



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

January 5, 2025



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## Bulletin Art

"Star of Bethlehem" by Hannah Garrity inspired by Matthew 2:1-12 (acrylic painting with mixed media on canvas)

They come from afar. I imagine the Magi as queens of wisdom, wealth, and power, bringing their entourage, a vast number of people, to care for them. They protect the Magi on their journey over the dunes and around the twists and turns, ensuring they arrive safely.

They come to pay homage to the baby, the holy child. In this Words for the Beginning series, I began each painting with a circular energy. There is a central focus to each design. Each painting has an original quilt square pattern which repeats as the border. The center design is a different iteration of the same idea. For this design, the main motif is the star of Bethlehem. The Bible pages of Matthew 2 are torn apart and glued as a texture within the star points, representing our need to constantly break down fear in service to the God who calls us into a fearless life of love. The star pattern is overlaid in chalk and soft pastel, reiterating the power of God as our guide—who, in this text, is showing the way home by another road.

In our own lives and communities, each of us is vulnerable to political corruption. How are we responding? Whom do we follow as our guide? God calls the Magi home by another road, and their choice to heed the call opens space for Jesus' ministry within the community, which will demonstrate the power of steadfast love. Shortly thereafter, God calls Mary and Joseph to journey to another land, to protect the Messiah until they are safe to return home. What parallels do we see in our own systems, and in our own lives?

In this text, the Magi are dreaming my dreams. The imperial power threatens to kill the long-awaited Messiah. These kinds of threats exist in our own lives too. The Magi seek another way home. I dream of the winding road that is God's call. The road isn't straight. Can you see your next bend?

—Hannah Garrity

# 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, 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

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## Business Meeting Sunday Afternoon (January 5)

Please join us this Sunday (1/5) in the Fellowship Hall at 2pm for a business meeting. We'll receive an update on the property repurposing project following our successful first public hearing last month.

## Immigration Justice Group Meeting (January 6)

The Immigration Justice Group is meeting on January 6 at 7pm via video call to continue discussing where we go on immigration issues. You can join us by reaching out to Diana McGahan at [ddmcgahan@gmail.com](mailto:ddmcgahan@gmail.com).

## Rev. Dr. Ben Boswell Preaching on January 19

We're welcoming back Rev. Dr. Ben Boswell to our pulpit on January 19. Rev. Dr. Boswell is a preacher, pastor, author, civil rights leader, and sought after public speaker.

Rev. Dr. Boswell recently served as Senior Pastor at Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC. Before that, he served as Senior Pastor here at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church. He was also Pastor at Commonwealth Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA, and an Adjunct Professor of Political Theology and Ethics at the John Leland Center for Theological Studies. He was also the lone clergy member of the NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture; a citizen group that worked to expose NC's participation in the CIA's post-9/11 torture program.

Dr. Boswell has received numerous awards and honors for his work as a pastor and civil rights leader. In 2021 he was selected to be one of the Freedom Fete speakers at Trinity Episcopal School, and was awarded the prestigious Martin Luther King Jr. Medallion. The award is the city of Charlotte's highest honor, given to a person who promotes racial equality, social justice, and community service.

He is the author of "For the Facing of this Hour: Preaching that Resists White Christian Nationalism," and "Confronting Whiteness: A Spiritual Journey of Reflection, Conversation, and Transformation."

