

Lisla



Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

December 8, 2024





WORLD

FOR THE BEGINNING

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. And so, we invite you to move through this Advent season as if you are entering a sacred new chapter, holding fast to the reminders that will bolster you for the journey ahead. As you journey through this season, may you find words for belovedness and hope. May you find words for beginning again. For no matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, love is your beginning.

(Thematic Elements and Art from A Sanctified Art)

Bulletin Art

"The Good That Is Yours" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity inspired by Luke 3:7-16 (Ink dyes and gold resist on silk, with digital collage)

As John the Baptist preaches about transformation, he receives the same question three times from those gathered by the river: "What, then, shall we do?" His responses are straightforward and practical, but also particular. He tells the crowd to share any excess clothing and food with those who have none. He tells the tax collectors not to use their position of power to launder and steal money. He tells the soldiers not to coerce and threaten, and to be satisfied with their wages.

In other words, he tells them what not to do, which leads me to assume that those showing up to be baptized are carrying some things they need to atone for. And yet, they have shown up. They have journeyed into the wilderness to be baptized and transformed. They long for a new beginning.

At the center of this quilt square collage, a pinwheel of fire spins. It represents the Holy Spirit impelling the world to turn. Surrounding it are four petal shapes that bloom like a flower. They are each filled with branches of fruit. When we align ourselves with the movement of the Spirit, we can do the good that is ours to do. Our actions can bear good fruit. The petals and pinwheel are encapsulated by the outline of a blue cross. Four walls of the cross contain broken fragments. In stark contrast to the lush fruit, the fragments are like shards of glass. They symbolize the sins John the Baptist sees present amongst the crowds: extortion, coercion, and the hoarding of power and resources. And yet, these fragments are linked together by blue arrows filled with the waters of baptism. There is a way to begin again.

From each cardinal direction, a triangle of Holy Spirit fire faces inward, pointing us to baptism and transformation. When we do the good that is ours to do, we bear good fruit—fruit that repairs and nourishes, fruit that grows into the four corners of the earth.

- Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

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, citizenship statuses, 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.



Announcements | Church Events and Updates

Public Hearing for Property Repurposing

Join us at Cary Town Hall (316 N Academy St, Cary, NC 27513) for the Town Council meeting at 6:30pm on Thursday, December 12. During the meeting, there will be a public hearing for the rezoning of our property to make way for the property repurposing project. Your presence indicates strong community support, so we'd love to see you there!

Staff Love Offering

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, please give your contribution to either Leta Huntsinger or Blair Biser or make use of the envelopes placed in each Faith Formation classrooms. You may make checks payable to Leta Huntsinger or you can use Venmo to send the money to @Leta-Huntsinger (last digits of phone number are 6291). Donations will be collected through Wednesday, Dec. 18. Thank you for your generosity!

Stories & Spirituality Churchwide Faith

Formation (December 15)

Mark your calendars! Rev. Spears-Newsome spent his sabbatical this year exploring writing and reading progressive spiritual literature for children. Join us in the Fellowship Hall on December 15 at 9:45am to hear some of the stories Wes wrote and what else he learned while away.

Advent and Christmas Schedule of Services

We're excited to welcome you to our Advent and Christmas Services over the next several weeks!

December 1:

First Sunday of Advent (11am)

December 8:

Second Sunday of Advent (11am)
Youth Ministry Advent Party

December 15:

Third Sunday of Advent (11am)

December 18:

Service of Lament (6pm)

December 22:

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

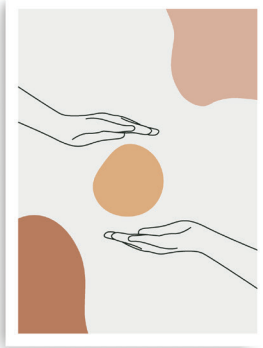
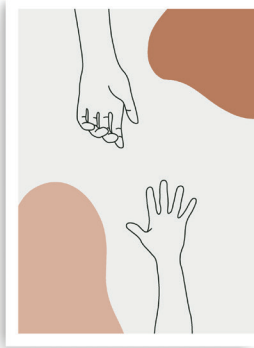
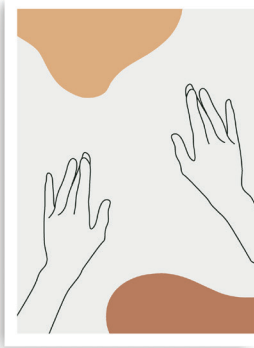
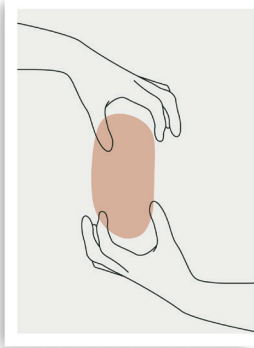
December 24:

Children's Christmas Eve (11am)
Candlelight Christmas Eve (8pm)

Service of Lament

Join us for our annual Service of Lament on December 18 at 6pm in the sanctuary. The holidays can be a time of resurfaced grief and mourning for many of us. Whether that's your current experience or not, we hope you'll join us in coming alongside those who are suffering this season and for us to remember those we have lost.

