



The Service for the Lord's Day
Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:45 a.m. Worship Service
December 22, 2024

"United in Christ's love, we glorify God through worship, nurture, and service to all people."

WE CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE

Prelude *Away in a Manger* arr. Schuster
Ruth Boetsch, violin

Welcome and Announcements

Gathering Song *Light a Candle Bright and Tall* DIX

Light a can - dle bright and tall for a love which knows no end.
Love that comes to one and all. Fear and ha - tred to up - end.
Shine with - in our hearts to - day. Come, O Love, to us, we pray.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Isaiah 11:6 Kenney, Stacey, Hunter, and Hadley Hentschke

ONE: Jesus says: I am coming soon.

MANY: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

ONE: The Lord will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child.

MANY: She shall bear a son, and name him Emmanuel: "God is with us."

Explanation of the Candles

Lighting the Candle

Prayer

MANY: May we be surprised by hope as we walk in the light of the Lord.

* Hymn No. 123 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* CAROL

Prayer of Confession

MANY: God of Grace, we ask your forgiveness for being consumed by the season and not by you. When we reduce Christmas to gifts and events, have mercy on us. When our self-absorbed nature causes us to forget about the pain and hurt of others, let your grace consume us. When peace is something we no longer fight for, forgive us and move us to compassion and action. When we lose our hope, surprise us once again. May we truly live no longer for ourselves, but as forgiven people who embody your mercy and grace. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Silent Prayer of Confession

WELCOME

Whether you are visiting for the first time, or are a long-time member, we are blessed to have you with us.

As a congregation, we seek to live as people united in Jesus Christ. Our church consists of people of all ages and stages on faith's journey, from those new to faith to those who have honed their faith for decades. We consider this one of Unity's greatest gifts. We see ourselves as an ever-widening family with room for everyone. We tend to worship in some pretty traditional ways. We study the scriptures and seek to understand the teachings and actions of Jesus. We sing many of the same hymns our grandparents sang. Yet, in our preaching and our prayers, we wrestle with the challenges of the modern world.

We hope your heart will hear something personal and relevant this morning - a word of comfort, a spur to action, a call to a deeper connection with the God who loves you! After the service, stick around for a few minutes. Introduce yourself to one of the pastors. If you cannot stay or are worshipping with us online, please visit our website. See if this is a place and a people that God is calling you to be a part of, a place and a people where you might invest yourself in the amazing work God is doing, a place and a people you just might call home.

Assurance of Pardon – Romans 15:13

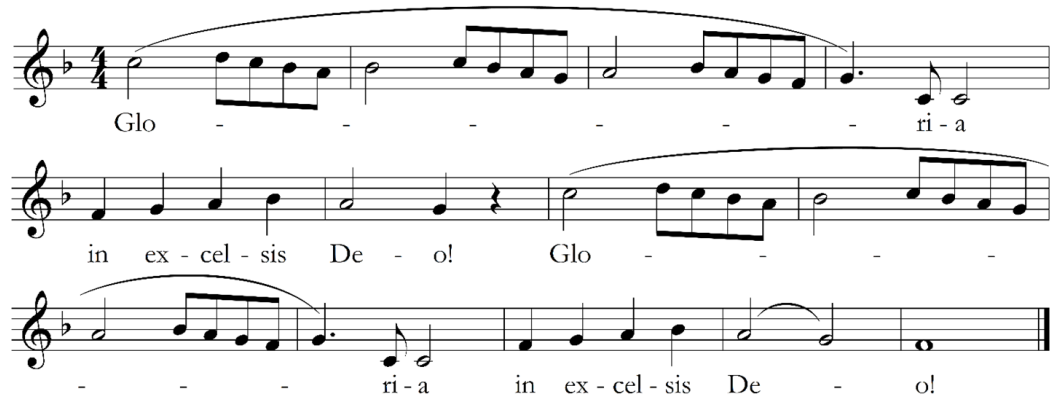
ONE: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

MANY: Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

* Congregational Response

Gloria

GLORIA



Glo - ri - a
in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - ri - a
in ex - cel - sis De - o!

The Sacrament of Baptism

Presentation

Questions to Parents and Congregation

* Affirmation of Faith – from A Declaration of Faith

MANY: We believe God acts by the Spirit in baptism: calling us by name to be his, cleansing us from corruption, giving us new life, setting us in the fellowship of believers. Baptism reminds us that God loves us long before we can love God and that faith and repentance are necessary as our response to God's love. Though we are baptized but once our response should continue and deepen throughout life. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

... Gracious God, pour out your Spirit upon Emma and Olivia, upon us, and upon this water that this font may be your womb of new birth. Strengthen us all to serve you with joy until that day when you make all things new. Amen.

