

Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church

Established 1812
Warrenton, North Carolina



The Reverend Ray Gooch, Pastor

The Reverend Connie Mitchell Shelton, Bishop
North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church
700 Waterfield Ridge Place
Garner, North Carolina 27529
Phone 800 849-4433

The Reverend David Joyner, District Superintendent
heritagedistrict@nccumc.org

Our mission is to assist people in recognizing God's call to a new life through faith in Christ Jesus. We exist to worship God, to serve Christ and to love our neighbors in the same way God loves us. We are a family of believers who profess our imperfections at the same time that we strive to help each other become more Christ-like through worship, education, service and fellowship.

Service of the Word

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent

** THE GATHERING	<i>Improvisations on Carols</i>	Gerre Hancock
THE CHIMING OF THE HOUR, WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS		
	<i>The Light of Christ leads us in to worship.</i>	
PRELUDE	<i>Adagio on 'Hyfrydol'</i>	Charles Callahan
CALL TO WORSHIP		
	Whenever people are confronted with astonishing news, they long for a sign that will verify the possibility of what may seem impossible. <i>It just helps us hold on to the hope that is generated within. It gives us something to look for as we wait for reality to set in.</i> God is generous with us. Sometimes we dare not to ask for a sign, God gives it anyway. <i>May God give us the eyes to see and the wisdom to accept the signs that God gives us!</i>	
PRAYER		
	<i>God of hope and peace and joy, fill us once again with your Spirit that we bear witness in this word of your truth cradled in your love for us. Amen.</i>	
* HYMN	<i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i>	UMH 196
ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING	<i>Isaiah 7:1-16</i>	Elizabeth Comstock
LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF LOVE		
RESPONSE	<i>Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel</i>	UMH 211
PRAYER		
	<i>In the holiness of birth, Almighty God, you breathe your life into the newborn. With the breath of your Holy Spirit, we are launched into new birth and new life. Born in your love, we are truly blessed. Thanks be to you, Holy God, for the newness of life. Amen.</i>	
PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION		
GOSPEL LESSON	<i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>	Pew Bible NT 1
A TIME OF SHARING WITH THE CHILDREN		
ANTHEM	<i>In the Bleak Midwinter</i>	Ruth Elaine Schram
EPISTLE LESSON	<i>Romans 1:1-7</i>	Pew Bible NT 142
* HYMN	<i>I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light</i>	UMH 206
* A PSALM PRAYER	<i>Psalm 80:1-7 (responsively)</i>	UMH 801
SERMON	<i>An Advent Sign</i>	Reverend Gooch
PRAYERS FOR GOD'S SIGNS		
THE LORD'S PRAYER		UMH 895
OFFERTORY	<i>Improvisation on 'Hyfrydol'</i>	Callahan
PRESENTATION OF OUR GIFTS		
* DOXOLOGY	<i>Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow</i>	UMH 94
* HYMN	<i>O Come, O Come Emmanuel</i>	UMH 211
* BENEDICTION AND BLESSINGS		
* CHORAL RESPONSE	<i>Go Now in Peace</i>	UMH 665
* CHIMING OF THE TRINITY		
* POSTLUDE	<i>Improvisation on 'Veni Emmanuel'</i>	Hancock
	<i>The Light of Christ leads us out into the world.</i>	

** Please enter in preparation for Christian Worship.

* All who are able may stand.

Pastor, The Reverend Ray Gooch
Liturgist, Jeff Harty
Greeter, Suzi Byam

Organist/Choir Director, Chet Hunt
Ushers, Steve Milligan, Tommy Ross
Acolyte, Ellen Hunter
Altar, Anne Harris

TO OUR VISITORS: We welcome all of our visitors today! In this hour, may your life be filled with peace as we worship our Lord together. If you do not have a church home, we invite you to join us. Please sign a visitor's card and let us know if you would like a call or a visit.

CHRISTMAS OPPORTUNITIES: Thanks to all who selected "ornaments" from the Angel Tree. Your gifts are filling the narthex and will surely brighten Christmas for several in need. Today is the deadline for returning your gifts, if you haven't already. Please wrap your gift and attach the name portion only of the gift tag. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness!

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP: Tomorrow night, December 22 at 5 p.m., there will be a contemplative worship, *Waiting in Darkness*, at Solitude Farm and Retreat Center, 182 Stagecoach Road, Warrenton, NC. Please bring a flashlight and arrive no later than 4:55 pm. Thank you to the Wethingtons for hosting, and to The Reverend Candy White for leading this service.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: At 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Wesley Memorial will host *A Service of Lessons and Carols, Communion and Candlelight*. Please come as you are and bring your guests to this special service. The offering at this service is earmarked for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to assist people in our community.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS: Our sincere thanks to all of you who so generously gave poinsettias and boxwood wreaths to decorate the church and parsonage for Christmas, and a special thanks to all who offered their talents to make the entire church, inside and out, a special place to worship and spend Advent and Christmas. Poinsettias will be on the altar for Christmas Eve and may be picked up following Wednesday's service.

OUR SYMPATHIES: We extend sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of The Reverend Charles Owens, former pastor at Wesley Memorial, who died Saturday, December 13, at Croasdaile Village in Durham. Condolences may be shared with his children, Rosa, Eddie and Bobby, at 1119 Olive Branch Road, Durham, 27703. A celebration of his life will be in the new year.

COMMUNITY PRAYER TREE: Wesley Memorial hosted a lovely gathering on Monday night during which several from Warrenton Baptist Church led the devotional and presented music for Community Prayer Tree gathering. The tree will be up through Christmas, and you may still place prayer request tags on the tree. Please let others know!

BASKET COLLECTION: Basket funds provide relief to those in need in our community. In 2024, the amount raised was \$2,777.00. Thanks to all who contribute throughout the year.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Tom Aycock, Jules Banzet, Mary Lou Bond, Anne Harris and Saralee Scott

Friends

The family, friends and colleagues of Mike Aycock

The family, friends and colleagues of The Reverend Charles Owens, former WMUMC pastor

The family, friends and colleagues of all who are killed or injured in senseless violence

All parties involved with the fragile peace deal, hostage / prisoner exchange in the

Middle East

The families of all in peril in Ukraine

Logan Barber, Lesa Bobbitt, Elke Capps, Glenn Coleman III, Janet Coleman,
Syd Cooper, Abby and Josh Cordes, John Boyd Davis, Suzanne Fleming, Allen Harris,
Ronnie Hight, Candy Holland, Donna Hunt, Phil Hunt, Warren Knight, Scott Lang,
Diane Lynch, Doris Milligan, Luke McCullough, Chris Pegram, Judy Pulley, Travis Pulley,
Suzan Monk Stafford and Holly Williams

SUNDAY, December 28, 2025

Scripture: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98;
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

Altar: Anne Harris

Greeter: Suzi Byam

Ushers: Alan DuBose, Lee Whitley

COMING UP

December 22 - Waiting in Darkness worship, 5 p.m.

Solitude Farm and Retreat Center

182 Stagecoach Road, Warrenton

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service, 5 p.m.

Wesley Memorial sanctuary

December 28 - Morning Worship, 11 a.m.

Wesley Memorial UMC
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2025 Church Budget - \$112,115.95
Amt. Needed Per Sunday - \$2,157.00

Collection Last Sunday - \$11,115.00
Attendance Last Sunday - 35