



**Greenwood Forest**  
Baptist Church January 21, 2024



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# Bulletin Art "Beloved" by Lauren Wright Pittman

*Digital Painting and Collage (inspired by Luke 3:21-22)*

Luke's account of Jesus' baptism is brief and vague. He was baptized among "all the people" (Luke 3:21) by an unnamed baptizer, and until he prays, the scene is rather unremarkable. During his prayer, however, an iconic scene unfolds with the heavens opening, the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and a voice booming from heaven.

As I considered how I might visually respond to this text, it was difficult to imagine this event with a beginner's mind. I've seen lots of imagery of Jesus in the water with clouds breaking open and a dove descending, or Jesus bursting out of water into a beam of light. These images are powerful, but I wasn't sure if creating a similar image would be helpful, or if I'd be offering insight into the text that hadn't already been visually explored.

I began to meditate on what was unspoken and implied in Luke's account, and one moment that stuck out in my imagination was the moment Jesus was underwater. How did Jesus feel when he held his breath and descended into the river?

This image offers a snapshot of Jesus right before he steps into his calling, on the threshold of spectacular affirmation. He is completely suspended, embraced, and upheld by the waters of baptism. The water's surface is choppy. The future is unknown and precarious. His path is a lonely and formidable one, eventually leading to his suffering and death.

Despite what is to come, Jesus reaches toward the surface. Two fish are drawn to the light of his halo, foreshadowing his companionship with fishers and his miraculous feeding of the five thousand. All of creation is leaning into his call.

This is what trusting your belovedness feels like—muscles and bones relieved of gravity's burden, serenity, weightlessness, oneness with creation, and the warmth of God's love permeating every cell of your body and every corner of your soul.





Greenwood Forest  
Baptist Church

an inclusive  
community  
of faith

# Welcome

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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](http://gfbccary.org)



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



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# Announcements Church Events and Updates

## Teaching Series Continues

God is Red: Learning from Indigenous Spirituality, Decolonizing Your Faith – Jan. 14, 21, 28 @ 9:45am

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.

## Randy Palmer Work Anniversary

*From the Personnel Committee:*

On January 27th we celebrate the 20th anniversary of Randy Palmer as our custodian. We have been incredibly blessed to have Randy care for our church building for two decades. For those of us who may not see him here at the church building during the week, many know Randy from his active participation and leadership in Sunday worship where he shares his singing and speaking talents. Please make a point to thank Randy for his dedication to our church community and congratulate him on this milestone.

## Tucson Trip | Register by January 31

This summer, we'll be traveling as a group with an organization called **Borderlinks** based in Tucson to the US-Mexico Border and other parts of Arizona (July 1-6). We'll engage in some service, learning, and relationship-building activities with residents of the borderlands and the migrants who cross them. Register at [gfbccary.org/tucson](https://gfbccary.org/tucson) by January 31. If you have questions, please direct them to Rev. Spears-Newsome.

## Ministry Monday

We'll be gathering for our first Ministry Monday of 2024 on January 29 beginning at 6pm. We meet in two groups:

**Group A Committees (6-7pm):** Children's Ministry, Congregational Care, Personnel, Properties, and Youth

**Group B Committees (7-8pm):** Discipleship, Finance, Outreach and Fellowship, and Worship

We'll be meeting in-person at the church in the Faith Formation Hallway with breakout rooms for each committee. We look forward to seeing 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  
Valerie Brooks  
Scott Davenport (friend of the Biser family)  
Deborah Davis (friend of Susan Beck)  
Stephanie Fancher (friend of Gerry Ritter)  
Anjar Hossain (friend of Kevin Schaefer)  
Aaliyah Murray (family of Gail Jones)  
Katheron E. Palmer (mother of Randy Palmer)  
Fred Seeger  
Sydney Spivey at the death of her mother, Lori Baysden  
Kimberly Taliano (Mercedes Auger's daughter)  
Mathias Warne (family of Gail Jones)  
Our partners at Ebenezer Baptist in Cuba

## Thank You Note

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all your prayers and concerns when my brother was sick for over four years. After James Mark's death, I have been touched by all the prayers, calls, cards, texts, and emails. I am truly loved by a caring church.

