

Greenwood Forest

Baptist Church

Dec. 31, 2023



Scan for Digital

Bulletin Art "Revelation" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing (inspired by Luke 2:21-30)

I wonder what Mary and Joseph expect when they enter the temple to dedicate their newborn son. This customary ritual quickly unravels into an astonishing scene. A stranger named Simeon pronounces Jesus to be a "light" and "revelation," and his dying wish is fulfilled. A prophet named Anna also draws near to the child, praising God for the redemption he will bring.

Simeon and Anna's words fill Mary and Joseph with amazement. But that can't be the only emotion taking up space in the room. For Simeon turns to Mary, perhaps privately, to continue sharing his message: the boy will also become the cause of great turmoil, the catalyst for opposition. He will expose the inner thoughts of many. A sword will pierce her innermost being. The mother of God will grieve as she bears witness to the suffering of the child she birthed.

In this image, Simeon bestows his blessing and prophecy with the urgency of a man desperate to say everything that needs to be said before his time runs out. Anna looks off into the distance, as if peering into the future. Her devotion to God over the years has sharpened her gaze; she knows redemption when she sees it.

In the top left, I depicted Jesus' hand being cradled by the hands of his parents. This tender moment is frozen in time, like a Polaroid photograph placed in a scrapbook. Mary and Joseph treasure their child as they receive the fullness of his calling. I imagine them memorizing each wrinkle and tiny fingernail, treasuring the smallness of a hand that will one day become a strong fist, fighting for justice for the oppressed and liberation for those held captive.



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.



gfbccary.org



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Announcements Church Events and Updates

New Teaching Series Begins on January 14

God is Red: Learning from Indigenous Spirituality, Decolonizing Your Faith – January 14, 21, and 28

Fifty years ago, Native American scholar and activist Vine Deloria, Jr. published *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Since then, indigenous voices have repeatedly called for Christians, especially those of European descent, to examine their conscience and leave behind colonizer religion. During this series we will learn together from Native theologians what it means to decolonize our faith and what a Christianity that respects indigenous people might look like. Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks is facilitating.

Spiritual Formation Retreat Opportunity

CBF of North Carolina's Spiritual Formation Advisory Team is excited to offer a special retreat opportunity this winter aimed at laity. "The Art of Savoring: Spiritual Practices for an Abundant Life" retreat will be held January 26-27 at Camp Agape in Fuquay-Varina. All are invited (clergy & laity) to get away for a period of spiritual reflection and refreshment. During the retreat, we will spend time thinking about how we might more fully embrace the goodness of God and the gifts of this life, both individually and in small groups.

The retreat will be lead by Sarah Blackwell, Derek Hogan, and Greenwood Forest's own Dr. Lydia Hoyle! Registration is \$60. Visit gfbccary.org/cbfretreat for more info.

MLK Interfaith Service

People of all faiths are welcome to a celebraton in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The program theme is "A Call To Conscience" taken from the title of Dr. King's book. The guest preacher will be Rev. Laura Ingersoll, from Baltimore, MD. with music by the Interfaith Choir. The MLK Virtual Reality truck will be at Christ the King Church prior to the service from 12pm-3:30pm, giving people an opportunity to experience King's 1960 "Fill Up The Jails" speech held in Durham.

Year End Gifts

We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas! As we approach the New Year, please remember GFBC in your end-of-year giving. Every gift helps us engage in vital ministries in our community!

Thank You from Staff

The church staff would like to thank everyone for the love offering extended to them at Christmas. We love serving alongside you and are eager to see what the next year holds!

Youth Decorations

If you are retiring or have any extra Christmas trees or garland, the youth ministry would love to use them to decorate their forest-themed youth room. Contact Rev. Spears-Newsome if you'd like to contribute!

