

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

VIOLIN 1
MICAH GANGWER

VIOLIN 2
KAREL ABO

VIOLA
RACHEL GANGWER

CELLO
DANIEL MUMM

GUITAR
MIA STONE

GREETERS
DENNIS KALTENBACK
MARGARET KALTENBACK

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
REAGAN LORD

ORGANIST
MICHAEL LOPEZ

DIRECTOR OF HANDBELLS
MICHAEL BLANTON

SENIOR MINISTER
REV. MICHAEL RITTER

SOLOIST
CAROLINE WHEELER
JANICE WATERS

LITURGIST
CHRIS ROGERS-BERRY
GRACIE BOCZKOWSKI
DON GRAU
LINDA HUFFMAN
FRANK MONTERISI
KATE SWANSON

Bethany United Methodist Church

SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA



Child of Peace

A Service of Seven Lessons and Carols

*The altar greens today are given to the Glory of God
by Shirley and Alan Scully celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.*

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST
CHANCEL CHOIR CHAMBER ENSEMBLE CHANCEL BELLS

Gracious God, our spirits long to meet you as you come. Prepare us for your entrance into our lives, and help us proclaim your coming in love. Lord, hear our songs and prayers for the rough places in our lives. Fill the valleys with your light, level the uneven paths with your grace, and grant that your Spirit might so move us and others, that your loving presence will be visible to all.

Take, O God, what we have given and transform it to your glory.

Take, O God, what we have done and transform it into your action.

Take, O God, what we have said and transform it into your song.

Take, O God, what we live and transform it into your creation.

On this Sunday which celebrates your love, let there be love in our lives, love in our church, and love in your world. In your coming name we pray. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

*HYMN OF INVITATION

Joy to the World
CHANCEL CHOIR, CONGREGATION, ORGAN, ORCHESTRA

ANTIOCH, UMH 246

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.

*BENEDICTION

REV. MICHAEL RITTER

Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

*POSTLUDE

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’” From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

RESPONSE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN, UMH 240

CHOIRS, CONGREGATION, ORCHESTRA & ORGAN

DAVID WILLCOCKS

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

An Order of Sunday Worship

Sunday, December 21, 2025

8:30AM

Fourth Sunday in Advent

The liturgical color for Advent is purple, representing the impending birth of Christ.

*Please stand in body or spirit

CALL TO WORSHIP

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

REV. MICHAEL RITTER

The grace and peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

PRELUDE

The First Noel

CATHY MOKLEBUST

CHANCEL BELLS

OPENING PRAYER

REV. MICHAEL RITTER

God of glory and compassion at your touch the wilderness blossoms, broken lives are made whole, and fearful hearts grow strong in faith. Open our eyes to your presence and awaken our hearts to sing your praise. To all who long for your Son’s return grant perseverance and patience, that we may announce in word and deed the good news of the kingdom. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

Once in Royal David’s City

IRBY, UMH 250

CHANCEL CHOIR, CONGREGATION, ORGAN & ORCHESTRA

CAROLINE WHEELER, SOLOIST

(Please join the choir as directed)

VERSE 1, SOLO

INTERLUDE

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.

INTERLUDE

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.

INTERLUDE

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.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH KAREN MCABEE & THOMAS YEARGIN

The first three candles we lit were for hope, peace, and joy. Today we light the fourth candle--the candle of **LOVE**. With this flame we signify the **love** of God that surrounds and fills us at all time, but that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than LOVE. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger than even death. We love, because *God LOVES us*.

Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season. Light our lives with your imagination. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained. Magnify your LOVE within us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

In seeking peace, take with you the sure and certain knowledge that God is always coming into the world. Seek Good not in a long ago stable or ancient manger, but in the people we meet and the depths of our own hearts. May the blessing of Christmas make you a blessing to others in hope, peace, joy, and love.

RESPONSE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* VENI EMMAUNEL, UMH 211

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here until the son of God appears.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

PRAYER

BIDDING PRAYER LINDA HUFFMAN

Beloved in Christ, in this Advent season let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger. Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought to us by this Holy Child. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world;

for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this our community.