In Christian love,  
Sue Hughes



## 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 [fbccary.org/give](http://fbccary.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:

### Discipleship Ministry

Our Discipleship Ministry fuels our spiritual growth both as individuals and as a community. We'll enjoy a new churchwide Faith Formation series this month *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* and we look forward to a Discipleship Retreat on March 1-3 on reading Scripture. These efforts wouldn't be possible without your generosity and gifts!

# Order of Worship Third Sunday after Epiphany

✝ 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.

Today's color is **green**, representing growth and change.

## 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.

## Chiming of the Hour

**Prelude** | *River* | Leon Bridges

**Welcome to Worship** | *Rev. Lauren Efrid*

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

## Passing of the Peace 📖

**Call to Worship (from Psalm 51)** 📖

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

**And put a new and right spirit within me.**

Do not cast me away from your presence,

**And do not take your holy spirit from me.**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

**And sustain in me a willing spirit.**

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,

**And sinners will return to you.**

Deliver me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,

**And my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

O Lord, open my lips,

**And my mouth will declare your praise.**

For you have no delight in sacrifice;

**If I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.**

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;

**A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise!**

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

✝ **Hymn** | *Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters* (pg. 7)

**Offertory Prayer** | *Natalie Patten*

**Offertory** | *Air from Water Music* | *Handel*

† **Doxology** | *Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN* 📖

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God all creatures here below.  
O praise God. Alleluia!  
Praise God above ye heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
O praise God! O praise God!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**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** | *O For a Closer Walk with God* (vv. 1, 3; 4 - pg. 8)

**Reading** | *Acts 9:1-31* | *Rev. Dr. Stacks*

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

**Anthem** | *Down to the River to Pray* (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | *Blood on My Hands* | *Rev. Efird*

† **Hymn** | *Just As I Am* (vv. 1, 3, 5; 6 - pg. 9) 📖

**Benediction** | *Rev. Efird*

**Postlude** | *Will You Come and Follow Me* | *John Bell*

## 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. A short doxology follows as we offer our gifts.

## 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!

# 7 Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters

Capo 3: (D) F (Bm) Dm (G) B $\flat$

1 Wash, O God, your sons and daugh-ters, new - born crea - tures  
 2 Ev - ery day we need your nur - ture; by your milk may  
 3 O how deep your ho - ly wis - dom! Un - i - mag - ined,

(D) F (Bm) Dm

of your womb. Num-ber them a - mong your peo - ple, raised like  
 we be fed. Let us join your feast, par - tak - ing cup of  
 all your ways! To your name be glo - ry, hon - or! With our

(G) B $\flat$  (D) F (A) C

Christ from death and tomb. Weave them gar - ments bright and  
 bless - ing, liv - ing bread. God, re - new us; guide our  
 lives we wor - ship, praise! We your peo - ple stand be -

(Bm) Dm (F $\sharp$ m) Am (Bm) Dm (G) B $\flat$  (A) C (D) F


spark-ling; com-press them with love and light. Fill, a - noint them;  
 foot - steps, free from sin and all its snares, one with Christ in  
 fore you, wa - ter-washed and Spir - it - born. By your grace, our

(Bm) Dm (G) B $\flat$  (D) F

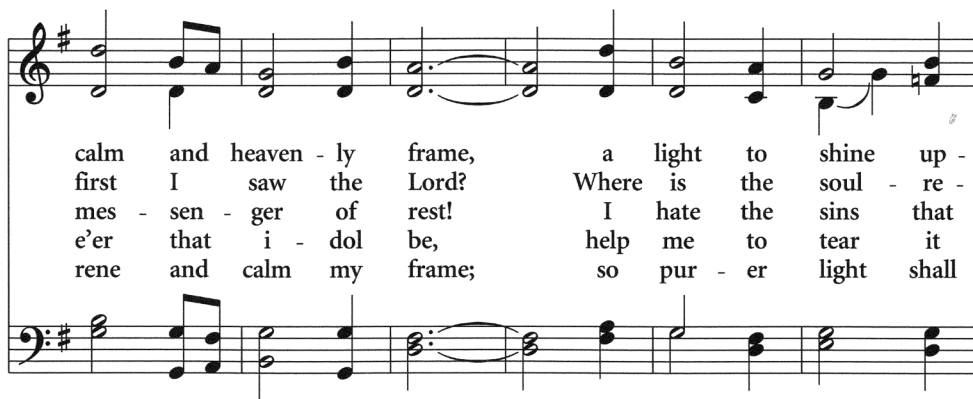
send your Spir - it, ho - ly dove and heart's de - light.  
 liv - ing, dy - ing, by your Spir - it, chil - dren, heirs.  
 lives we of - fer. Re - cre - ate us; God, trans - form!



