

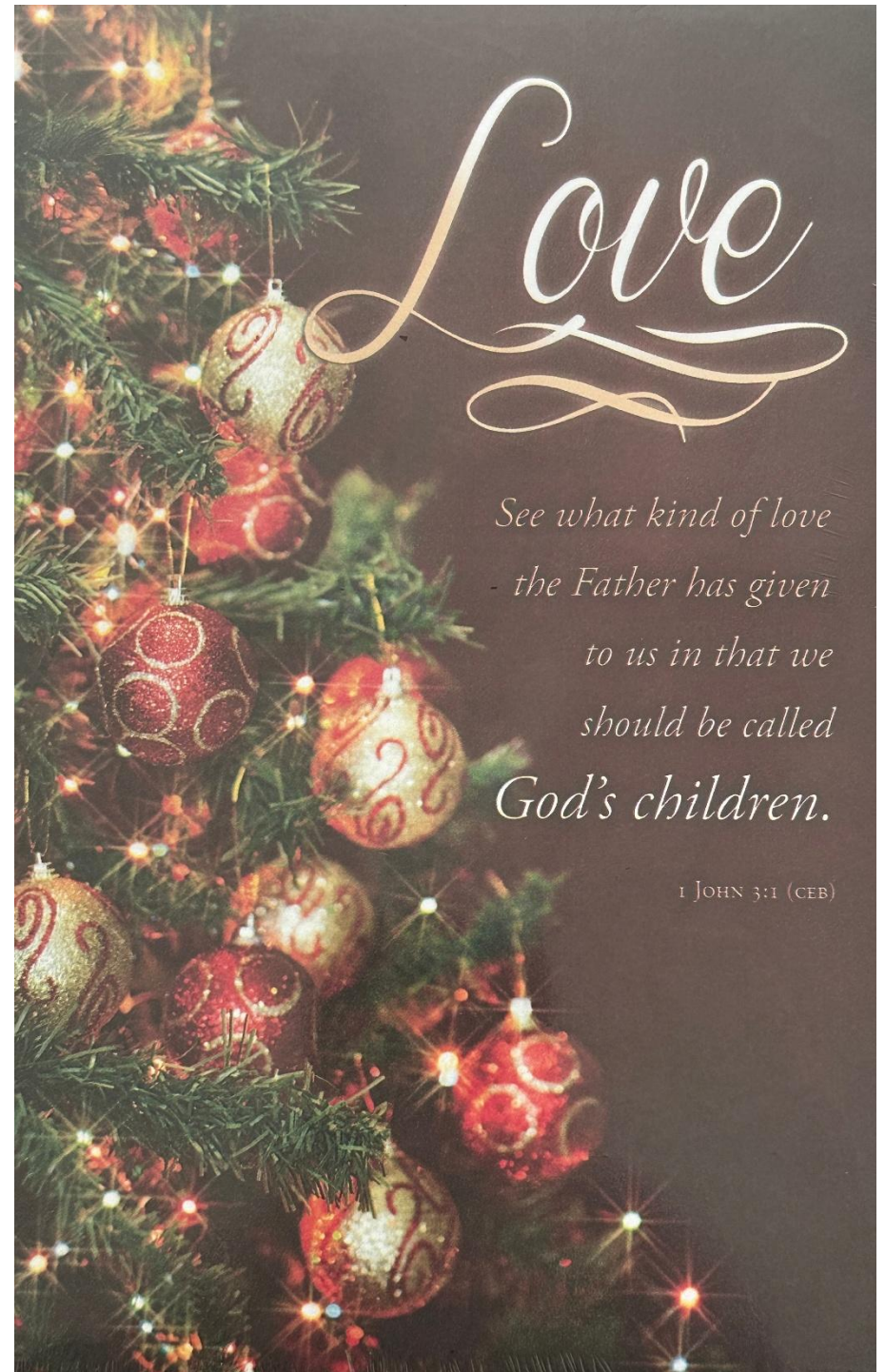
PRAYER REQUESTS

CONGREGANTS

Ruth Dolan	Judi & Gary Landin	George Batten
Bill Trainer	Sheryll Ingram	Candace Payne
Mim Mazon	Linda O'Connor	Andy & Sharon Makarick
Lois Finch	Dave Fisher	

