

# Unto Glory

*A Prophetic Pilgrimage*

Advent 2025



Faith United Methodist Church  
301-881-1881 | [office@FaithWorksHere.com](mailto:office@FaithWorksHere.com)  
[www.FaithWorksHere.com](http://www.FaithWorksHere.com)

Sunday, December 14, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.  
Third Sunday in Advent

---

Accommodations: Faith provides large print hymnals and Bibles, magnifiers, printed versions of the sermon, FM wireless assistive listening devices, and noise-cancelling headphones for your use located on the white bookshelf at the Sanctuary entrance. Please feel free to use what you need and return. If you have any questions, please ask the welcome hosts at the Sanctuary entrance or contact Jennifer Young, Faith's Accessibility Coordinator, at [young.jennifer@gmail.com](mailto:young.jennifer@gmail.com) to request any other accommodations for future worship services.

## WE GATHER

Centering

Prelude: *Sinfonia (Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248, No. 10, 1734)*

Chamber Ensemble

Dr. Michael Wu, Director

Sally McLain and Jennifer Houck, Violin; Michael Chong, Viola;

Stephen Czarkowski, Cello; Joseph Cunliffe and

Katie Ambacher, Flute; Kathryn Jurado and

Michael Helgerman, Oboe

Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750

Welcome

Nancy Kneisly, Outreach Team, chair

Call to Worship

Brian Jones, Liturgist

ONE: Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters of joy!

**ALL: Our hearts are hungry for delight,  
our souls long for gladness.**

ONE: Listen, and you will live;  
sing, and you will find your strength renewed.

**ALL: We come to worship the God  
who leads us in joy and gathers us in peace.**

Confession and Pardon

Brian Jones



## Prayer of Confession

One: Joyful God,  
we confess that we often forget how to sing.

**All: We let cynicism steal our delight,  
and worry mute our praise.**

**We forget that You created us for laughter, for wonder, for joy.**

One: Forgive us, O God.

**All: Teach us the song of Your salvation again.  
Let it rise from our hearts and echo into the world,  
until all creation dances to the music of Your love.**

(Silent reflection)

**All: Amen.**

Words of Pardon

Brian Jones

Passing the Peace

Wreath Lighting: JOY      Emily Sama-Miller, Aurelia, Cora & Ryan Miller

## WORD

\*Hymn #216: *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming*

Chancel Choir & Congregation  
Ann Bartlow, organ

Children's Message

Brian Jones, Leadership Board, member

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:1-13

Brian Jones

Today's reading can be found on pages #685-686 in the Old Testament  
of the pew Bible.

Special Musical Presentation

*For Us a Child Is Born: A Christmas Cantata* (BWV 142, c. 1711)

Chancel Choir, Soloists, and Chamber Ensemble

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750

more recently attributed to Johann Kuhnau, 1660-1722

Movements:

I. Overture (Chamber Ensemble)

II. Chorus: *For Us a Child Is Born*

III. Aria: So Appears Thy Natal Day (Howard Bartlow, baritone)

IV. Chorus: Laud We the Name

V. Aria: Lord, My Thanks to Thee (Andre Coleman, tenor)

VI. Recitative: Immanuel! O Give to Me (Eleanor Smedberg, alto)

VII. Aria: Lord, I Sing Thy Name (Eleanor Smedberg, alto)

VIII. Chorus: Alleluia

## WONDER

Invitation to Offering

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Offertory Prayer

Brian Jones

## WHAT NOW?

Prayers of the People

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Pilgrim's Perspective

Laura Basford

\*Hymn #213: *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

Chancel Choir and Congregation  
Ann Bartlow, organ

Sending Forth

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Postlude: *Allegro (Concerto Grosso, TWV 54:B2, 1718)*

Chamber Ensemble  
Dr. Michael Wu, Director  
Georg Philipp Telemann, 1681-1767

*The altar flowers are given in loving memory of Lesley Avery's parents,  
Buddy and Lucille Browne, charter members of Faith UMC.*

## UNTO GLORY: A PROPHETIC PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage is not only about what we receive but how we live because of it. On this Advent journey, we are called to move from passive waiting to active witness. Like the shepherds who ran to Bethlehem and the Magi who offered their treasures, we respond with worship, generosity and justice. We respond with compassion and love. Our lives become a testimony that the Word has become flesh and dwells among us.