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
Valerie Brooks
Jeff Cisco (friend of Susan Beck)
Scott Davenport (friend of the Biser family)
Stephanie Fancher (friend of Gerry Ritter)
Scot Glasgow at the death of his brother-in-law, Greg Gibson
Anjar Hossain (friend of Kevin Schaefer)
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)
Kimberly Taliano (Mercedes Augur's daughter)
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 Christmas

✝ 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 Christ Candle | *Magdalene Mulbah*

Prelude | *Away in a Manger* | arr. Tornquist

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)

Every year we celebrate Christmas.

Every month we break bread.

Every week we gather for worship.

Every day we count our blessings.

Every minute God is near.

Yes, every minute God is near.

These are the rituals of our faith.

Let us worship Holy God.

Invocation | *Rev. Efird*

✝ **Hymn** | *The First Noel* (pg. 7)

Offertory Prayer | *Andy Jarrell*

Offertory | *Gesu Bambino* | arr. Heather Sorenson 📖

✝ **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 him my heart

Today's color is **white**, representing the glory of 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, expressed through a peace sign, a handshake, a wave, conversation, etc. We hope you will take the time to greet and speak with those around you or with someone you haven't met!

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. Amanda Warren* 📖

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** | *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (pg. 8)

Reading | *Luke 2:21-38* | *Rev. Efird*

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

Anthem | *Mary Did You Know* (pg. 10)

Sermon | *Not Alone* | *Rev. Spears-Newsome*

† **Hymn** | *O Weary Soul Return* (pg. 9) 📖

Benediction | *Rev. Efird*

Postlude | *He is Born* | *arr. Brant Adams*

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.

Final Hymn: An Invitation

During the final hymn, if you'd like to join our community at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church, we invite you to come forward to the altar. When you come forward, you'll be greeted by a minister and a deacon who will then introduce you to the congregation after the hymn. Welcome!

Thank you to Leanne Glasgow for leading hymns this week. Thank you to Lynn Newsome for playing piano during the Prelude this morning.

The First Noel

1. The first Now - ell the an - gel did say, was to cer - tain poor
2. For all to see there was a star shin - ing in the
3. And by the light of that same star the wise men
4. Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es

shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing their
east, be - yond them far, and to the earth it gave great
came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their in -
to our heav - en - ly Lord who hath made heaven and earth of

sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night. Now - ell, Now -
tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
naught, and with His blood hu - man - kind hath bought.

ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Unison

1. Of the Fa-ther's love be-got-ten, ere the worlds be-gan to be,
 2. O that birth for-ev-er bless-ed, when the vir-gin, full of grace,
 3. O ye heights of heaven a-dore Him; an-gel hosts, His prais-es sing;
 4. Christ, to Thee with God the Fa-ther, and, O Ho-ly Ghost, to Thee,

He is Al-pha and O-me-ga, He the source, the end-ing He,
 by the Ho-ly Ghost con-ceive-ing, bore the Sav-ior of our race;
 powers, do-min-ions, bow be-fore Him, and ex-tol our God and King;
 hymn and chant and high thanks-giv-ing and un-wea-ried prais-es be:

of the things that are, that have been,
 and the Babe, the world's Re-deem-er,
 let no tongue on earth be si-lent,
 hon-or, glo-ry, and do-min-ion,

and that fu-ture years shall see, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 first re-vealed His sa-cred face, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 ev-ery voice in con-cert ring, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 and e-ter-nal vic-to-ry, ev-er-more and ev-er-more!

O Weary Soul Return

Text: Anna Strickland (2023)

Music: Swedish melody, arr. American Lutheran Hymnal (1930)



Oh wea-ry soul re - turn to the place your bo - dy
The dis - or - i - ent - a - tion of mod - ern, fast - paced
For here the font and ta - ble stand an - chored through - out
So wheth - er it's your first time or you've been here be -



knows Re - trace the well - worn path - ways deep
life Up - roots our spir - it's bear - ings and
time Con - nect - ing us to - geth - er with
- fore Let this be res - pite for you, a



etched in - to your bones Re - lax your wea - ry
leaves us with - out guides When ver - ti - go of
wa - ter, bread, and wine In sim - ple acts re -
place your soul calls home Come back when - e'er you



mus - cles from dai - ly stress and strug - gles Let
spir - it has pushed us to our li - mits Our
- peat - ed we've found what our souls need - ed A
need to, let this place be what feeds you Oh



mus - cle me - mo - ry lead your soul to what it needs
ri - tu - als re - store the faith that keeps us moored
grace in the mun - dane, a bo - di - ly re - frain
wea - ry soul re - turn for grace you need not earn