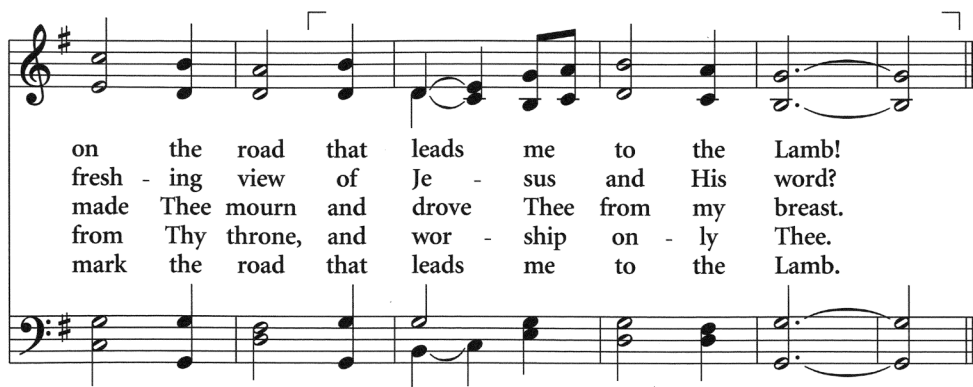
# O For a Closer Walk with God



1. O for a clos - er walk with God, a  
2. Where is the bless - ed - ness I knew when  
3. Re - turn, O ho - ly Dove, re - turn, sweet  
4. The dear - est i - dol I have known, what -  
5. So shall my walk be close with God, se -



calm and heaven - ly frame, a light to shine up -  
first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul - re -  
mes - sen - ger of rest! I hate the sins that  
e'er that i - dol be, help me to tear it  
rene and calm my frame; so pur - er light shall



on the road that leads me to the Lamb!  
fresh - ing view of Je - sus and His word?  
made Thee mourn and drove Thee from my breast.  
from Thy throne, and wor - ship on - ly Thee.  
mark the road that leads me to the Lamb.

# Just As I Am

1. Just as I am, with - out one plea, but  
2. Just as I am, and wait - ing not to  
3. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with  
4. Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; sight,  
5. Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, wilt  
6. Just as I am, Thy love un - known hath

that Thy blood was shed for me, and that Thou bidd'st me  
rid my soul of one dark blot, to Thee, whose blood can  
man - ya con - flict, man - ya doubt, fight - ings and fears, with -  
rich - es, heal - ing of the mind, yea, all I need in  
wel - come, par - don, cleanse, re - lieve, be - cause Thy prom - ise  
bro - ken ev - ery bar - rier down; now to be Thine, yea,

come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!  
cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!  
in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!  
Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!  
I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!  
Thine a - lone, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

# **Prelude** River

Leon Bridges; Randy Palmer, soloist

Been traveling these wide roads for so long  
My heart's been far from you  
Ten-thousand miles gone

Oh, I wanna come near and give ya  
Every part of me  
But there is blood on my hands  
And my lips aren't clean

In my darkness I remember  
Momma's words reoccur to me  
"Surrender to the good Lord  
And he'll wipe your slate clean"

Take me to your river  
I wanna go  
Take me to your river  
I wanna know

Tip me in your smooth waters  
I go in  
As a man with many crimes  
Come up for air  
As my sins flow down the Jordan

