



November 16, 2025  
23rd Sunday After Pentecost  
10:15 am Family Contemporary Worship





*Come & See*

## WELCOME

Welcome to worship! We are so glad that you've chosen to worship here! Cross & Crown is a community of Christ-followers from all walks of life. We hope that you will feel a warm welcome from the congregation and will worship with us again!

## ADDITIONAL SUNDAY INFORMATION

Sunday school classes are offered for adults located in the Multipurpose space. Our adult class, Books of Faith, meets in room 206.

Communion is offered each week. Everyone is invited to the Lord's Table!

Our church has something for everyone, and not just on Sundays. During the week, we have activities such as Bible studies and small groups. On Wednesday evenings we share a fellowship dinner at 6 pm. We hope you'll come try it out! See the back of the bulletin for more details about how to sign up.

Now that you know a little about us, help us get to know you better by completing the Connection Card handed to you by one of our greeters when you entered. You can hand it to one of the pastors or drop it in the offering plate.

## PARENTS

We love the sound of kids in our service! Here are some ideas to keep them engaged.

**Relax!** It's ok to let kids be kids!

**Sit close:** Consider sitting up front where it's easier for kids to see and hear.

**Explain:** Kids are curious! Explain what's happening in the service.

**Participate:** Sing hymns loudly, pray, respond, etc. Children learn by following your lead.

**Activities:** If you would like a bag of quiet activities for your little ones, ask an usher and they will provide one for you.

**Wander:** It's ok to move around. Sometimes it's easier to let fidgety kids move a bit.

**Need to Leave?** No problem, but please come back! Sometimes kids just need a break. There are speakers in the narthex & lounge so you can hear. The narthex is a great place to get the wiggles out, and the lounge is nice if you need privacy.

**Ask:** Questions or just need help? Just ask one of our ushers.

**Childcare:** The nursery is down the hall in the Multipurpose Space for infants to age 4 and is available during both worship services. If you need assistance, an usher can help you. C&C Kids is offered to kids pre-K through 3rd grade. Kids depart the sanctuary during the Passing of the Peace and return to worship before communion.

# WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

## Prelude

On Eagle's Wings

Joncas, arr. Carter

## Worship Song

Reckless Love

Culver, Asbury, Jackson

### Verse 1

Before I spoke a word You were singing over me  
You have been so so good to me  
Before I took a breath You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so so kind to me

### Chorus

(And) O the overwhelming never-ending reckless  
Love of God  
O it chases me down fights 'til I'm found  
Leaves the ninety-nine  
I couldn't earn it I don't deserve it  
Still You give Yourself away  
O the overwhelming never-ending reckless  
Love of God yeah

### Verse 2

When I was Your foe still Your love fought for me  
You have been so so good to me  
When I felt no worth You paid it all for me  
You have been so so kind to me

### Bridge

There's no shadow You won't light up  
Mountain You won't climb up  
Coming after me  
There's no wall You won't kick down  
Lie You won't tear down  
Coming after me

## Confession

P: Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection

P: Lord God, we have failed as the people you call us to be.

We don't put you as a priority in our lives. We turn our backs on you.

We use your name freely to justify our actions.

We worship money and idols instead of serving the needy and poor.

We neglect those closest to us and take them for granted.

We murder with our words and push others away with our selfish actions.

We don't honor the promises that we make with you and with our partners.

We take without thinking through the consequences of our actions.

We lie to get ahead, make ourselves look better, and to spare feelings.

We are jealous of our neighbors and their possessions.

C: Lord, Forgive us and bring your grace.

P: Jesus came into this world to save us from our sins. God runs to us with open arms to offer forgiveness, mercy and love. As a called and ordained ministry of the church of Christ and by His authority and pronounces to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C: AMEN.

## Prayers of the Church

*Your love is lifting me higher  
Your love is lifting me higher*

*Your love is lifting me higher  
Your love is. Your love is.*

(Refrain)

Let us pray for all those in the world that God created, kneeling, sitting, or standing.

