



Greenwood Forest

Baptist Church

Dec. 3, 2023



Scan for Digital





Advent and Christmas

November 26

Reign of Christ and Souper Love Feast (11am)

December 3

Advent I Worship (11am)

December 10

Advent II Worship (11am)

December 17

Christmas Breakfast (9:45am)
Service of Lessons and Carols (11am)

December 20

Service of Lament (6pm)

December 24

Family Christmas Eve (11am)
Candlelight Communion Service (8pm)

December 31

Christmas I Worship (11am)





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.

CONTENTS

- 3 | Announcements
- 4 | Community Notes
- 5 | Order of Worship
- 7 | Songbook

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.



gfbccary.org



[greenwoodforestcary](https://www.facebook.com/greenwoodforestcary)



[@gfbccary](https://www.instagram.com/gfbccary)

Announcements Church Events and Updates

Advent & Christmas

Be sure to check out our schedule of special Advent and Christmas services on the inside cover of the bulletin! If you're unfamiliar with any of these events, here's a brief rundown:

Christmas Breakfast: We come together for a potluck breakfast at 9:45am on December 17 in the Fellowship Hall.

Lessons and Carols: This is when we hear the entirety of the Christmas story and sing many of our favorite Christmas carols.

Service of Lament: Holidays can be hard when grieving a loss. This service is a special time to be together in the sadness that can come with the holidays.

Christmas Eve: The family service (11am) involves a child-friendly experience that revolves around assembling a Nativity. Evening worship (8pm) is a traditional candlelight service.

Poinsettia Dedications

If you would like to dedicate a poinsettia to adorn our Sanctuary this Advent, please fill out the form at gfbccary.org/poinsettias. Poinsettia dedications are \$15 each. Once you have filled out the form, you can mail your check to the church office (110 SE Maynard Rd, Cary, NC) with "poinsettias" in the memo line or give your money at gfbccary.org/give, selecting poinsettias from the drop-down menu. The Christmas Eve bulletin will list dedications.

Business Meeting

There will be a short, called business meeting on December 10 following worship to approve the ministers' 2024 housing allowances.

Christmas Gift Donations

If you'd like to donate Christmas gifts to our community this year, visit tinyurl.com/Gfbchristmas (only one "c").

Staff Love Offering

From the Personnel Committee:

At GFBC, we have an Advent tradition of collecting a love offering for our staff. The offering is distributed to the staff as an expression of our gratitude for their hard work, dedication, leadership, and faithful service to the church throughout the year.

If you would like to contribute to this offering, please give your contribution to either Andy Jarrell or Steve Denning or make use of the envelopes placed in each Faith Formation classrooms. You may make checks payable to Andy Jarrell or you can use Venmo to send the money to @Andy-Jarrell (last digits of phone number are 3662). Donations will be collected through Wednesday, December 20th. Thank you for your generosity.

GFCC's Jingle Mingle

The Greenwood Forest Children's Center is hosting their annual winter celebration and basket raffle on December 8 from 5:30-7:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. This is the signature fundraising event for the Dr. Bill Jones Scholarship Fund. See you there!

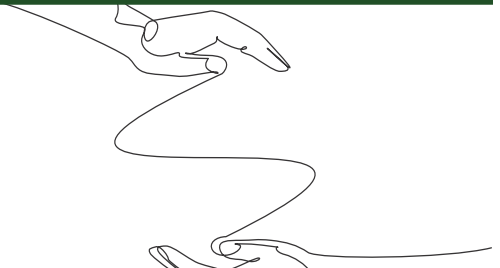
Community Notes Prayer Requests and Giving



PRAY

Please keep in prayer these members of our community and their friends and family. To add a name to the prayer list, please contact the church office. Names rotate off and can be re-added upon request.

Nell Allen
Gilles Bikindou
Gordon Brewer and the Brewer Family at the death of Mary "Sister" Brewer
Valerie Brooks
Jeff Cisco (friend of Susan Beck)
Scott Davenport (friend of the Biser family)
Stephanie Fancher (friend of Gerry Ritter)
James Mark Frazier (Sue Hughes' brother)
Anjar Hossain (friend of Kevin Schaefer)
Randy Medford
Max Miller (Amanda Warren's father)
Aaliyah Murray (family of Gail Jones)
Katheron E. Palmer (mother of Randy Palmer)
Fred Seeger
Eddie Stewart (friend of Diana Morde)
Mathias Warne (family of Gail Jones)
Our partners at Ebenezer Baptist in Cuba



GIVING

All of the ministries of Greenwood Forest Baptist Church are supported by members of our community like you. Thank you! Supporting us is easy. You can:

- Give online at gfbccary.org/give
- Place your gift in the offering plate before or after worship.
- Set up an automated bank draft through the church office.
- Set up a recurring gift through your bank's "bill pay" function.