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF CONGREGANTS

Hannah Nystrom, friend of Marie Baldauf
David Sharp, son of Beverly Cook
Norman Neus
Bobby Cleland, nephew of Ouida Dell
Beverly Byrd, friend of Cynthia Thompson
Daughter of Don McKay
Sheila Palamina, friend of Althea Serrant
Persephone, sister of Penelope Power
Linda, best friend of Judi Landin's daughter, Nikki
Martha, friend of Margo Cservek
Elaine, friend of Michele Elek
Sharon Mogel, friend of Marie Baldauf
Todd, son of Richard Rohde
Margo, friend of Constance Ulrich
Debbie Hamilton, sister-in-law of Diana & Walker Hamilton
June, sister of Janet Jacoby
Dawn Sharp, daughter of Beverly Cook
Heather, friend of Sherri Prosser
Nancy, mother-in-law of Michelle Cramer
Lynn, neighbor of Beverly Cook
Joy Haley, friend of the Wheelers
Dorothy Riley, friend of Peggy Firtion
Rosalyn Perdue, mother of Allyn Perdue
John, friend of Judi Landin
Dale Lawrence, nephew of Jerry Vagnier
Helene, friend and neighbor of Susie Brown
Stephanie, daughter of Nettie Peck
Michael, uncle of Megan Sytsma
Annie, daughter of Kathy Smith
Mother of Megan Sytsma
Robin, friend of Margo Cservek
Diana Oder, friend of Diana Walker
Kim Piehl, daughter-in-law of Fran Iacovo
Steve Rose, friend of Candace Payne
Dotty Ebcarr, former member
Pete Berger, friend of Jane Tiffany
Jan Demcsak, neighbor of Jane Tiffany





St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Where Friends and Faith Meet
Rev. Dr. Christopher L. Thompson

Marsha Gerber, Music Director

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

Greeters & Ushers: Tina Blount, Barb Silcox

PRELUDE

THREE BELLS, Chiming of the Trinity

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

OPENING PRAYER

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES: Will Ross & Jim Smith

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** No. 881

***GLORIA PATRI** No. 70

PASTORAL PRAYER/LORD'S PRAYER

THE GIVING OF OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS/OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

Cantata Musicians & Narrators

Music Director - Marsha Gerber

Choral Conductor - Tatyana Topoleski

The Chancel Choir - Armen Hagopian, Charlene King,
Judi Landin, Allyn Perdue, Will Ross,
Joann Sandruck, Pat Schwartz,

Narrators - Pastor Chris Thompson, Nancy Sariscak,
Diana Hamilton

CAROLS

A CANTATA for Congregation and Choir
By Heather Sorenson

Litany 1	Leader, Pastor Chris Thompson	
Carol	<i>"Joy to the World!"</i>	No. 246
	Vs. 1, 2, 3, 4	
Litany 2	Reader 1, Reader 2, Leader	
Carol	<i>"Away in a Manger"</i>	No. 217
	Vs. 1, 2, 3	
Litany 3	Leader	
Carol	<i>"O Come, All Ye Faithful"</i>	No. 234
	Vs. 1, 3	
Litany 4	Leader	
Carol	<i>"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"</i>	
	<i>Choir only</i>	
Litany 5	Reader 1, Reader 2, Leader	
Carol	<i>"O Little Town of Bethlehem"</i>	No. 230
	Vs. 1 - Tenor Solo, Will Ross	
	Vs. 2, 4 - Congregation & Choir	
Luke 2:8-18	Reader 1, Reader 2	
Carol	<i>"The First Noel"</i>	No. 245
	Vs. 1, 2	
Carol	<i>"Silent Night"</i>	No. 239
	Vs. 1, 2, 3	
Litany 7	Leader	
Carol	<i>"Joy to the World"</i> (Reprise)	No. 246
	Vs. 4	

BENEDICTION

***"God Be With You Till We Meet Again"** (Holding hands is optional)
(Hymnal inside back cover)

***POSTLUDE**

Please join us in Fellowship Hall for a reception following the service.

WELCOME

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY – Will resume Monday morning on January 5th at 8:00 a.m.

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WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY - Will resume on January 8th for a study on the book of Revelation.

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CHOIR PRACTICE - Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

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Please send information for UPCOMING MEETINGS, BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS and the PRAYER REQUEST LIST to Amy Erickson amyhousererickson@gmail.com and Linda Metcalf lmetcalf2010@hotmail.com.