The Baptism

Laying on of Hands

Welcome

... With joy and thanksgiving we welcome Emma and Olivia into Christ's church, for we are all one in Christ. We promise to love, encourage, and support you, Krystal and Joseph, and we promise to share the good news of the gospel with Emma and Olivia.

Hymn

Jesus Loves Me!

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,
Taking children on his knee, saying "Let them come to me."
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Gifts from the Congregation

WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

First Reading		Isaiah 58:6-14
Time with Children		
Congregational Blessing	<i>Go Now in Peace</i>	Sleeth
Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of God surround you everywhere, everywhere you may go.		
Second Reading		Luke 1:57-66
Sermon	"His Name Is What?"	Rev. Dr. Matt Rich

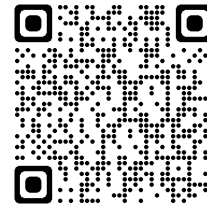
WE RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

MANY: 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.

Offering

As we worship both at home and in the sanctuary, we pause in gratitude to God to prayerfully reflect on the response we make to God's amazing grace in Jesus Christ. Financial gifts can be shared online at <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/give/now> through the mail, as the plates are passed, or in the mailbox in front of the Historic Sanctuary.



Offertory Anthem *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*
Jim Redden, soloist arr. Burleigh

When I was a learner, I sought both night and day,
I ask the Lord to help me, and he show me the way.

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain; over the hills and everywhere:
Go tell it on the mountain, our Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching; o'er wandering flock by night;
Behold! From out the heavens, there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

He made me a watchman; upon the city wall,
and if I am a Christian; I am the least of all. *Refrain*

And lo! when they had seen it, they all bowed down and prayed;
then traveled on together, to where the Babe was laid. *Refrain*

Leading Worship this morning:

Rev. Dr. Matt Rich
Senior Pastor

Rev. Molly Spangler
Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Mark Verdery
Parish Associate

Mike Berens
Lay Reader

Margaret Monroe
Director of Music

Acolytes:

Victor Ernst
Vance Ernst

Children's Ministry Staff:

Kathryn McGregor
Director of Christian
Education

Nursery Caregivers:

Angie Benjamin
Carolyn Blair
Sylvia Coleman

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Fort Mill](https://www.youtube.com/UnityPresbyterianChurchFortMill)

Praise to God, the One who made us. Praise to Christ, the soon-born Son.
 Praise the Spi - rit, ev - er with us. Praise the God - head, Three in One.
 Clear a path! Pre-pare the way! Ad-vent leads to Christmas Day!

* Prayer of Thanksgiving

* Hymn No. 145

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES

* Charge and Benediction

* Congregational Response

Go, All Ye Faithful!

ADESTE FIDELIS

Go, all ye faith - ful! Take the hope of Christ-mas! Car - ry the
 mes-sage far be - yond these walls. Hold forth the Christ-light.
 Con-quer every dark - ness. Go forth, O church of Je - sus! Pro-claim the One who
 frees us! Speak peace! Reach out in mer - cy, in kind - ness and love.

* Postlude

Prepare the Royal Highway

arr. Hobby

* As you are able in body or spirit, please stand.

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Advent Doxology – Text: R.G. Huff, © 2022 R.G. Huff. Used by permission.

Go, All Ye Faithful – Text: R.G. Huff, © 2015 R.G. Huff. Used by permission.

DEACONS SERVING today are Ronda Williams, Michael Brown, and Lyn Evans.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE BAPTISMS of Emma Rose and Oliva Grace, children of Krystal and Joseph Melton, at the 8:45 AM worship service; of Logan Arthur, son of Kate and Greg Dasher at the 11:00 AM worship service.

ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES are available at the Deacons desk in the Narthex of the Sanctuary.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT, WORSHIP, GROW, AND SERVE

Worship

SANCTUARY WORSHIP IS LIVESTREAMED - Please note that as you join us for worship in the Sanctuary, there is a possibility that you will be seen on the online livestream. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know by contacting Dr. Matt Rich at the church office at 803-547-5543.

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES are welcome in worship. If you find that you need to leave the service to care for your child, Room M201 is open, and is connected to the sanctuary sound system. Ask an usher in the Narthex if you need directions.