A monthly finance update is available in the weekly church email. If you're not receiving our weekly email and would like to, please contact the church office.

Monthly Ministry Highlight:

Advent and Christmas Events

We have a lot going on this holiday season from all our ministry areas. We connect with our fellowship ministries through Christmas Breakfast, congregational care in the Service of Lament, worship and music in Lessons and Carols, Youth at the Advent Party, and children at their special Christmas Eve service. None of these experiences are possible without your gifts to this inclusive community of faith!

Order of Worship First Sunday of Advent

† 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

Lighting of the Hope Candle | *Melissa Rincon*

Prelude | *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* | *arr. Hayes*

Welcome to Worship | *Rev. Lauren Efird*

Leader: The Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Passing of the Peace 📖

Call to Worship (A Sanctified Art)

In God's house, we can be joyful.

We can be grateful. We can be hopeful.

In God's house, we can be weary.

We can be anxious. We can be grieving.

In God's house, we can be honest—

**inspired or tired, delighted or doubtful,
connected or curious, and everything in between.**

This is God's house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

Let us worship our loving God.

† **Invocation** | *Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks*

Hymn | *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* (pg. 7)

Offertory Prayer | *Natalie Patten*

Offertory | *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* | *arr. Melody Bober* 📖

† **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

Today's color is **purple**, representing preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ.

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.

The Offertory

During the offertory music, we pass plates across the pews as a way to make our collective offering to God and the wellbeing of this community.

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.

† **Hymn** | *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (vv. 1, 3; pg. 8)

Reading | *Luke 1:5-23* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*
The word of God for us, the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem | *You Carried Me* (pg. 10)

Sermon | *Hope in a Weary World* | *Rev. Efir*

Communion | *Rev. Efir* 📖

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** | *Weary World Rejoice* (pg. 9)

Benediction | *Rev. Efir*

Postlude | *Noel Nouvelet* | *arr. McLean*

The Doxology

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

The Prayers of the People

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

Communion

During Communion, we gather around the table as Christ showed us, to remember and give thanks. We have an open table—all who wish to take Communion are invited. We practice intinction, which means you receive a piece of bread and dip it in the cup. A gluten-free option is available on the altar.

Thank you to Sally Shaver for playing piano during the Offertory this morning.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran-som cap-tive
2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spir-its by Thine
3. O come, Thou Wis-dom from on high, and or-der all things,
4. O come, De-sire of na-tions, bind all peo-ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un -
ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and
far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show, and
heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife, and quar - rels cease; fill

til the Son of God ap - pear.
death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
all the world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

1. It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
2. Still through the clo-ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un-furled,
3. All ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
4. For lo! the days are has-tening on, by proph-et bards fore-told,

from an-gels bend-ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heaven-ly mu-sic floats o'er all the wea-ry world.
who toil a-long the climb-ing way with pain-ful steps and slow,
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years comes round the age of gold;

“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven’s all-gra-cious King.”
A-bove its sad and lone-ly plains they bend on hov-ering wing,
look now! for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing:
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,

The world in sol-emn still-ness lay, to hear the an-gels sing.
and ev-er o'er its Ba-bel sounds the heaven-ly an-gels sing.
O rest be-side the wea-ry road, and hear the an-gels sing.
and the whole world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

Weary World Rejoice

Weary World Rejoice

STILLE NACHT ("Silent Night")

Text: Anna Strickland (2023)

Music: Franz Xaver Gruber (1818)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

Wear - ry world, God's own vine Tears our on - ly
Wear - ry world, bro - ken and bruised Name of God
Wear - ry world, out of hope Dis - be - lief is
Wear - ry world, wait - ing still Hold - ing our

bread and wine Cry - ing out to be re-stored
so mis-used Can we see the light of Christ
how we cope We've left faith to rot and rust
breath un - til Christ re-turns in truth and grace

Des - perate for a break from war
Glow - ing in each per - son we spite?
Dreams are cov - ered in lay - ers of dust?
Will we re - cog - nize his face?

©Anna Strickland, 2023. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC. Free for congregational use.

Anthem You Carried Me

Will Reagan

Holy, God of our faith
You are welcome in this place
You are welcome in this place

Holy, God of our faith
You are welcome in this place
You are welcome in this place

