

Greenwood Forest
Baptist Church



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Bulletin Art:

Las Posadas by Donna Clair
(Illustration)

The illustration on the cover of the bulletin comes from a children's book by Jean Ciavonne called "Carlos, Light the Farolito" about the novenario (extended devotional prayer) tradition called Las Posadas. It is celebrated in many countries in Central America, Mexico, and in Hispanic communities in the United States. Typically, Las Posadas is celebrated between December 16 and 24 (nine days, one for each month of Mary's pregnancy).

Las Posadas means "the lodging" or "the inns" referring to the shelter (or lack thereof!) in the Nativity story. Traditionally, a small child leads a procession through the streets of the town. The processions can take many forms but often involve children surrounding Mary and Joseph and musicians. As the procession goes door-to-door in town, they are refused lodging (though people often give refreshments). Every time they make a stop, someone reads scripture and everyone sings a Christmas carol. The procession ends in Mass and a celebration for the children.

Las Posadas recreates the conditions of the Nativity, conditions that endure today. Many find themselves unwelcome and unhoused in our world today. When we observe those who don't receive welcome in our world, we should see them as the Holy Family. When we welcome each other, we welcome God.

In "Carlos, Light the Farolito," a small child is afraid to play his part in Las Posadas but he does gather the courage to do so. In the end, Carlos doesn't want this time of generous welcome to end. "Can't I stay up just a little longer?" Carlos asks his grandfather on the final day, Christmas Eve. May we approach this season of welcome like Carlos and never let go of God's radical hospitality.

- Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome



Greenwood Forest
Baptist Church

**an inclusive
community
of faith**

Welcome

We are so glad you've chosen to join us this week. Greenwood Forest Baptist Church is an inclusive community of faith, which means we welcome, affirm, and include all God's people in their diversity of genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We are each beloved by God and we are happy to welcome you to our church exactly as you are.

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REMINDERS



Nursery care is available for infants and toddlers. There is also a glider in the back of the sanctuary if you need to rock your little ones.



Hearing assistance devices are available at the back of the sanctuary along with a transcript of the sermon.



Services are livestreamed and you may end up on camera.



Gender-neutral, single-occupant bathrooms are located at the back of the sanctuary in the Narthex.



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Order of Worship Christmas Eve

✝ This icon indicates an invitation to stand or express reverence however you see fit.

📖 This icon indicates a worship aid is available in the righthand column.

🎵 Hymns and song lyrics are available in the songbook following the Order of Worship.

Chiming of the Hour

✝ **Processional Hymn** | *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (pg. 5)

Welcome to Worship | Rev. Lauren Efird

Leader: The Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Passing of the Peace 📖

Preparation for Worship | *Follow the Star* (pg. 8)

Lighting of the Christ Candle | *Alma Gazzaniga*

Call to Worship (Sanctified Art) | Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks

If you are like Joseph, and you are seeking truth,
There is room here for you.

If you are like Mary, and you are seeking rest,
There is a seat here for you.

If you are like the wise men, and you are looking for a sign,

These candles are here for you.

If you are like the angels, and you cannot help but sing,

There is a melody here for you.

Come in. You are in God's house.

Love was born tonight, and there is love here for you.

Let us worship the God of love.

Invocation | Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks

✝ **Hymn** | *Angels We Have Heard on High* (vv. 1-3; pg. 6)

Offertory Prayer | Andy Jarrell

Today's color is **white**, signifying an emphasis on the glory of God.

The Passing of the Peace

The passing of the peace is a symbolic enactment of the reconciling love and mercy of God in our midst. We express it through a peace sign, a handshake, a wave, or many other expressions of peace. Be mindful and considerate of others' desire for physical space or distance.

Prayer in Worship

We use many kinds of prayers in worship. The Call to Worship is a communal prayer using call and response. The Invocation is a single individual inviting (or invoking) God into our worship this morning. The Prayers of the People uses intercessory prayer to ask God to come to the world's aid. The benediction is a blessing offered over those gathered in worship.