## VISITORS



If you are new to Faith United Methodist Church, welcome! We encourage you to scan the QR code to let us know that you joined us today. If you would rather, you may complete a blue guest card that is available from a welcome host, then drop it in the offering chest.

## OFFERING

We are not passing an offering plate at this time. An offering box has been placed on the welcome table in the Narthex. You may also scan the QR code to give online.



## YOUTH MINISTRY

*Today at 5:00 p.m.*

Middle and high school youth will meet tonight at Faith UMC to wrap gifts for the families on our Angel Tree. This is a wonderful opportunity to share joy and serve others during the holiday season. For questions, contact Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator, at [ssmedberg@faithworkshere.com](mailto:ssmedberg@faithworkshere.com).

## ADVENT RESOURCES

We invite you to continue on our Advent journey, *Unto Glory: A Prophetic Pilgrimage* — a walk through prophetic visions of hope, peace, joy and love that lead us to the light of Christ. Each step draws us nearer to the manger, nearer to God's dream for creation and nearer to the truth of who we are called to be. Visit our website to explore our curated list of books, movies, podcasts and music that can inspire, explore and celebrate a pilgrimage, by scanning the QR code.



So lace up your hearts, beloved travelers. The road is set before us. Let's walk it together — unto glory. If you have suggestions for additional resources that will illuminate our journey, please let us know at [office@faithworkshere.com](mailto:office@faithworkshere.com).



## SPECIAL CHARGE CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

*Wednesday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m.*

The Leadership Board has asked and received permission from our District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Ianther Mills to convene a special Charge Conference on Wednesday, December 17 at 7 p.m. via ZOOM for the purpose of revising the clergy compensation agreement for 2026. This is an administrative issue to correct an oversight.

When the Board made its recommendations earlier in the fall, it was not aware that the UMC would be implementing new formulas in 2026 for the contributions made by churches to their pastor's pension plan. It was the intention of the Board to increase the pastor's total compensation (salary, housing allowance, pension contributions) by the same cost of living increase granted to social security recipients. However, after the new formulas for pension contributions were applied the total compensation fell far short of the objective. The purpose of this Charge Conference is to approve a correction of the clergy compensation report to achieve the Board's original intentions.

The Charge Conference is comprised of the Leadership Board and retired ordained ministers who hold membership at Faith. The Conference will take place via ZOOM. If you have questions, please contact Bill Maas ([billmaas@verizon.net](mailto:billmaas@verizon.net)), chair of the leadership board.

## THE LONGEST NIGHT

*Sunday, December 21, at 7:00 p.m.*

Join us as we worship together on December 21 – the date of the winter solstice and often referred to as the Longest Night. We recognize that not every moment of the season is joyful. There is space for times of darkness and grief. Often, in retrospect, growth comes from these times. In the moment, God is with us as we sit and rest, weep and wonder. Our hope is that this worship service will create a safe and sacred space for those who are struggling to feel the joy and light of this season. Gather with us.

**This service will not be live-streamed; we encourage you to consider bringing someone who might not be able to drive that evening.**

## STAFF GIFT

*Friday, December 19*

Our staff have been instrumental in guiding transitions from traditional approaches to embracing new opportunities and challenges. In addition to ensuring a meaningful worship experience each week—both in person and online—they support community outreach, pastoral care, ministries of justice and programming for children and youth. Their leadership and commitment help us live out our mission and welcome all who seek connection and hope.