Community Notes | Prayer Requests and Giving



Prayer

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.

Gilles Bikindou

Jo Brooks

Edwina Erwin

David Floyd

Barney Graham

Doris Martin

Jennie Pegram

Fred Seeger

Kathleen Wicker

Our siblings in Western North Carolina

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: Property Repurposing

We've been working for several years now on better utilizing our property to benefit the wider Cary community. We house several community efforts, recovery meetings, and even host a business! The most significant part of this effort is the development of a four-story mixed-use building to meet community needs of housing and childcare. The project goes before Town Council for a public hearing on December 12 at 6:30pm!

Order of Worship | 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 the Advent Wreath (Peace) | Elizabeth Deters

Prelude | O Come, O Come, Emmanuel | arr. M. S. Kelsey

Welcome to Worship | Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome

Leader: The Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Passing of the Peace 📖

Call to Worship (A Sanctified Art) 📖

"Teacher," the crowd asked, "What should we do?"

If you have two shirts, give one away.

Hold onto hope.

Live like we belong to one another.

Speak the truth.

Look for God.

Do the good that is yours to do.

It's all that easy, and it's all that hard.

Let us worship our present and active God.

Invocation | Rev. Amanda Warren

† **Hymn** | O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Offertory Prayer | Susan Beck

Offertory | Follow the Star of Bethlehem | arr. Linda Lamb | GFBC Handbells 📖

† **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 **purple**, representing repentance and reflection on the coming 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, 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 Prayers of the People | Greg Upchurch

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 | Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (pg. 8)

Reading | Luke 3:7-16 | Rev. Al Whitehouse
The word of God for us, the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem | Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord (pg. 10)

Sermon | Do the Good That Is Yours to Do | Rev. Spears-Newsome

† Hymn | Do the Good That's Yours to Do (pg. 9) 

Benediction | Rev. Spears-Newsome

Postlude | Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus | arr. Mark Hayes

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!

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

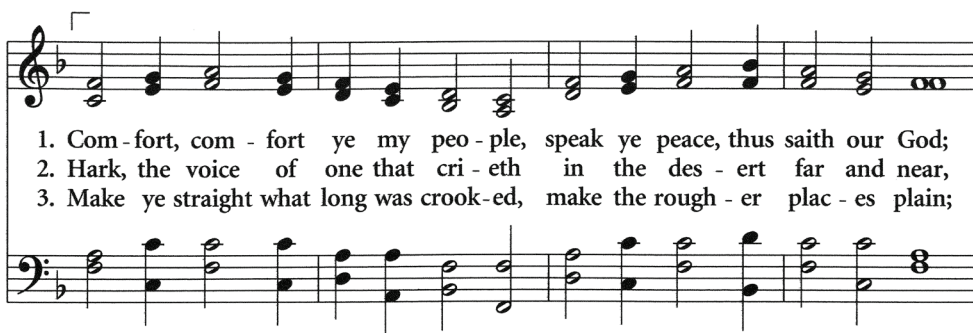
1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2. O come, Thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by Thine
3. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,
4. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

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

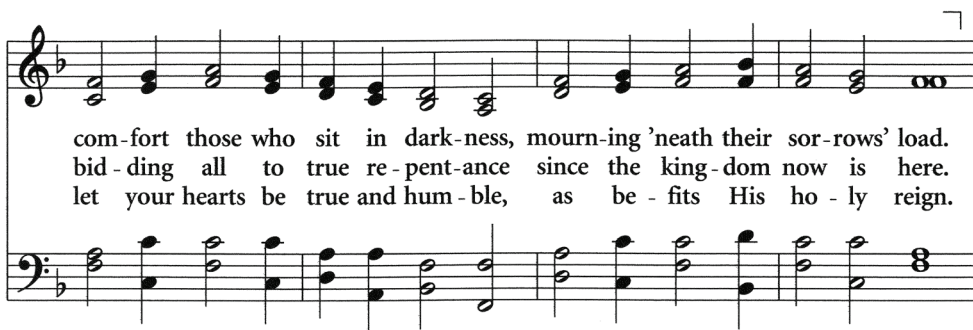
til the Son of God ap - pear.
death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
cause us in her ways to go.
all the world with heav - en's peace.