RESPONSE *Away in a Manger* JEFFREY VAN
CHANCEL CHOIR & GUITAR

*Away in a manger no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing, the poor baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay,
Close by me forever and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children, in thy tender care
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.*

SIXTH LESSON Luke 2: 15-20 (KJV) GRACIE BOCZKOWSKI
THE SHEPHERD AND THE ANGELS

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

RESPONSE *Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella* STEPHEN PAULUS
CHANCEL CHOIR & GUITAR

*Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella, bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village; Christ is born and Mary's calling;
Ah! ah! beautiful is the Mother
Ah! ah! beautiful is her Son!*

*It is wrong when the Child is sleeping, it is wrong to talk so loud;
Silence, all, as you gather around, lest your noise should waken Jesus.
Hush! hush! see how fast He slumbers!
Hush! hush! see how fast He sleeps!*

*Softly to the little stable. Softly for a moment come;
Look and see how charming is Jesus, quietly come and whisper softly!
Hush! hush! see how the Child is sleeping;
Hush! hush! see how He smiles in dreams.*

RESPONSE

O Come, All Ye Faithful

CHOIRS, CONGREGATION, ORGAN & ORCHESTRA

VERSES 1, 2, 5 & 3

ADESTE FIDELES, UMH 234

DAVID WILLCOCKS

**O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,
 lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
 Son of the Father, begotten not created;
 O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
 O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

**Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with awe and love.
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 2: 8-14 (KJV)

GRACIE BOCZKOWSKI

THE SHEPHERD AND THE ANGELS

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the 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, good will toward men."

And because this would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed;

the sick and them that mourn, the lovely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those 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 before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light,

that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one for evermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

DEDICATION

OFFERTORY

He is Born How Great Our Joy

BRENDA AUSTIN

CHANCEL BELLS

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

LASST UNS ERFREUEN, UMH, 94

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!

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9: 1-7 (NRSV)

FRANK MONTERISI

THE RIGHTEOUS REIGN OF THE COMING KING

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 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. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. 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. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

RESPONSE	<i>Child of Peace</i> CHAMBER CHOIR; JANICE WATERS, SOPRANO	JEFFREY VAN
<i>Sleep, O sleep, Thou lovely Child divine; Love distilled in humble form so fine. May Thy slumber keep Thee now from pain; long and weary journey yet remains. God of love who gave this little one, God of love who came to overcome, Holy Spirit, God and Christ in one child.</i> <i>Wise men sought a King and journeyed far, guided by a strange and glorious star, offering gifts of incense, myrrh and gold, witnessing the holy birth foretold. When we seek Thee, Jesus, may we be guided to Thy cradle there to see prophecies fulfilled and hope revealed.</i> <i>Child of peace who came so long ago, Child of love still with us here we know, may Thy tears of passion freely flow, melting hearts within us cold as snow. He is come to be our dearest kin, He is come to take from us our sin: Jesus, come and make us safe within You</i>		

SECOND LESSON	Isaiah 11: 1-10 (NRSV) THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM	KATE SWANSON
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A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

RESPONSE	<i>Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence</i> CHANCEL CHOIR, CHANCEL BELLS, CONGREGATION, ORGAN & ORCHESTRA <i>(Please join the choir as directed)</i>	PICARDY, UMH 626
VERSES 1 AND 2 CHANCEL CHOIR		
Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,		
As the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,		
That the pow’rs of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.		
At His feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim with sleepless eye,		
Veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry:		
“Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!”		

THIRD LESSON	Luke 1: 46-55 (ESV) THE SONG OF MARY	CHRIS ROGERS BERRY
And Mary said,		
“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”		

RESPONSE	<i>Christmas Lullaby</i> CHANCEL CHOIR & GUITAR	JEFFREY VAN
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"Lullaby, lullaby, sleep wondrous child to my lullaby...

*Heaven's light radiant within the hay, all gathered here sing thy mystery,
How can this babe the answer be? Yet hear the angels so surely say:*

"Here! Here's the One! ...

"Lullaby, lullaby, sleep wondrous child to my lullaby...

*Peaceful and still all around thy bed, outside in darkness a world of dread,
Rest thy head near us, O holy child,
Stay, stay awhile.*

"Lullaby, lullaby, sleep wondrous child to my lullaby...

FOURTH LESSON	Luke 2: 1-7 (KJV) THE BIRTH OF JESUS	GRACIE BOCZKOWSKI
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And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should 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.