NURSERY IS AVAILABLE during today's worship services in Room S104 for infants-18 months and S103 for toddlers/ preschoolers up through age 3. Both rooms are located on the bottom floor of the Sanctuary building. Our nursery is run by trained, paid staff with assistance from trained church volunteers. Age-appropriate Bible stories and activities are offered throughout the morning. Children may be dropped off up to 15 minutes prior to a worship service or may attend worship with you until the Children's Time, and then will be taken to nursery by our volunteers and staff. ***If your child plans to leave the service following Children's Time, please complete a bright yellow Child Identification Sticker, found in the pew rack. Place it on your child's back. Please check "nursery" on the sticker and add a cell phone number in case of an emergency.***

CIW IS AVAILABLE during today's worship services. "Children in Worship" is a Montessori-based worship program for young children (those who turned 4 before September 1st, 2024, those who are Rising Kindergarten and 1st graders as well as those who have just completed 1st grade). They learn to worship in a way that corresponds to corporate worship yet addresses their needs as young children. Please bring your child with you to worship in the sanctuary and ***complete a Child Identification Sticker, found in the pew rack, and place it on your child's back. Check "CIW" on the sticker and add a cell phone number in case of an emergency.*** After the Children's Time, your child will be escorted to the CIW Room (M206) on the children's Sunday school wing.

Advent and Christmas 2024

UNITY POST - Send your Christmas Cards to Unity friends through the Unity Post **now through Christmas day!** The "post office" is located just outside the narthex. Boxes are organized by the first letter of the last name. In exchange for our postage-free service, consider donating to Unity's "Emergency Assistance Fund," which provides for the unmet emergency needs of members of our community (ex., assistance with utility bills or rent).

ADULT ADVENT STUDIES CONCLUDE TODAY. Join one of these Advent studies offered on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am:

- *Prepare the Way of The Lord, a study of John the Baptist* - meets in Room M312
- *The Heart that Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch* - meets in the Historic Sanctuary
- *An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story* - meets in Room M201

No registration is required. Adults of all ages are welcome to any of these studies. Come grow in your faith this Advent.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVE DATES: We hope that you will join us for the Season of Advent and Christmas at Unity Presbyterian Church. Our theme this year is "Surprised by Hope" and we will explore the ways Christ continues to surprise us in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. With worship, scripture, song, study, fellowship, service, and more we anticipate these will be not only wonderful times for our church family, but also opportunities to truly share the hope, light, and love of Christ with our community.

December 24th Christmas Eve services:

11:00 a.m. - Family Friendly Christmas Eve Service (infant nursery only)

4:00 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service With Communion (nursery available)

6:00 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service With Communion (nursery available)

11:00 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service With Communion (no nursery)

December 29th at 10:00 a.m. - single Sunday worship service in the Sanctuary (infant nursery only)

A Unity Yuletide!

LOOKING FOR AN ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SOUNDTRACK? Look no further! Our staff here at Unity have chosen their top favorite tunes for the season and we have put them together in one place so we can all enjoy them together. The playlist is called, "A Unity Yuletide," and it can be found on Spotify at this link: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1XYmatk6Sw5QHpcixI49Av?si=T60vgogyRpenCvllGWSQRg>, or by scanning the QR code! If you have never used Spotify, you can use it for free with ads. We hope you will join us as we listen to our favorite seasonal songs, and perhaps you can even figure out which songs each staff member chose. Happy Listening!



Children's Ministry

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2025 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SUMMER CAMPS:

- VBS & Mission Camp – June 9-12, Ages 4 – Completed 3rd Grade (VBS), Completed 4th and 5th Grades (Mission Camp)
- Grands Camp – July 23-25, Ages 4 -5th grade with a Grandparent or Surrogate Grandparent

REGISTRATION FOR PASSPORTKIDS! CAMP IS NOW OPEN THROUGH JANUARY 15TH. Unity will take a group to PASSPORTkids! Camp at Montreat Conference Center in Montreat, NC on June 30-July 3, 2025. This fun-filled four-day, three-night camp is for children and youth who are currently in 3rd - 5th grade. Kathryn McGregor and other Unity adult chaperones will travel with the group to Montreat for camp. The cost is \$375. A non-refundable registration deposit of \$150 is due by January 15th. **Scan the QR code to register today!**



GROWING CHRISTIANS (GCS), our 4th and 5th Grade fellowship group, will resume on Sunday, January 12th, and meet each Sunday from 4:00-5:00 p.m. through February 9th. All 4th and 5th graders are welcome. No registration is required. GCs meets in Room M208, which can be accessed on Sunday afternoons by parking in the Fellowship Hall parking lot and walking between the Fellowship Hall and the labyrinth courtyard. Leaders will meet children at the door. For questions, contact Kathryn McGregor at KMcGregor@UnityFortMill.org.