I wanna go, wanna go, wanna go  
I wanna know, wanna know, wanna know

# **Anthem** Down to the River to Pray

arr. Sheldon Curry

*As I went down in the river to pray  
Studying about that good old way  
And who shall wear the starry crown  
Good Lord, show me the way!*

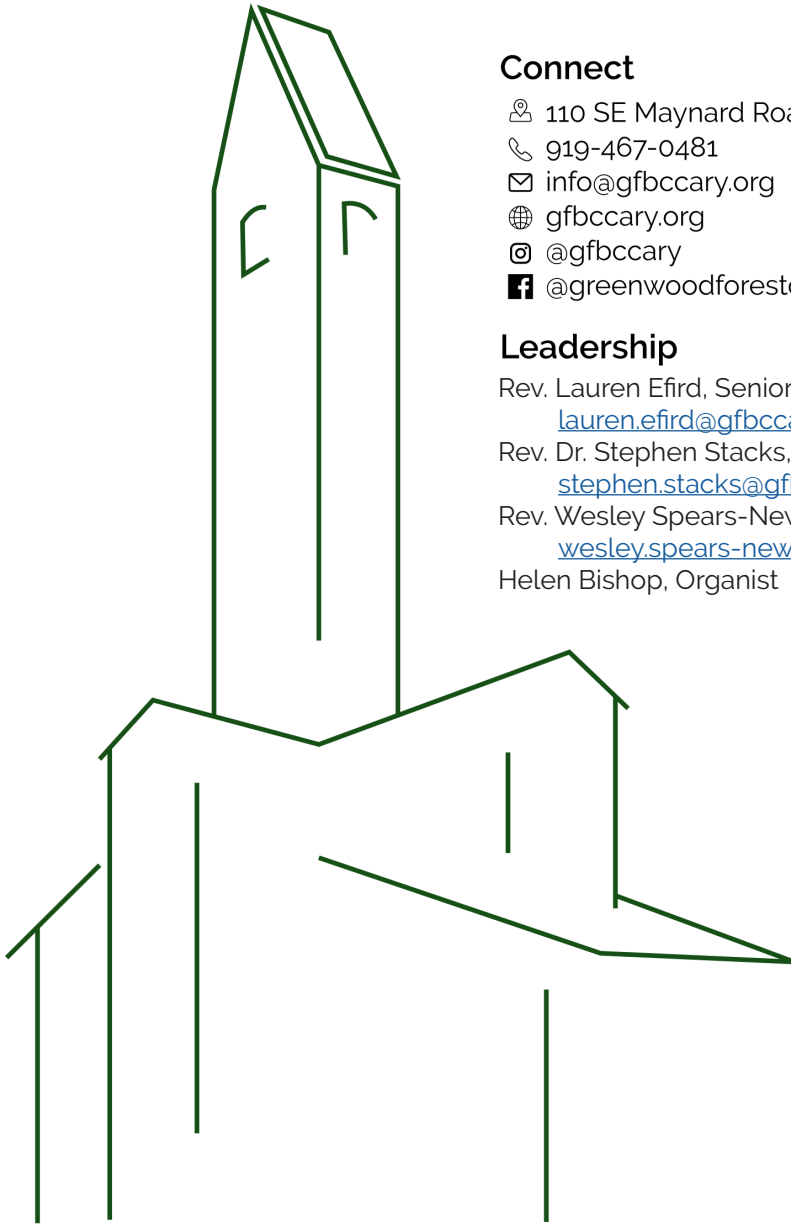
O sisters, let's go down,  
Let's go down, come on down  
O sisters, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray

O brothers, let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
Come on, brothers, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray

O fathers, let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
O fathers, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray

O mothers, let's go down  
Let's go down; don't you want to go down?  
Come on, mothers, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray

O sinners, let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
O sinners, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray



## Connect

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📷 @gfbccary

📘 @greenwoodforestcary

## Leadership

Rev. Lauren Efird, Senior Pastor

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Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks, Associate Pastor

[stephen.stacks@gfbccary.org](mailto:stephen.stacks@gfbccary.org)

Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

[wesley.spears-newsome@gfbccary.org](mailto:wesley.spears-newsome@gfbccary.org)

Helen Bishop, Organist

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