Anthem Mary Did You Know

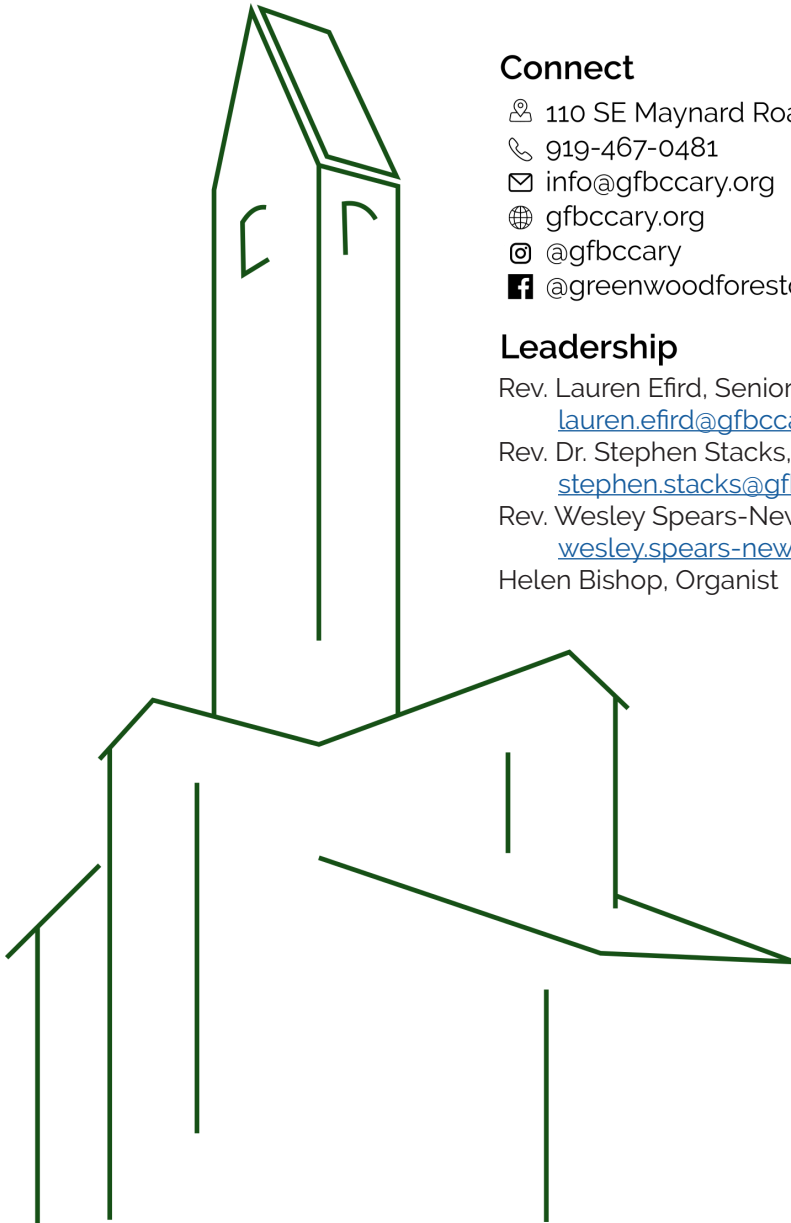
arr. Brent Edstrom; BJ Facemire, Soloist

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will calm the storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little baby
You kiss the face of God?

Mary, did you know?
The blind will see, the deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?
That sleeping child you're holding is the great I Am?



Connect

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Helen Bishop, Organist

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