



4500 Rimer Rd, Concord, NC 28025
Church 704-782-8483

The Rev. Marty Ramey, Interim Pastor
A NALC Congregation



Welcome to worship at Cross of Christ!
In the Cross of Christ I glory †

Third Sunday In Advent
December 14, 2025

(* *Please stand as you are able*)

PRELUDE

OUR ACCOMPANIST MRS. YVONNE YOST

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

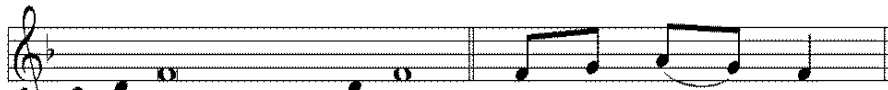
* OPENING HYMN *“What Child Is This ”* LBW 40

*APOSTOLIC GREETING

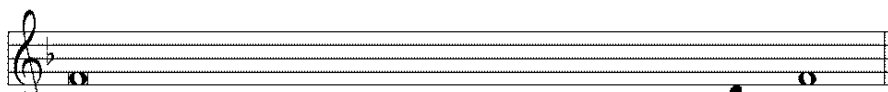
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

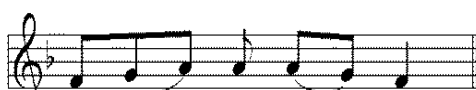
*KYRIE



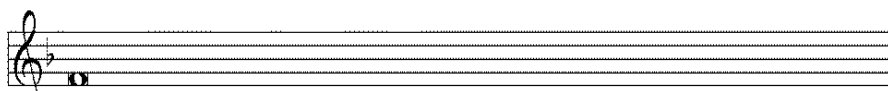
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **G** Lord, have mer - cy.



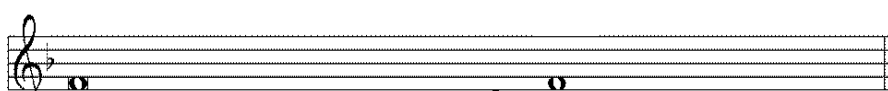
A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



G Lord, have mer - cy.




A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



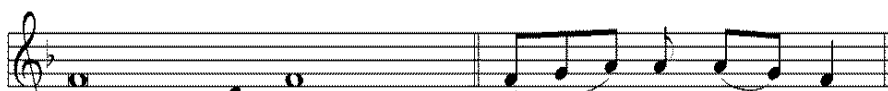
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.




G Lord, have mer - cy.



A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **G** Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **G** A - men

***SALUTATION**



***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Lord Jesus Christ, give ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by your gracious visitation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

WOV 630

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (vs 1-3)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RAMEY

CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35: 1-10 (ESV)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of God for the people of God!

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM 146: 1-10 (ESV)

READ RESPONSIVELY BY VERSE

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

² I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;

on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the LORD his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed,

who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless,

but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰ The LORD will reign forever,

your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

SECOND READING: James 5: 7-11 (ESV)

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of

Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

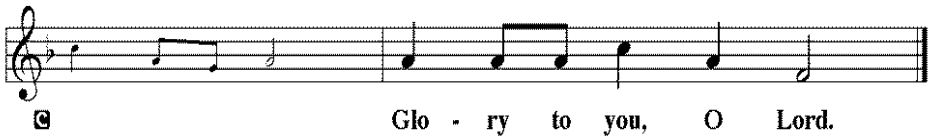
The Word of God for the people of God!

C: Thanks be to God!

***Gospel Acclamation**



P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, 11th chapter.

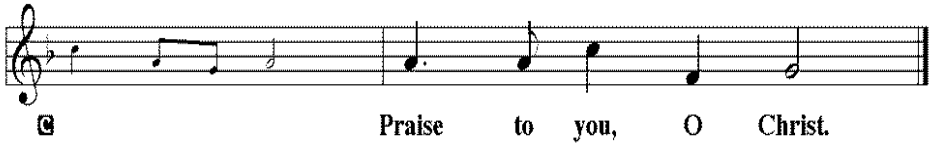


***THE HOLY GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 11: 2-15 (ESV)**

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” ¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law

prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

P: This is Gospel of our Lord.



SERMON *“Are We There Yet?”* Pastor Marty Ramey

*SERMON HYMN *“O Little Town Of Bethlehem”* LBW 41

***APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.**
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
 He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
 and born of the virgin Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried.
 He descended into hell.
 On the third day he rose again.
 He ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living 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

*RECEIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*THE OFFERTORY



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir -
it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store to me the
joy of your sal - va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

*PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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 and ever. Amen**

*BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace.

C: Amen

*SENDING HYMN *"It Came Upon A Midnight Clear"* LBW 54

***DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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The **Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and memory of J.B. Faggart on his and Jane's 76th wedding anniversary by Jane Faggart.

The Historical Committee will be taking family Christmas pictures **today**, which is the **final opportunity** to have yours made. Families will receive both a hard copy and a digital copy of their photo. If you'd like to participate, please meet at the front of the sanctuary immediately after worship.

The **PBnJ Youth Group** will meet this afternoon at **3:30 PM**. All K-5 children are welcome to join us.

Have you submitted your 2026 Friends Prayer List requests? Reminder to submit anyone for the Friends section of the prayer list per the December Newsletter information as the Prayer List is doing a complete reset as of 1/1/26. **Those on the current list will not transition unless you submit your request by 12/21/25.**

Join us for Christmas caroling to our shut-ins on **December 21st**. We'll meet in the church parking lot at **2:00 PM** and carpool to each home. Everyone is welcome! Contact Ashleigh Ennis with any questions.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is December 24th at **9 PM**.