† **Doxology** | *Tune: CRANHAM* 📖

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

The Prayers of the People | *Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome* 📖
Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer.

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Scripture Reading | *Luke 2:1-20* | *Rev. Dr. Stacks*

The word of God for us, the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem | *O Holy Night* (pg. 9)

Homily | *Rev. Efird*

Communion | *Rev. Efird* 📖

Prayer of Confession: Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be obedient disciples. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we've not loved our neighbors, and we've not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us for what we have done and for what we've left undone, and free us for joyful obedience through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mystery of Faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

† **Hymn** | *Silent Night, Holy Night* (pg. 7)

Benediction | *Rev. Efird*

The Doxology

A "doxology" is a short hymn that usually praises the Trinity. We sing the doxology as we symbolically present our offerings back to God.

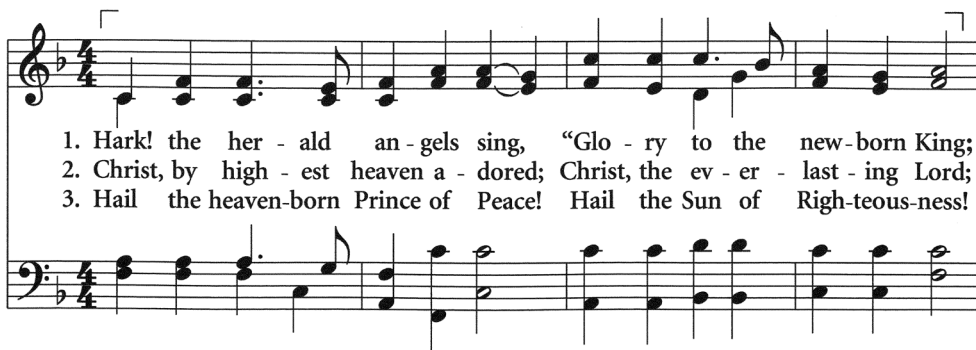
The Prayers of the People

This prayer typically has five parts: a confession; prayers for the earth, the world, and the church; and prayers for those with needs in our own community.

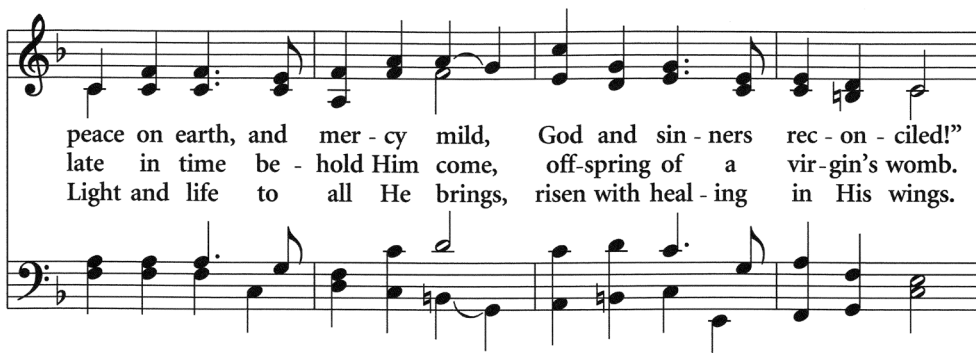
Communion

During Communion, we gather around the table to remember and give thanks for God's saving acts with bread and wine. We have an open table—all who wish to take Communion are invited. We practice communion by means of intinction, which means you receive a piece of bread and dip it in the cup. A gluten-free option is available on the altar.

