

**LIVING SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 21, 2025**

*Living Saviour Lutheran Church is a faith community
striving to live and love as Jesus did, eagerly welcoming all
and bringing healing, help, and hope to the world.*

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS TODAY:

Assisting Minister - **Heather Langan**
Crucifer - **Cooper Thom**
Acolyte - **Henry Schwab**

INSTRUMENTALIST TODAY:

Trumpet - **Gordon Hann**
Woodwinds - **Barbara Tobin**

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Steve and Janet Axtman in loving memory of their parents, Vickie, Kenneth and Nolan.

THIS WORSHIP FOLDER contains all elements of the worship service. It is designed to encourage your participation. Please read the words in bold print and join in the singing of all hymns. Italicized words are instructions.

RESTROOMS are located at the back of the sanctuary and down the short hallway.

WE WELCOME CHILDREN IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES!

Parents, you are always welcome to bring your children to worship with you. If you are comfortable and prefer having them in supervised childcare, it is available and is under the very capable and loving supervision of Ms. Carla. The Childcare Room is down the steps as you enter the gathering area outside the sanctuary. Someone will be happy to direct you there.

- **CHILDREN'S WORSHIP BULLETINS** for readers and non-readers are available on the welcome table where the worship folders are located.
- **QUIET BAGS** for use by children during worship have been updated and arranged by age groups. They are located to the left as you enter the sanctuary. Please feel free to pick one up and replace it on the hooks when you leave.
- **SPARK FAMILY MAGAZINES** are available on the welcome table and are free for the taking!

NEIGHBOR BAGS have been assembled and are located in the blue bin outside of the sanctuary. Please take a few to keep in your car and hand out when the opportunity arises.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES are on page 22.

NOISY OFFERING for December will go to Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency (CRRA). CRRA provides resettlement services to refugees and asylees who are escaping violence, persecution, and repression.

Learn more on their website: <https://carolinarefugee.org/>

DECEMBER 2025 HEALTH AND WHOLENESS

The December theme for Health and Wholeness is Creating Peace on Earth.

Tip#3: Speak up for peace through non-violence, working to understand others. Educate yourself about conflict prevention, mediation, and peace building. Say no to violence. Treat others with respect, practice empathy, and promote understanding. Take part in local and national dialogues where people can share different perspectives even if they disagree. Work to stop bullying and harassment. Support understanding and reconciliation to promote peace.

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

WE GATHER IN CHRIST'S NAME

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

“Away in a Manger”

Bryan Sharpe

(Joyce Godwin, Moss Hathcock, Lucy Ilderton, Pastor Sara Ilderton, Cathy Lyall, Maria Rozhin, Riley Skidmore, Pat Snodgrass, Elizabeth Wise)

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESS AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, \ddagger one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.**
**We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.**
**We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.
You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace †,
and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

*Please turn to face the processional cross.
As the cross passes your row, please turn to the altar.*

GATHERING HYMN**"Savior of the Nations, Come"**

ELW 263:1,2,3,5,6

*V 1, 2—All**V 3—Higher voices**V 5—Lower Voices**V 6—All*

- 1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
- 2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
- 3 Won-drous birth—oh, won-drous child—from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
- 4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path-way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van-quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. hymnal version

Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524

Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Noonkester Family

Let us pray.

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
sharing our flesh and bones.
As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we wait and dream for you.
Bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.
Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.
We pray in the name of Emmanuel,
your promised child and our Savior.
Amen.

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ELW 240



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

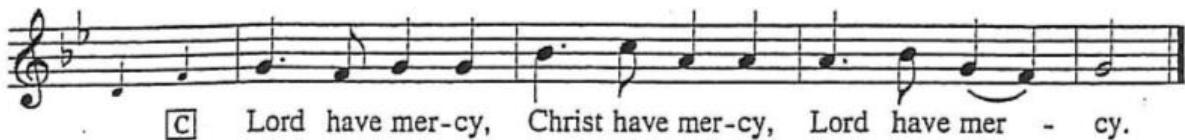
The fourth candle on the Advent Wreath is lit.

Please remain standing as you are able.

KYRIE FOR ADVENT

Cantor sings verses. All sing Refrain (R)

Verse: For watchful and ready hearts as we await the King of kings,
let us pray to the Lord (R)



[C] Lord have mer-cy, Christ have mer-cy, Lord have mer - cy.

Verse: For wisdom to see, for openness to hear, and for courage to
proclaim the advent of his reign, let us pray to the Lord (R)

Verse: For his rule of peace and justice, for his kingdom of truth and love,
let us pray to the Lord (R)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son.

**By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and
peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

Amen.

Please be seated.

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from Isaiah.

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also?

¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him 'Immanuel'. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cantor sings Alleluia. All sing Alleluia. Cantor sings verse. All sing Alleluia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le-lu-ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verse: The virgin shall conceive and I bear a son, and they shall name I him Emmanuel.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE/NOISY OFFERING

SERMON

Pastor Sara Ilderton

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY**"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

ELW 257:1,6,7



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - - ra - el.

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'ly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill especially those we name silently or aloud...

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

After exchanging the peace with those near you, please be seated.