The Leadership Board invites you to consider a monetary gift to the staff as a thank-you for work well done. You may contribute using the weekly Sunday online portal (the portal now includes an option to contribute to the Staff Christmas Gift), visit our website at [FaithWorksHere.com](http://FaithWorksHere.com) to give online, or send a check to the church office marked “Staff Gift.” The deadline for donations is Friday, December 19, to allow time to process gifts before Christmas. Thank you.

## QUARTERS FOR KIDS

Faith Church is collecting quarters during the Advent season to help The Heifer Project ([heifer.org](http://heifer.org)) provide families with chickens and ducks that lay eggs, honeybees that increase the yields of fruit and vegetable gardens, goats that give milk, and sheep that produce wool. Donations may be placed in the offering chest in the Narthex any Sunday through January 4th or given electronically on the Faith website using the “Give” button. Our “pocket change” can provide sustainable food sources and warm clothing for disadvantaged families.





## TRY SOMETHING NEW!

Volunteer to be part of one of the teams below as a ministry of the Faith community.

- **Welcome Hosts:** The sign-up sheet to serve as a welcome host is available in the narthex next to the flower calendar. We need volunteers for December, January and February. If you have never served as a welcome host, we will pair you with someone to teach you the ropes. All you need is a smile!
- **Nursery:** Faith sees the nursery as a child's first step toward a relationship with Christ. As infants and toddlers learn to trust those who care for them, their hearts prepare to have faith in God, who loves and cares for them. Following Safe Sanctuary policies, two unrelated adults are required to work with children. We are asking for volunteers to serve in the nursery from 9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. in Room 210 with Tessa Ricketts. If not already completed, volunteers will need to finish the online Safe Sanctuary training. If you are interested, please contact the church office at [office@faithworkshere.com](mailto:office@faithworkshere.com).

## SERVING US TODAY

Acolyte: Grace Basford

Advent Wreath Liturgy: Emily Sama-Miller, Aurelia, Cora and Ryan Miller

Altar Guild for December: Nancy Kneisly

Audio Visual Volunteer: Eric Winchenbach, Jason Spriggs, Brian Hahs

Congregational Welcome: Nancy Kneisly

Fellowship Hosts: Carol & Gordon Henley

Liturgist: Brian Jones

Money Counter: Alisa Dowd, Jane Rall

Nursery Caregiver: Tessa Ricketts

Online Host: Mary Stark

Sunday School Teachers:

- Elementary School Teachers: Dawn Adair Johnson, Frank Johnson, Jane Rall, Janelle Veazey
- Middle School Teachers: Jeff Bryant, Sara Romeyn
- High School Teachers: Kristen Wayne

Welcome Team Hosts: Bill Beisner, Sharon Virts

## FAITH UMC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Pastor | Ann Bartlow, Organist | André Coleman, Tenor Section Leader | Keshika Dias, Facilities Manager | Valerie Kunsman, Office Administrator | Curtis Osborne, Coordinator of Intergenerational Nurture | Tessa Ricketts, Nursery Staff | Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator | Kim Webster, Finance Manager | Dr. Michael Wu, Music Director



# Unto Glory

## A PROPHETIC PILGRIMAGE



December 14 – Isaiah 55:1-13

*Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant.*

The prophet Isaiah implores us to seek the Lord in all things, and to remember that like the heavens, God's ways are higher than our ways and each divine word accomplishes God's purpose.

### Consider:

- How are you "seeking the Lord?"
- In this passage, God expands his covenant, and Isaiah reminds us that God's words and God's ways are higher than ours. What, in your mind, is it important to consider when thinking about God's ways and purpose?
- On this third Sunday in Advent, we celebrate joy. The prophet tells us, "For you shall go out in joy and return in peace; the mountains and hills before you shall burst into song and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." How will you choose abundant, extravagant joy this week?

### On a sacred journey (John 4:13-14)

*Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."*

Jesus' choice of a Samaritan and a woman to converse with was a surprising one for many people. She goes on to be a witness and evangelist. What things do you turn to for comfort and gratification? How do they differ from the idea of the "living water" that Jesus offers? How might you be a witness to the joy and abundance of God this week?