Holy One, we praise you for your overwhelming grace in which you sent your one and only Son to redeem the world. When we face loss, doubt, or endings, lift our eyes to the promise that you are still creating life where we see none. Let the hope of the resurrection shape our courage, our compassion, and our joy today and always.

God of life and hope, guide the leaders of our nation and all nations with wisdom rooted in justice and compassion. Where there is conflict, sow in them the courage to choose peace over power, reconciliation over revenge. Let your resurrection hope awaken in every heart a vision of a world renewed by mercy, truth, and love.

And we sing...

(Refrain)

Spirit of God, move in and among your church. In a congregation of faithful believers, energize us for compassionate service and delight us through worship and inspired prayer. Encourage your people in building an equitable community where all are valued.

Living God, where injustice and exploitation result in populations that are marginalized or underserved, accompany those abandoned by friends, hurt by family, and harmed by violence or oppression. We pray for any who are hungry, living in poverty or desperation, weary in body or spirit, or sick. We lift up to you all on our congregational prayer list and all we name aloud at this time...

(Pause for congregation)

Comfort all in need of your tender care.

O God, we lift to you our prayers, trusting in your everlasting grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We sing our AMEN.

(Refrain)

(Children may head out for C&C Kids)



This Week's Story: Queen Esther  
Icebreaker Question: What is your favorite number?

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Welcome Home and Announcements (See back page for additional announcements.)

## THE WORD

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

12 But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; 13 esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. 15 See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in

all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

### Luke 11:1-13

1He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." 2So he said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, may your name be revered as holy.

May your kingdom come.

3Give us each day our daily bread.

4And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

5And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' <sup>7</sup>And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' <sup>8</sup>I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything out of friendship, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

<sup>9</sup>"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>11</sup>Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup>Or if the child asked for an egg, would give a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

(Please be seated)

Sermon

Pastor Matt Simpkins

## THANKSGIVING

Anthem

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

Nancy Hill Cobb

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me bless His name.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy,

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy

To them that fear Him.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within in me bless His name.

Psalm 103: 1, 8, 11

(Please stand

### Offertory Response

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful



The musical notation consists of five lines of music in G clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with each line of text corresponding to a line of music. The lyrics are as follows:

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -  
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

### Statement of Belief

#### The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

### Come to the Table—Everyone's Invited!

Holy Communion is a celebration of Christ's love, shared through His body and blood. If you're hungry for His presence, this meal is for you! We commune by taking a piece of bread and dipping it into wine or grape juice. Need grape juice or gluten-free options? No problem—the assistant will gladly help you out. Kids are welcome, too! Just let the assistant know if your child will be receiving Communion or would prefer a special blessing. We're so glad you're here—let's share this joyful moment together!

## Communion

### Words of Institution

#### 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.

Our Father, who is of heaven,  
Holy is your name  
Your kingdom come  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us today our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses  
**OR**  
As we forgive those who trespass against us  
And lead us not into temptation  
and deliver us from evil  
For yours is the kingdom  
And the power, and the glory  
now and forever, Amen.

### Welcome to the Table

P: Come now and feast on the gifts of God for the people of God.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please be seated)

#### Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

### Distribution of Holy Communion

## Communion Song

### Promises

#### Verse 1

God of Abraham You're the God of covenant  
Of faithful promises  
Time and time again You have proven  
You do just what You say

#### Pre-Chorus

Though the storms may come  
And the winds may blow  
I'll remain steadfast  
And let my heart learn when You speak a word  
It will come to pass

#### Chorus

Great is Your faithfulness to me  
Great is Your faithfulness to me  
From the rising sun to the setting same  
I will praise Your name  
Great is Your faithfulness to me

#### Interlude 1

Oh Seasons change  
You remain the same

#### Verse 2

God from age to age  
Though the earth may pass away  
Your word remains the same yeah

Marin, Barnes, Bowe, Moses, Gaines, Alvarado

Your history can prove  
There's nothing You can't do  
You're faithful and true

#### Interlude 2

Oh Your faithfulness  
It never runs out  
It never runs out  
Oh Your faithfulness  
Oh it never runs out  
(Never runs out)  
It never runs out  
(Never runs out)

#### Bridge

I put my faith in Jesus  
My anchor to the ground  
My hope and firm foundation  
He'll never let me down  
(REPEAT)

#### Vamp 1

From the rising sun to the setting same  
I will praise Your name

## The Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in God's grace.

C: Amen.