WE SHARE THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

*Ascribe unto the LORD the honor due unto his Name;
bring offerings and come into his courts.* *Psalm 96:8*

The offering plate is passed. You may also give electronically using the QR code on the back cover.

MUSICAL OFFERING “Lift Up Your Heads” Niedmann

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY “Blessed is the One” ACS 929



Bless-ed is the one who comes in the name, who comes
in the name of the Lord. Bless-ed is the one who comes
in the name, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Text: Psalm 118:26

Music: BLESSED IS THE ONE, Nathan Hauge, b. 1977

Music © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground.

**Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine and money,
and make us messengers of your mercy and love
for all in need of your healing and justice.
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our privilege and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

3

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

The celebrant continues with the Words of Institution.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Please be seated.

An usher will direct you forward for Communion.

Communion is served around the altar rail. You may kneel or stand.

We use wheat wafers, white grape juice and wine. If you need a gluten free wafer, please make that known to the pastor.

For any who desire a blessing, please come forward with your arms crossed.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

*The body of Christ given for you.
The blood of Christ shed for you.*

COMMUNION HYMN

“Lamb of God”



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give us your
peace. Pre -pare us to re - ceive your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-
joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

MUSIC DURING SHARING OF BREAD AND WINE

Please join in singing the hymns.

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

ELW 265



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

Glo - - - - - ri - a!

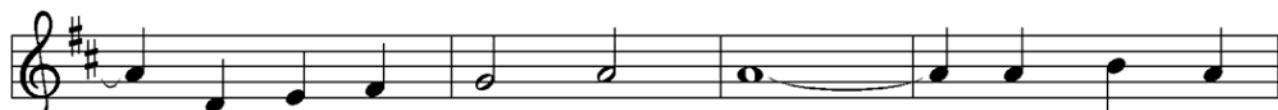
Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924
Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

"As the Dark Awaits the Dawn"

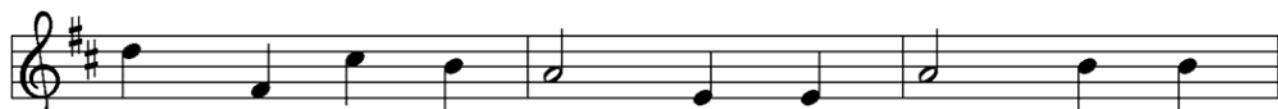
ELW 261



1 As the dark a - waits the dawn,
2 As the blue ex - pec - tant hour
3 As the moon re - flects the sun
4 Shine your fu - ture on this place,



so we a - wait your light. O Star of
be - fore the sil - v'ring skies, we long to
un - til the night's de - crease, may we your
en - light - en ev - 'ry guest, that through us



prom - ise, scat - ter night, lov - ing bright, lov - ing
see your day a - rise, whole and wise, whole and
heal - ing light re - lease, liv - ing peace, liv - ing
stream your ho - li - ness, bright and blest, bright and



bright, till shades of fear are gone.
wise, O lu - cent Morn - ing Star.
peace, un - to your ho - ly dawn.
blest; come dawn, O Sun of grace.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953

Music: LUCENT, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929

Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

"Wait for the Lord"

ELW 262

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.

www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Please stand as you are able.

COMMUNION BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gifts of his body and blood,
strengthen, keep and unite us now and forever.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.

WE ARE SENT TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,
Father, \ddagger Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN**"O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

1. O lit - tle town of Beth-le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry; And gath-ered all a - bove,
3. How si - lent-ly, how si - lent-ly, The won - drous gift is given!
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth-le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by.
While mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-dering love.
So God im-parts to hu - man hearts The bless-ings of His heaven.
Cast out our sin and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light;
O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth.
Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en-ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man-u - el!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

“Fantasy on “Joy to the World”

Helman

Credits/Acknowledgements

Intercessory Prayers from Sundays and Seasons by permission under Augsburg Liturgies License SAS103467

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #23663.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All music and lyrics published in this worship service are printed by permission of the following licenses:

OneLicense #A-725570, LisenSing #612800, CCLI #11242717, Augsburg Fortress #23663.

Holy: Arranged by Don Huff.

THIS WEEK AT LIVING SAVIOUR

Sunday: December 21

- 9:15 a.m. Children's Sunday School
- 9:15 a.m. Chancel Choir
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- 11:30 a.m. Monthly Council Meeting

Monday: December 22

- 6:15 p.m. Yoga 4 You

Tuesday: December 23

- 9:30 a.m. Yoga 4 You

Wednesday: December 24 - Christmas Eve - Office Closed

- 3:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Eve Worship
- 5:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas Eve Worship

Thursday: December 25 - Merry Christmas - Office Closed

Saturday: December 27

- 10:00 a.m. Yoga 4 You

Sunday: December 28

- 9:15 a.m. Chancel Choir
- 10:30 a.m. Worship



LIVING SAVIOUR

Lutheran Church

Living Saviour Lutheran Church
6817 Carmel Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28226
(704) 542-3626

The Reverend Sara Ilderton, Pastor
Don Huff, Director of Music Ministry
Nancy Mersereau, Assistant Musician
Laura Schwab, Administrative Assistant
Susan Hall, Treasurer
Elsie Davis, LS Preschool Director

QR for donating online:



scan to
join us online

Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera, tap the link, and you'll be taken to LSLC's YouTube Channel