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VOLUNTEERS are needed for GREETERS/USHERS and GOSPEL READERS for both the 8:30 and 10:15 services. A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the Sanctuary. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Sariscak at nlsack72@gmail.com or Amy Erickson at amyhousererickson@gmail.com.

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FELLOWSHIP HALL RESERVATIONS – Please contact Amy Erickson (amyhousererickson@gmail.com) if you would like to reserve Fellowship Hall for an event or a meeting. The Fellowship Hall calendar is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Our hope is that you will experience God our Father's love in our worship service today. Guests, we are happy you are with us and hope we have extended to you a warm welcome. Please don't hesitate to ask any member about our church and the activities we offer. The informative information, located in the bins in the back of the church, provides some of St. Luke's history.

Please let us know you were with us today by signing the BLUE REGISTRATION PAD located at the end of each pew.

Church Office: 843-705-3022
Mailing Address: PO Box 2779
Bluffton, SC 29910
Location: 3080 Okatie Hwy., Bluffton 29909
Website: www.stlukesumc-okatie.org
Church's email address: stlukesumc.hwy170@gmail.com

Pastor's Mailing Address: Rev. Dr. Christopher L. Thompson
465 Live Oak Walk
Bluffton, SC 29910
Cell phone: 864-704-0728
Email address: clthompson@umcsc.org

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PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Please text or call his cell phone (864-704-0728) for an appointment to be sure he doesn't have a prior commitment.

MEETINGS: Coffee Hour Ministry, 12:30 PM - December 27

MEMBERSHIP: We will be receiving NEW MEMBERS on Sunday, DECEMBER. 28th. If you would like to join St. Luke's UMC, please fill out an "Invitation to Membership" form and place it in the collection plate. Pastor Chris will get in touch with you. The forms are on the Sanctuary bulletin board and in the Fellowship Hall.

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BLUFFTON SELF HELP - Donations are collected the first Sunday of the month, or can be left in the Bluffton Self Help basket in Fellowship Hall.

Litany 1

Leader: Joy to the world! Our Lord has come! He is here! He has accomplished the Gospel. He is a living testament that *God keeps His promises*.

Lord, like the Holy Family on that first Christmas night, many of us enter into the Christmas season with mixed emotions. And like that first Christmas night, we celebrate in the midst of a complicated, ever changing world. Because You are good, even through Your birth You remind us that You are an unchangeable, faithful God. Because of this,

ALL: We come today in gratitude

Leader: knowing that *as far as the curse is found, your Light shines. As far as the curse is found, Your blessings search us out and cover us.*

ALL: We come today in humility

Leader: stripped of pride, accepting You as our eternal Gift, given by God the Father.

ALL: We come rejoicing

Leader: as Your adopted children! Your *earthly* adoption brought You into a world of heartache, poverty, and death. Our *heavenly* adoption brings us kingdom riches and life.

ALL: We come in faith

Leader: knowing that in our own advent seasons of life, You are the Promise Keeper. You are the God who comes and stays and delivers. Because of this,

ALL: You are our Hope!

Leader: Our Hope for things to come,

ALL: Our Hope for unresolved situations today.

Leader: You are our HOPE when we pray in Your name.

ALL: In the name of Jesus. Amen.

CAROL: "Joy to the World" - Vs. 1, 2, 3, 4 No. 246

Litany 2

Reader 1: *And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*

Reader 2: *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

Reader 1: *So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)*

Leader: Lord, it is beyond our comprehension that our Royal Prince, our Holy Messiah would have no place to lay His head. While we shake our heads in disapproval, we must also ask ourselves where we have not made room for You. So today, Lord.

ALL: We invite You into our homes

Leader: The place where we are the most vulnerable and real. We invite You to see us as we are, with no pretense or show; to see the best and the worst of us.

ALL: We create room for You in our workplaces

Leader: Where tensions often run high, and people can be difficult.

ALL: We invite You into our conflicts

Leader: Drawing on Your divine compassion, understanding, and wisdom to resolve situations that wound us.

ALL: We create room for You in our finances

Leader: So that You can guide us to people in need, precious souls beloved by You. And for those who struggle during the Christmas season,

ALL: We invite You into our struggle

Leader: Embracing You as our Prince of Peace, our Wonderful Counselor. May every heart prepare room for You in this season and throughout the year.