## Benediction

P: The love of God the Sovereign strengthen you, God the Son save you, and God the Holy Spirit anoint you for the work ahead. The holy Trinity bless you + and grant you a faithful and courageous heart now and forever.

C: Amen.

## Sending Song

### Stand In Your Love

Baldwin, Hulse, Springer, Harris

#### Verse 1

When darkness tries to roll over my bones  
When sorrow comes to steal the joy I own  
When brokenness and pain is all I know  
I won't be shaken I won't be shaken

#### Chorus

My fear doesn't stand a chance  
When I stand in Your love  
(REPEAT)

#### Verse 2

Shame no longer has a place to hide  
I am not a captive to the lies  
I'm not afraid to leave my past behind  
I won't be shaken I won't be shaken

#### Bridge

There's power that can break off every chain  
There's power that can empty out a grave  
There's resurrection power that can save  
There's power in Your name power in Your name

#### Ending

Standing in Your love

### The Doxology (sung a capella)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures here below;  
praise God above, ye heav'nly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!

### Sending

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!



### ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK – TODAY!

Join us TODAY for Cross & Crown's Annual Meeting in the sanctuary following worship. We'll review next year's budget, discuss plans for 2026, and hold council elections. Afterward, we'll gather in the Fellowship Hall for a potluck meal—please bring a dish to share as we enjoy food and fellowship together!



# Gobble, Gobble!

*We only need a few more frozen turkeys to bless local families in need this Thanksgiving! We're asking for 12-15 lb turkeys or a 9 lb bone-in breast.*



**A FEW MORE TURKEYS NEEDED!**

*If you have signed up to bring a turkey, please have it delivered to the church by **THIS WEDNESDAY** before 8 pm. There is a designated space in the large freezer in the Fellowship Hall for the turkeys.*

**PLEASE BE SURE THAT THE FREEZER DOOR IS SECURELY CLOSED.**

*The church office is open on Monday & Tuesday between 8:30 am & 2 pm. If you need to deliver on Wednesday, please coordinate with LeAnne in the church office and she will make arrangements for someone to let you in.*

*Scan the QR code to let us know what you're bringing so we can track our progress. Prefer to give instead? You can sponsor a turkey with a \$25 donation. Questions? Contact Keith Whitener for details.*





# Food Drive for Common Heart

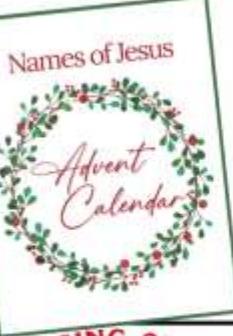
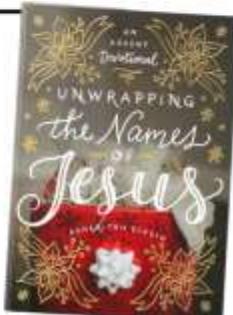
The food drive for Common Heart continues! So far we have donated almost 1,000 pounds of food in the past 2 weeks!

Thank you to all who have donated!  
Let's see if we can get that total over 1,500!

## Advent Devotional Books Available!

Join us this Advent season as we journey through Unwrapping the Names of Jesus, a devotional that invites us to reflect on who Christ is and the hope He brings. Our midweek services will begin on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:45 pm.

Books can be purchased on Amazon, or you can pick up one in the Narthex. Copies can also be purchased on Amazon. Coordinating advent calendars are available in the Narthex, too!



## Advent Calendars Available!

This set of 25 Advent cards includes one card for each day of December leading up to Christmas. Each card features one of the names of Jesus on the back, along with a Bible verse that highlights its meaning and significance. The set coordinates with our Advent devotional book, but you're welcome to take a set even if you're not following along with the book! Choose from either an easel display or a garland format.