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

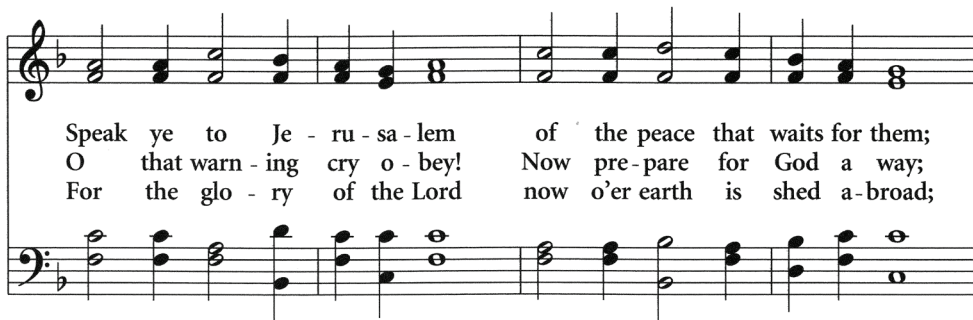
Comfort, Comfort Ye My People



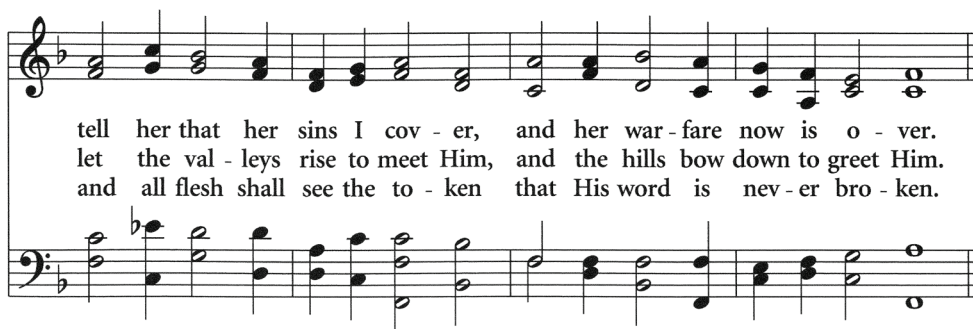
1. Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
2. Hark, the voice of one that cri - eth in the des - ert far and near,
3. Make ye straight what long was crook - ed, make the rough - er plac - es plain;



com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, mourn - ing 'neath their sor - rows' load.
bid - ding all to true re - pent - ance since the king - dom now is here.
let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits His ho - ly reign.



Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;
For the glo - ry of the Lord now o'er earth is shed a - broad;



tell her that her sins I cov - er, and her war - fare now is o - ver.
let the val - leys rise to meet Him, and the hills bow down to greet Him.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that His word is nev - er bro - ken.

9 Do The Good That's Yours to Do

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music from the *Piae Cantiones*, 1582



Peo - ple came from all a - round just to see the tea - cher
"Tell me, John, what should I do as a tax col - lec - tor?"
Some are called to of - fer care, some to ex - hor - ta - tion



Liv - ing in the wil - der-ness, speak-ing to the see - kers
"Take on - ly what's yours to take; don't a - buse your debt - ors"
Some to hos - pi - tal - i - ty, some to ed - u - ca - tion



He had no pre - ten-tious-ness; he would tell you blunt - ly
Sol-diers, shep-herds, fish - er - men asked him the same ques - tion
All our gifts col - lec - tive - ly work to bring sal - va - tion



So they sought out his ad-vice on how to live just - ly
John re - spond - ed all the same, "Share all your pos - ses - sions"
Do the good that's yours to do with de - ter - min - a - tion

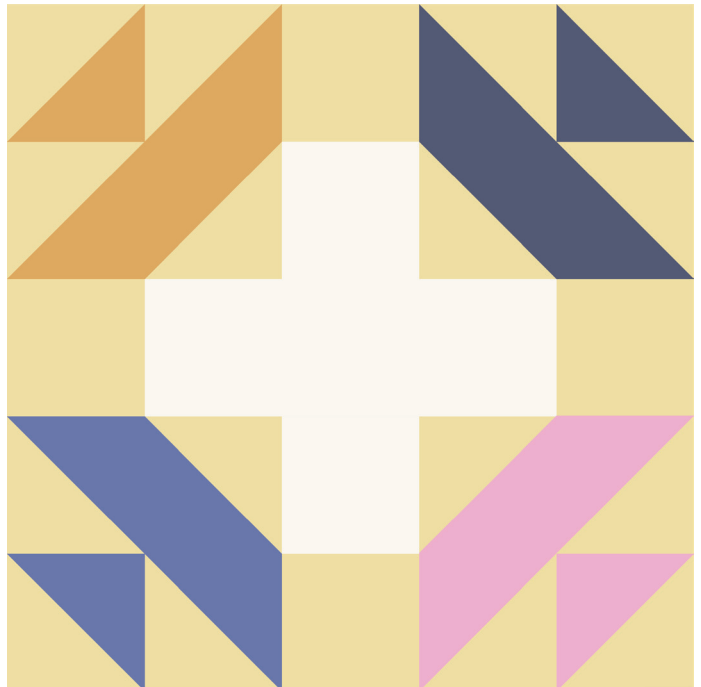
Anthem Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