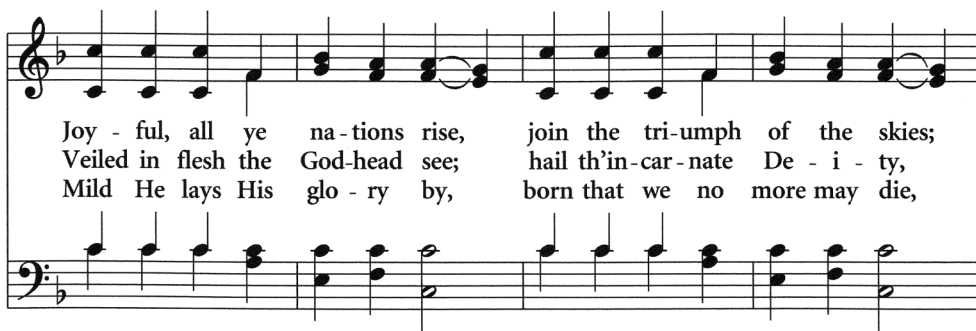
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



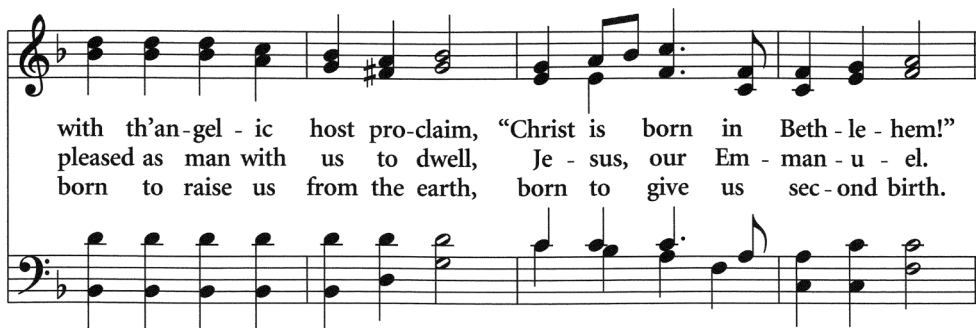
1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;
 2. Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;
 3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 late in time be - hold Him come, off-spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all He brings, risen with heal - ing in His wings.

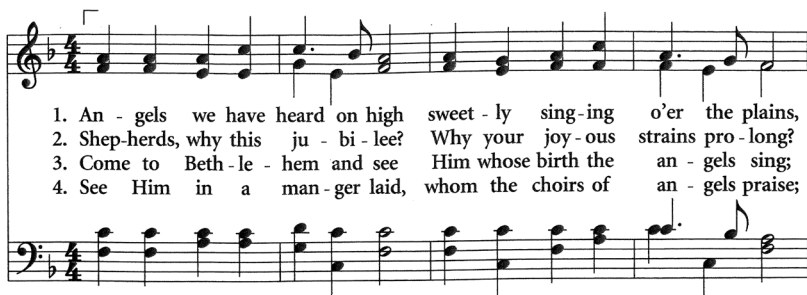


Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'in-car-nate De - i - ty,
 Mild He lays His glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

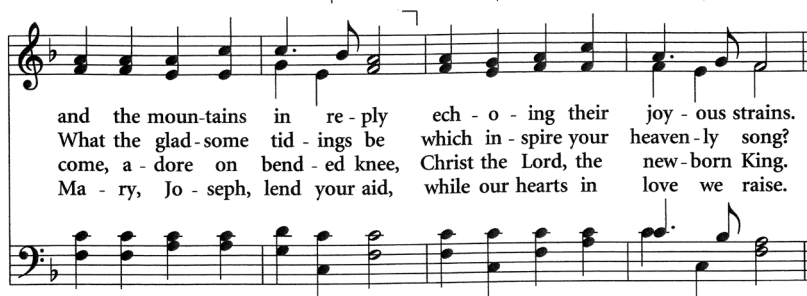


with th'an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Angels We Have Heard on High



1. An - gels we have heard on high sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;
 4. See Him in a man - ger laid, whom the choirs of an - gels praise;




and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav - en - ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ the Lord, the new - born King.
 Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Silent Night, Holy Night

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep - herds quake at the sight.
 3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light
 4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, won - drous star, lend thy light;
Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht

round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant so ten - der and mild,
 Glo - ry streams from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu - ia,
 ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our King;
nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar. Hold - er Kna - be im lock - i - gen Haar,

sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born."
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.
schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh', schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh'!"