Come fill our hearts up
Come fill our hearts up
With Your presence

Sweet Lord, sustain us
Sweet Lord, sustain us

You carry me
You carry me on the wings of love

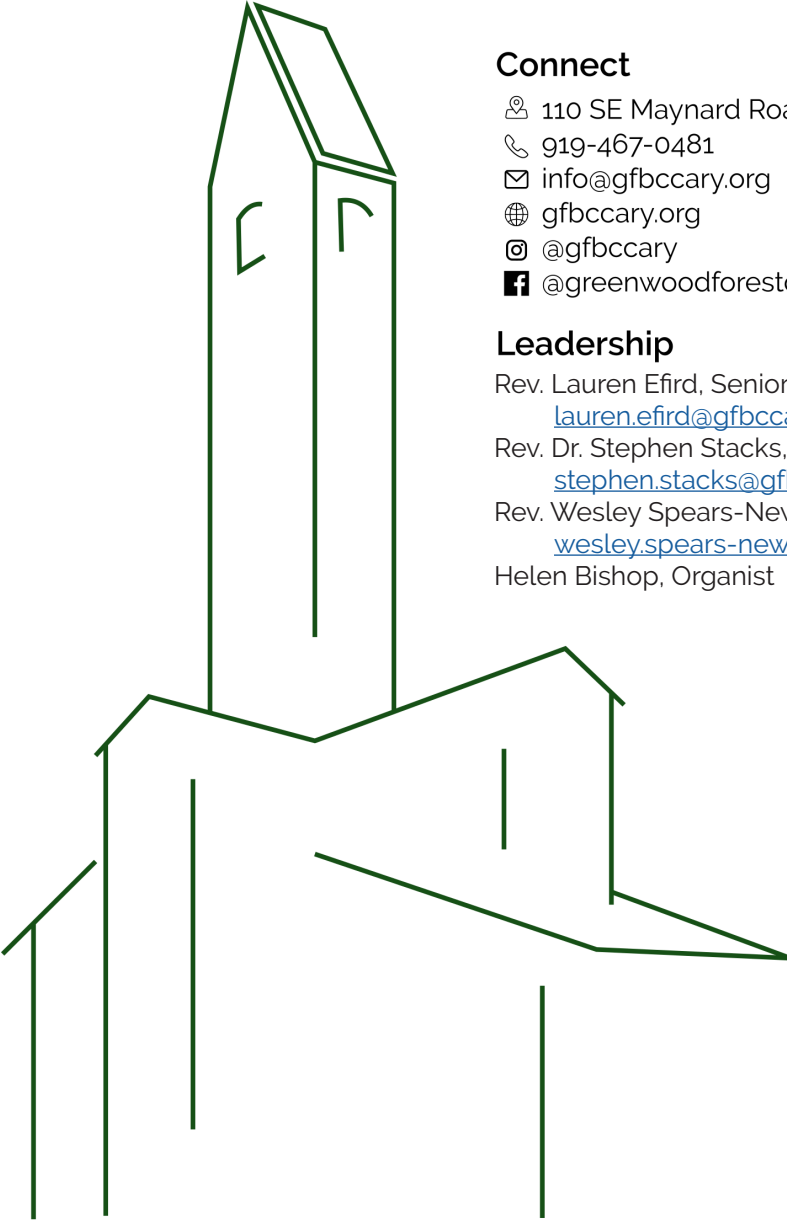
Bulletin Art Annunciation to Zechariah

Lauren Wright Pittman | Inspired by Luke 1:1-23 | acrylic and ink on wood panel

Zechariah is dressed in a breastpiece, ephod, robe, checkered tunic, turban, and sash, just as the book of Exodus specifies. In my painting, gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns are woven together and bejeweled with engraved stones which bear the names of the sons of Israel (Exodus 28:4). Zechariah stands in the Holy Place wearing the most meticulous of garments. Does he expect to encounter the divine? Or is he just going through the motions, lighting the incense as an all-too-familiar scent fills the air? After all these years of fulfilling priestly duties and “living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord” (Luke 1:6), Zechariah and his wife are still childless. Regardless of their desire for children, in their culture and context, childlessness bore the implication of God’s contempt.

I ruminated on this image... a weary priest wrapped in layered fabrics, colors, symbols, textures, and rare stones that proclaim God’s providence and power. The contrast is not lost on me. I often try to neglect my weariness by putting on a veneer of unwavering trust in God—while feeling like I may suddenly unravel into a pile of beautifully-curated threads, stones, and gold accessories. In this image, I decided to depict the angel as smoke from the altar of incense. Zechariah has one hand over his mouth in fear and disbelief, while his other hand cradles the notion—not yet hope—of his son’s existence.

Do you bind up your weariness in a neat and tidy bow, put your head down, and project okay-ness like me? What would it look like to acknowledge our weariness, quit powering through, and open ourselves up to what God might have in store for us? Perhaps we’ll meet an angel.



Connect

📍 110 SE Maynard Road Cary, NC 27511

☎ 919-467-0481

✉ info@gfbccary.org

🌐 gfbccary.org

📷 @gfbccary

📘 @greenwoodforestcary

Leadership

Rev. Lauren Efird, Senior Pastor

lauren.efird@gfbccary.org

Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks, Associate Pastor

stephen.stacks@gfbccary.org

Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

wesley.spears-newsome@gfbccary.org

Helen Bishop, Organist