Cameron Aiken

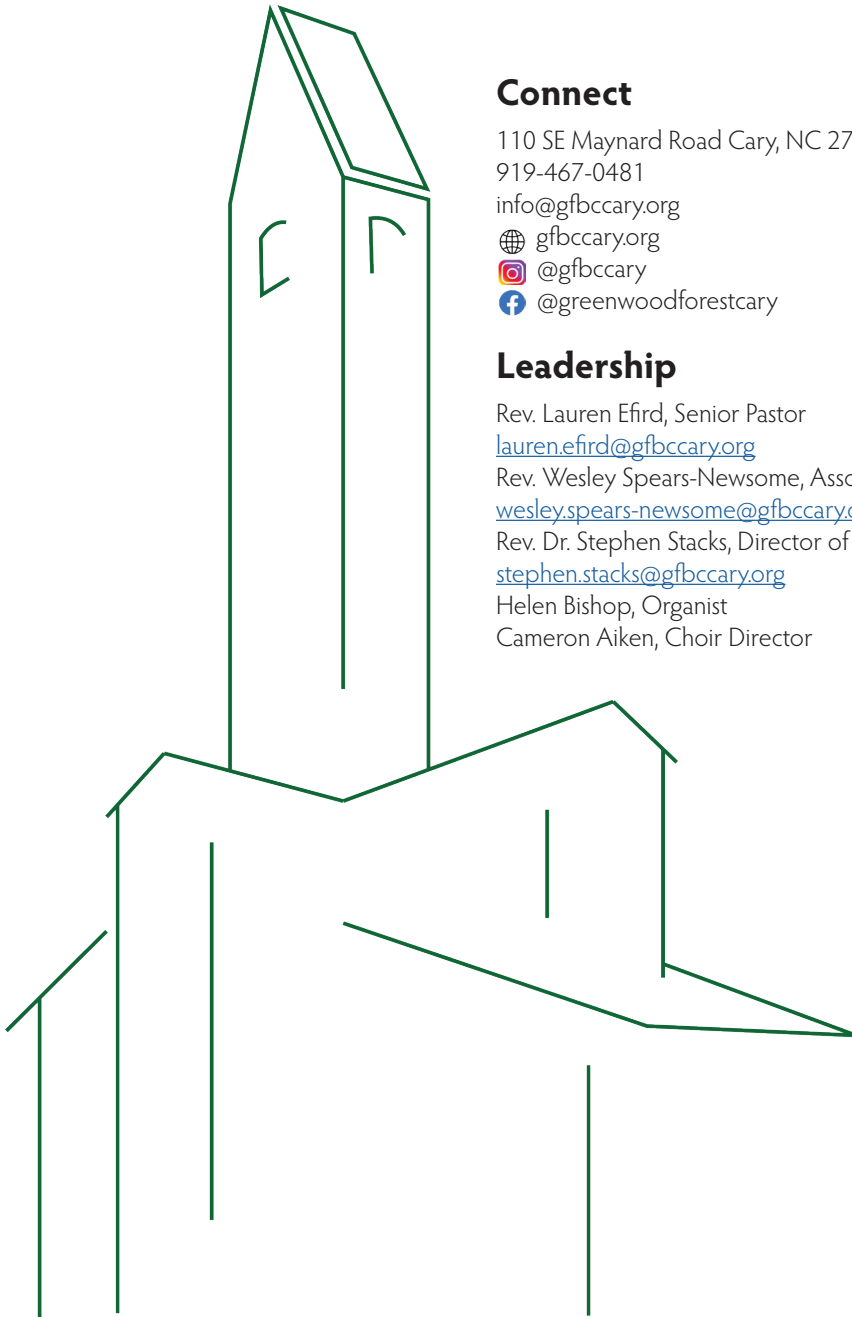
Prepare ye the way of the Lord

Get thee up to a high mountain, O Zion,
Say to the cities of Judah,
Behold, here is your God.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd.
He will carry the lambs in his arms.



Can you find this square on the pulpit quilt?



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Helen Bishop, Organist

Cameron Aiken, Choir Director

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