Thomas Keesecker

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. Please join us. Our hosts this week are Phil and Jean Minton.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God and in memory of Hilda Hedgecock and Rev. Stewart Crank by David Hedgecock and Marty Crank.

NIV