Please see **Suzanne Bost** for all **new** and **reoccurring** parish hall rentals/events for **2026**. Thank you!

The **2026 Flower Calendar** has been placed in the mail room. Please mark any dates that you would like for flowers. The cost is still **\$64** for both vases. If a date you would like is already taken, talk with the person who signed up and split that Sunday. **One vase is \$32.**

If you have any changes to addresses, phone numbers, or email address for the **CCLC 2025 / 2026 Annual Yearbook**, please get those changes to the Historical Comm, Rhonda Drye or Jodie Strube. Committee chairs, event leaders, group leaders please start preparing your year-end summaries. If you have any questions, please contact us.

SHARING SHEPHERDS From Carol Fryer, Director of Missions, North American Lutheran Church: "I am pleased to inform you that the NALC Executive Council has approved Sharing Shepherds to be a Recognized Ministry as a Congregational Partnership. Congratulations!"

Sharing Shepherds has been included on the NALC website as a Congregational Partner. The preliminary description can be found at <https://thenalc.org/en-us/our-work/transforming-communities/global-missions/#ministry-directory> We will also have an article in the January NALC newsletter and display area at the NALC and Carolinas Mission Region Convocations. This is an important step in our mission to McDowell County, West Virginia. God is good!

December Stewardship Awareness -

Leonard Sweet quotes a portion of a sermon by John Buchanan titled "Give It All": "I always had a dream that when I am asked to give an accounting of my life to a higher court, it will be like this: 'So, empty your pockets. What do you have left of your life? Any dreams that were unfilled? Any unusual talent that we gave you when you were born that you still have left? Any unsaid compliments or bits of love that you haven't spread around?' And I will answer, 'I've nothing to return. I spent everything you gave me. I'm as naked as the day I was born'"

We see in John 3:16 the depth of God's generosity distilled in a single verse. This is a powerful text for Christian stewardship. Here again, we have the evidence of God as Giver. God created the world out of His divine love for us and all creation. He loved the world with such an intensity that He was willing to do anything to save it. God held nothing back, sacrificing His own Son. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (ESV).

Advent Week 3 - Prayer for Joy

This third week of Advent, let us remember that the good news of Jesus' birth has the power to bring us great joy this Christmas season. Our joy isn't dependent on what is going on in our life, in our world, or the people that we are with. It doesn't depend on the gifts we give or the gifts we find under the tree. No earthly thing can ever give us complete joy. Our joy comes from you. That joy that flooded the hearts of the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, the hosts of heaven, and Mary and Joseph is the joy that still has the power to overwhelm our hearts with rejoicing.

Father, you offer that same joy to us now if we know you and recognize Jesus as our Savior and Lord. You gave us a reason to celebrate when you gave us the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ. You came to dwell among us. You went to Calvary's cross for us. You overcame death and rose from the dead for us. You forgive our sins and give us eternal life when we believe in you.

Our joy doesn't come from our jobs, our family, our relationships, our finances, or our success. Our joy doesn't come from what we have on earth or who we are with. Our joy is a gift. It is the gift that you gave us that first Christmas in Jesus Christ. Our joy is encompassed in our Savior, King Jesus. Flood our heart with joy this Advent season as we reflect on the good news of Jesus' birth. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.



December 14, 2025

We ask that you always have an individual's permission before requesting their name be added to our Prayer List.

Please send prayer list request additions or changes to prayercclc@gmail.com by Tuesday 5PM.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people... 1Timothy 2:1

In the Fellowship of Cross of Christ

Walker Drye; Roy Gray; Dorothy Goodman; Harry Goodman; Norman Goodman; Amy Preston; John Trull; Linda Trull.

Call Process prayer requests: 1) Cross of Christ Church; 2) Call Committee; 3)

Prospective pastors see our profile/video and consider a call here.

Friends of Cross of Christ

J.D. Almond; Pastor Charles Barrier; Kathryn Blick; Deena Bost;

Pastor Gene Bost; Myra Bost; LeaAnn Buckwell;

Pastor Randall Cauble; Pastor Tom Corbell; Luke Cranford; Ed Duncan; Vicky

Floyd; April Funderburke; David Gandy; Marty Gandy;

David Goforth; Lee Goforth; Barbara Hamilton; Annette Heller;

Candice Horton; Greg Houston; Jimmy Howard; Melissa Krumbien; Gerry

Litzinger; Susie Moore; Karen Morgan; Hank Morris;

Daniel Pless; Lettie Reid; Blake Rogers; Jacob Rodgers;

Nick Smith; Susan Starling; Veronica Williams; Candace Yates;

Vickey Belk Young.

Serving in the Military

Eaven Allison (Fairbanks, Alaska)

General Prayer Concerns:

Rimer Fire Department

Praise List:

Tim Aldridge – Thanking everyone for their prayers and thoughts during surgery and recovery.

**** Please remember our shut-ins with a visit, phone call, card, or email along with your prayers**

Today December 14, 2025

Sunday Church School	9:00 AM
Family Worship Service	10:00 AM

This Week

MON: 7 – 8:30 PM Soldiers of the Cross of Christ Practice

NEXT SUNDAY

9:00 AM	Sunday Church School Classes
10:00 AM	Family Worship Service

Next Sunday's Readings

Fourth Sunday In Advent

Isaiah 7: 10-17

Psalm 24: 1-10

Romans 1: 1-7

St. Matthew 1: 18-25

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