Faith Formation

MONDAY MUSINGS meets each **Monday from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.** with the pastors in Room M201 for conversation about and study of Sunday's sermon and scripture texts.

SUNDAY MORNING FAITH FORMATION meets each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. There is a place for everyone! A list of all classes and room numbers are below. **Scan the QR code** to learn more about each adult offering and find the place that is right for you. **There will be no Faith Formation next Sunday, December 29th**, as there is one worship service at 10:00 AM. Regular classes will resume on January 5th.



Children

Birth - 3 years: S103 & S104
4K – Kindergarten: M203
1st-2nd Grades: M205
3rd - 5th Grades: M208

ALL Youth

Christmas Bible Trivia: M108

Adults

As a Child: M312
Faith Connections: Historic Sanctuary
Fellowship: M201
Gospel of Matthew: M210
Unity: M102

REGISTER FOR AN ALL-CHURCH READ SMALL GROUP BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST. Our All-Church Read for 2025 will be *Hope: A User's Manual*, by Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Small groups will **begin the week of January 26th** and meet once a week for 6 weeks through the week of March 2nd. On March 2nd, we will have the privilege of hosting Rev. McKibben Dana at Unity to preach and lead a conversation about what she hopes we got from the book during the Faith Formation hour that day. Watch for small group signups, which will open on REALM on January 1st. A limited number of books will be available for purchase at the church beginning Sunday, January 5th. You can also order your own book through your favorite bookseller.

Stephen Ministry

UNITY PRESBYTERIAN IS A STEPHEN MINISTER CHURCH - If you feel you need a Stephen Minister to help through a difficult time, or know someone who does, please contact one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson via email at Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org, or call a pastor at the church office (803-547-5543). Our Stephen Ministers are here to help you!

Women of Unity

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH with all things happening with the Women of Unity by sending an email to wouministry@gmail.com. We would love to add you to our communications! Follow us on Instagram: [@woufortmill](https://www.instagram.com/woufortmill).

SAVE THE DATE: MOTHER DAUGHTER SISTER FRIEND LUNCHEON - Women of Unity will host our annual Mother Daughter Sister Friend Luncheon on **March 23, 2025**. Our theme this year is "Learning to Share Our Stories" with Rev. Julie Hester. We are people formed by stories - the stories we've heard and lived through, the stories we tell ourselves, and the stories we tell together. Join us as we explore how the spiritual practice of writing can help us understand and share our stories as part of God's beloved community. We'll listen, learn, write, and share around our small group tables. No writing experience is needed, and grammar and spelling don't count! If you can talk, you can write. We'll do some of both together. More details coming soon! Event Co-Chairs are Karen Compton Fuqua (kfuqua@comporium.net) and Stephanie Faherty. **Scan the QR code** to view all special events hosted by Women of Unity.



Worship & Music

2025 FLOWER CALENDAR - Would you like to honor a family member, friend, or a special group of people? Placing fresh flowers in the sanctuary to the glory of God is a perfect way to remember and celebrate a special person/s or occasion in your life. You may order flowers from a local florist or provide your own arrangement with flowers from your yard or another place of business that sells fresh-cut flowers. Your name along with the name or occasion being honored will be printed in the church bulletin. Dates for 2025 have now been added to a sign-up genius for reserving a Sunday to place flowers in the sanctuary. You may visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094CA5A729A0FCC25-53403724-unity#/> and complete the steps for selecting your choice of Sunday(s). All instructions are included. If you have questions, please contact Michaela Braswell at mbraswell@UnityFortMill.org or 803-547-5543 ext. 130). Early sign-up is recommended to ensure the Sunday of your choice.

Youth Ministry

CHRISTMAS BIBLE TRIVIA FOR ALL YOUTH during Sunday School next **Sunday, December 22nd!** Middle school and high school youth will face off during Sunday School for a special edition of Christmas Bible Trivia in the Youth Wing!

UNITY YOUTH LUNCH MEETUP ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 23RD! All youth are invited to meet at Panera in Kingsley at noon to enjoy lunch together. Please bring money for lunch. Friends are welcome!

SPRING RETREAT AND SUMMER TRIP REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! There are countless opportunities for middle and high school youth to engage in meaningful outreach and faith formation trips this Spring and Summer. Youth are headed to Asheville, St. Simons, Montreat, Massanetta Springs, and more! Save your spot by registering now on Realm!

Hymns for December 22, 2024
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

Hymn

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

CAROL

It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all-gracious King”:
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Hymn

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!