

Light has Come



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church

1st Sunday of Christmas

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
December 28, 2025**



*We have the closed hearing loop system.
You may be able to turn your hearing device to the "T" setting.*

To allow all worshippers to reflect and prepare for the service, please observe silence during the prelude.

1st Sunday of Christmas

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE Wondrous Love

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Please respond with words in bold*)

We gather as people looking for the star,
a sign that God is at work in the world.

God, help us find your glory.

We gather as people listening for the whispers of the Spirit,
hints of the good news in the least likely places.

God, help us notice your glory.

We gather as people yearning for Love's presence,
the assurance that we are not alone
and that Love will have the last word.

God, help us encounter your glory.

On this Sunday after Christmas, when the wonder of your coming
has begun to fade, may the Light of Love shine among us,
revealing divine glory in unexpected places, through neighbors
known and unknown, vulnerable children, the kindness of people
we pass on the street, and may we be bearers of that light to
those needing to find a way.

**God, reveal to us anew the glory of your expansive Love
that gathers us together and sustains us in loving service
to one another and all creation. Amen.**

HYMN #245 The First Noel

OPENING PRAYER

Light of God, illumine the path that leads us to healing, hope, and salvation. Glory of God, fill this sanctuary and expose the darkness that stalks our souls. Light of God, shine with such brightness that we marvel in awe and bow in worship. Glory of God, fill each of us with a deep awareness of your holy presence. Light of God, Glory of God, we welcome you in this place. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 31:7-14 *The joy of coming home*

⁷ For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back; I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path where they shall not stumble, for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock." ¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

Psalm 147:7-20 UMH 860 *Song of praise for all God has done* (Please respond with the words in bold.)

Ephesians 1:3-14 *God made known in Christ*

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

John 1:1-18 *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (Please stand as you are able.)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God; ³ all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. ¹¹ He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of

the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. ¹⁵ (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'") ¹⁶ And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

God in our midst, why are we always willing to descend into the worst that life offers to us, but reluctant to come into your presence? Why will we stand without hesitation on sin's shaky foundations, yet find it impossible to dance in your joy? Why are we so quick to trumpet our own hollow achievements, and do not seem to be able to recognize your signs and guidance in our lives?

God of compassion, who cares enough to come dwell in this messy world in order that we might be saved, forgive us and fill us with your mercy. May we set our hope in Jesus Christ, who came so we might become your children, inheritors of your faithful love, peace, and joy forever, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

In Christ, God's salvation has come. The light shines brightly, expelling the darkness of our hearts, our minds, our world. God is here, eager to find us, embrace us, take us by the hand, and lead us home in peace and joy.

God has called us, God has claimed us, God has redeemed us. This is good news for all of creation! Because of Christ, we can move forward knowing we are loved and forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH # 880 The Nicene Creed

(Please stand as you are able)

GLORIA PATRI #70

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

HYMN # 219 What Child is This

OFFERTORY Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart

F.C Atkinson, arr. Don Whitman

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

DOXOLOGY #95

(Please stand as you are able)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**God of hope and promise, we bring our humble gifts to help bring your light into a dark world that is too often overwhelmed by greed, pain, and loneliness. Accept these gifts of money and time, indeed, the gift of our very selves. Let them be brought into the sphere of your love and righteousness that they may bring help and hope to a weary and anxious world. And may we not just leave our gifts and go our way, but may we walk in your way carrying the light of your presence and allowing it to shine among all we meet. In the name of Christ, whom we have come to worship.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN #220 Angels from the Realms of Glory *(Please stand as you are able)*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Oh Mighty God arr. Don Whitman
(Please be seated)

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Bob Kintner: 828-329-2457

Lay Leaders: Paula Markert: 828-553-9434, Maria Buehler: 828-553-2128

Audio/Visual & Livestream: Joe Haraschak: 813-918-1916

Liturgist: Beth Holimon

Coffee Hour*: Patricia Simmons & Tom Cook

*Volunteers needed in 2026—see chart in FH

Liturgical selections adapted from umcdiscipleship.org resources.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Katie Monkus, daughter of Stan & Bobbie Moore,
as she begins radiation treatment for inoperable tumors on her liver;

Charlotte Gilmore; Cody Collins

The families of Mary June Warren and Beverly Goree

Those missing loved ones during this season

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers on the altar are offered by Ryan & Amanda Stahl in honor of their 30th wedding anniversary on December 30.

Thank you to Kathy Palmer who is stepping in today on the piano while Bob Kintner is away. We are grateful for her continuing connection to our church community.

We welcome Kerrigan Cannon as our guest musician today. Kerrigan is a Brevard College student seeking a degree in Music Education. She is local to Horseshoe, NC, graduating from West Henderson High School in 2024. She plays French horn and trumpet. We are grateful to have her share her gifts in worship today.

Sunday Morning Bible Study will return on January 11th. All are invited to join as the new year begins.

Year-End Gifts

If you are planning on mailing a year-end gift, please be sure to use our mailing address: **Lake Toxaway UMC, P.O. Box 83, Lake Toxaway, NC 28747**. Please let the church know if your winter address has changed by sending an email to pastor@laketoxawayumc.org to ensure your 2025 giving statement gets to you for your taxes. Giving statements will be mailed in the early part of 2026.

The Prayer Ministry meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 9:30 AM. Prayer requests may be mailed to LTUMCPrayerRequests@gmail.com.

AA Meets Every Thursday Night at 4:45 PM in the Dice Hall. To honor anonymity, please do not go to the Parish building from 4:00-6:00 PM.

Invitation to Become a Scripture Reader for Worship in 2026

We are inviting anyone interested to become a scripture reader for worship in the new year. Contact Kim at mldkjd@comporium.net or text 828-553-0283 to express your interest. She will work with Marcus in the next weeks to plan a schedule for 2026 that works for you. Thank you for sharing your gifts in this way.