ALL: Amen.

CAROL: "Away in a Manger" – Vs. 1, 2, 3 No. 217

Litany 3

Leader: To be invited to the very first Call to Worship,
To be summoned to the stable where the curse was reversed,
To have “A Request for the Honor of Your Presence” from the King
of the Nations,
How can we refuse?!

All: And so we come

Leader: In answer to Your bidding.

All: We come

Leader: With uplifted hearts and outstretched arms.

All: We come

Leader: Joining our voices with the angels.

All: We come

Leader: With joyful songs and happy greetings.
*“All the earth bows down to You; they sing praise to You; they sing
praise to Your name.*

**All: Come and see the works of God; how awesome are His deeds
toward mankind!” (Psalm 66:4-5)**

CAROL: “O Come, All Ye Faithful” – Vs. 1, 3 No. 234

Litany 4

Leader: O come, all ye faithful...joyful...triumphant! ...Words we’ve just
sung as an invitation to meet the Savior.

And yet, who can live up to that standard? These words which
describe us on our best days – faithful, joyful, triumphant – also
seem to disqualify us, as we all occasionally miss the mark.

What about the unfaithful? The broken? The defeated? Can we
also come to Bethlehem and meet the Savior? Because if we’re
honest with ourselves, we have *all* been unfaithful. We have all
strayed and turned to our own way.

The Good News of Christmas is that Christ was born specifically
for the unfaithful. He came to gather the broken, the disillusioned,
the weary and the utterly defeated to Himself for healing. He
breaks the power of fear and sin, and He frees us, giving us His
peace.

**All: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give
you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am
gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
(Matt. 11:28-29)**

Leader: These are the tidings of comfort! These are the tidings of joy!

CAROL: “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen - The Chancel Choir only

Litany 5

Reader 1: *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 the old, from
ancient days...*

Reader 2: *And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the
Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they
shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the
earth. And he shall be their peace. (Micah 5:2, 4-5a)*

Leader: Because our culture pushes us to look for the extraordinary in
exaggerated situations, we are prone to miss miracles that
happen in unlikely places. We might be tempted to manufacture
glamour in efforts to see God’s hand at work.

Lord, remind us that throughout history, You have chosen the
underdog, the unassuming to show Your greatest power.

**ALL: Remind us that You can be found in the most unlikely of
places.**

Leader: Remind us that Your miracles and blessings cannot be
summoned by wealth, power, or presentation.

ALL: In times when we lack confidence in our calling.

Leader: Remind us that you chose Mary, an unwed teen, to raise the
Savior of the world.

**ALL: In times when our current situation seems to disqualify us
from Your blessings.**

Leader: Remind us of Bethlehem, a tiny city with heavenly fame.

ALL: In times when we feel “less-than,”

Leader: Remind us that You are the Great I AM. When we act justly, love
mercy, and walk humbly with You, we are in *partnership* with the
Almighty. That You would use us to accomplish the divine is an
honor almost more than we can comprehend, but we are
grateful!

**ALL: Let us be Your hands and feet, bringing miracles of hope and
deliverance to people in darkness. AMEN.**

CAROL: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” No. 230
Vs. 1 – Tenor Solo, Will Ross
Vs. 2, 4 – Congregation & Choir

LUKE 2:8-18

Reader 1: Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Reader 2: Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

Reader 1: So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Reader 2: Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

CAROL: “The First Noel” - Vs. 1, 2 No. 245

CAROL: “Silent Night” – Vs. 1, 2, 3 239

LITANY 7

Leader: Lord, as we exit this morning, we will see celebrations of You everywhere. When we see the Christmas lights blinking on the trees and on the houses, we will rejoice.

ALL: For You are the Light!

Leader: When we feast on our Christmas meal and all the confectioneries, we will give thanks.

ALL: For you are the Bread of Life.

Leader: As we leave with these carols in our hearts and on our lips,

ALL: We will sing with the angels,

Leader: In the car, in our homes, during the mundane tasks of life, making each moment sacred. And so, we end today in the same way we began:

Joy to the World! Our Lord has come!

ALL: We receive You as our King!

CAROL: “Joy to the World (reprise)” - Vs. 4 No. 246