Preparation Follow the Star

Poor Clare

The star shines bright
We must pack light

Become a fool
to become wise

In the dark
There lives a spark

Follow the star
Bright in sky
To light our path
With hope and joy

Set out on foot
To find a boy
Bring finest gifts
receive his joy

You shine so bright

Anthem O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

O holy night!
the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.

Long lay the world
in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared
and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope -
the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks
a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees!
O hear the angel voices!

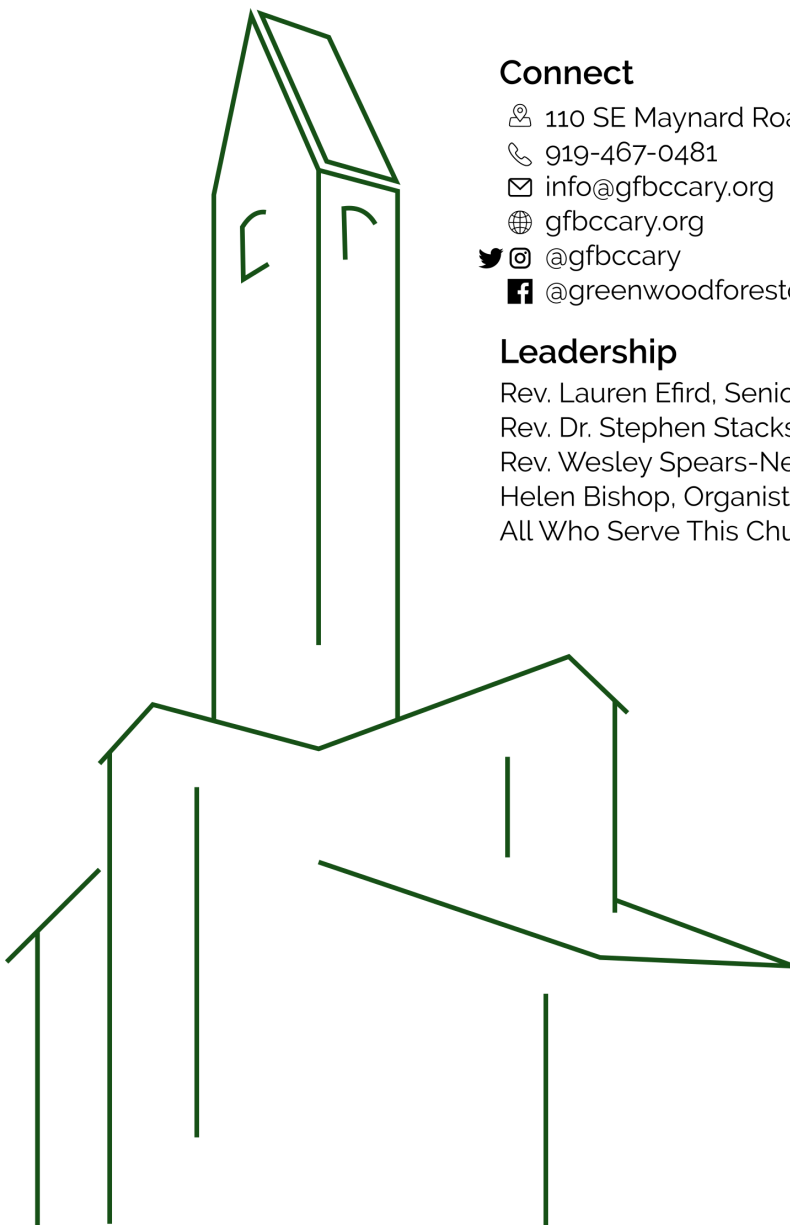
O night divine,
O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another;
His law is love and his gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break,
for the slave is our brother,
And in his name
all oppression shall cease.

Sweet hymns of joy
in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his holy name.

Christ is the Lord!
O praise his name forever!

His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!



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Leadership

Rev. Lauren Efird, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks, Associate Pastor

Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

Helen Bishop, Organist

All Who Serve This Church

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Additional Resources for Advent and Christmas come from A Sanctified Art.