Join us for our **Hanging of the Green** service on Sunday, November 30th at 4:00 PM, followed by a potluck meal—please bring a dish to share!

After the meal, each household is invited to stay and make their own Advent wreath. Please bring garden gloves and handheld trimmers. The church will provide foil pans, wet oasis, plastic candle holders, candles, and an assortment of fresh-cut greens, pinecones, and berries.

**Come and help us prepare our hearts and our space for this special season of anticipation!**

## ROADSIDE CLEANUP- DEC. 5



Looking for a way to serve at Cross & Crown? Join our next Roadside Cleanup on Saturday, Dec. 5th! We'll meet at the church at 8:45 am. (donuts provided!) go over safety rules, and begin cleanup at 9 am. Most teams finish in about two hours. No experience needed—volunteers ages 12+ welcome! Use the QR code to sign up or contact Stuart and Julie Moffat at 704-517-0272 for details. Thanks for helping keep Matthews clean!





# It's a Women & Wine Cookie Swap!



Women & Wine is having a cookie swap! Bring a batch of your favorite homemade treats to share, and go home with a delicious assortment from others. It's the perfect way to kick off the season with fun & fellowship!

DEC



1-3 PM

SCAN TO  
RSVP!



Laura Van Landingham's Home  
5150 Blackberry Lane • Matthews, NC 28104



## Flowers for Christmas

We invite you to help beautify our sanctuary this Christmas by ordering flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. Your generous contribution will add to the festive atmosphere as we celebrate the birth of Christ. To participate, please complete the flower order form using the insert in the bulletin. **Orders are due by November 30th.**

Thank you for helping us make our Christmas services even more special! Donations can be made to Common Heart in lieu of flowers.

## No Thanksgiving Plans? You're Invited!

If you don't have Thanksgiving plans this year, we'd love for you to spend time with your church family! Join us at Cross & Crown for a Thanksgiving meal filled with good food, warm fellowship, and grateful hearts. Contact Terry McClure, Vivian Farland, or Julie Rutkowski if you plan to attend so we can have a place set for you.

**All are welcome!**



# Week at a Glance

## Monday, November 17th

10 am- Morning Book Club  
7:30 pm- Women's Bible Study

## Tuesday, November 18th

12 pm- Staff Meeting  
7 pm- Worship & Music Committee Mtg.  
7 pm- Finance Committee Mtg.

## Wednesday, November 19th

6 pm- Wednesday Night Happenings Dinner  
6:30 pm- Executive Committee Mtg.  
Men's Gathering @ the Fire Pit  
6:45 pm- Handbells  
7:30 pm- Choir

## Thursday, November 20th

7:45 am- Men's Bible Study

## Friday, November 21st

4:30 pm- Walking Club

## Saturday, November 22nd

12pm- Paint & Sip

## Sunday, November 23rd

8:15 am Worship  
9 am Coffee Hour  
9:15 am- Adult Sunday School Book of Psalm  
10:15 am- Worship  
11:30 am- Council Meeting  
4 pm- Hanging of the Green

## Serving in Worship Today

You can give to C&C by scanning  
the QR code below.

## SCAN TO GIVE



Assisting Minister:	Felicia Eybl
Acolyte:	Copeland Simpkins
Communion Assistants:	Julie & Ashley Rutkowski
Usher:	Leonard Rutkowski, Brian Deppe
Communion Set-up:	Kim Kirk
Greeters:	Cathy Kozlinski
Nursery Assistant:	John Hejka
C&C Kids:	Jason & Dawn Watts
Contribution Counter:	Barbara Maillet, Cathy Kozlinski

## Our Staff

Melody Simpkins  
Matt Simpkins  
Larry Stratemeyer  
LeAnne Bates  
Laura Van Landingham  
Dan Goldstein  
Terry McClure  
Jessica Carter

Co-Pastor  
Co-Pastor  
Dir. of Music Ministries  
Church Administrator  
Ministry Program Coordinator  
Technical Director  
Hospitality Coordinator  
Custodian

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