## Teaching Series on the Lord's Prayer begins Jan. 12 in Fellowship Hall

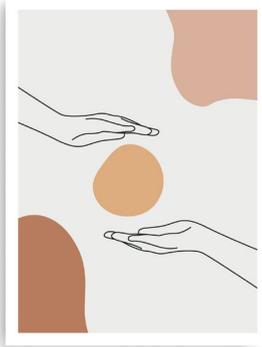
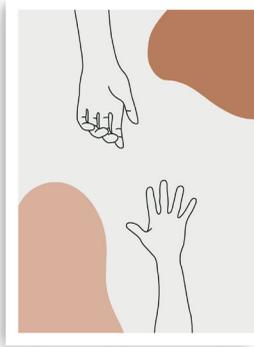
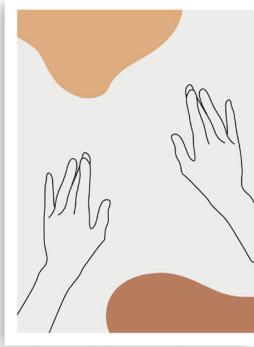
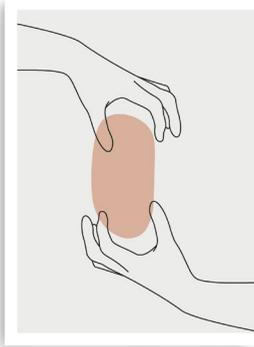
Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks will begin a three-week series on the Lord's Prayer beginning on January 12. Join us in the Fellowship Hall at 9:45am to explore the history, language, and usage of Christianity's most enduring prayer.

## Thank You from GFBC Staff

Thank you for your generosity with the staff love offering this Christmas season! Everyone appreciates the gift and the love shown. We are delighted to work at GFBC!

- GFBC Staff

# 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.*

The family of Gilles Bikindou at his death  
Jo Brooks  
Edwina Erwin  
David Floyd  
Barney Graham  
Doris Martin  
Jennie Pegram  
Fred Seeger  
Kathleen Wicker  
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](http://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: Immigration Justice

Since returning from our trip to Tucson, AZ and the US-Mexico Border, a group of GFBC members have been exploring what it needs to look like to honor migrant justice in our context. We've been learning and discussing issues together and determining what actions to take. With the transition in presidential administrations this month, these issues will only become more salient. You can join us by reaching out to Diana McGahan at [ddmcgahan@gmail.com](mailto:ddmcgahan@gmail.com); the next meeting is on Jan. 6 at 7pm via video call.

# Order of Worship | 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.

## Chiming of the Hour

### Prelude

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

**Passing of the Peace** 📖

**Call to Worship (A Sanctified Art)** 📖

How did you get here?

**I walked, eyes looking up, following a star.**

How did you get here?

**I ran, lunging for a love bigger than me.**

How did you get here?

**I tumbled and fell, tender step after tender step.**

How did you get here?

**I ambled like a river, caught up in God's flow.**

How did you get here?

**I'm here by the grace of God.**

Welcome home.

**This is God's house.**

There is room for you here.

**Let us worship our gracious God!**

**Invocation** | Nathan Bullock

✝ **Hymn** | What Child Is This? (pg. 7)

**Offertory Prayer** | Jazzmoné Sutton

**Offertory** 📖

✝ **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,

**5** Yet what I can I give him, give him my heart.

Today's color is **white**, representing 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, 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. A short doxology follows as we offer our gifts.

**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** | God of Life and Lord of Light (pg. 8)

**Reading** | Matthew 2:1-12 | Rev. Spears-Newsome  
The word of God for us, the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | Siyahamba (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | The Road Isn't Straight | Rev. Efrid

### **Communion**

**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** | The Road Winds Ever On (pg. 9) 

**Benediction** | Rev. Efrid

### **Postlude**

### **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.

### **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!**

Thank you to Sally Shaver for playing piano for us this week.

# What Child is This?

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest on Ma-ry's lap is sleep-ing?  
2. Why lies He in such mean es-tate, where ox and ass are feed-ing?  
3. So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, come peas-ant, king, to own Him;

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet, while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tians, fear: for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en-throne Him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing:  
Nails, spears, shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.

haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!  
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!

# God of Life and Lord of Light

1. God of light and Lord of life — you have heard your peo-ple's strife. —  
2. God of old and Lord of now — give us cou-rage, give us pow'r. —  
3. God of dreams and Lord of vi - sions You break down all our di - vi - sions.  
4. God of grace and Lord of truth — through your Word we find the proof. —

5  
In - to dark - ness you be - came rad - iant flesh, — the — new-born babe.  
For the world that we now see, let us be — an e - piph - an - y.  
Jew and Gen - tile, slave and free, all de - serve — our — dig - ni - ty.  
Death will ne - ver o - ver - come Life that ligh - tens — e - very - one.

9  
Call us forth from our old sto - ry. Make us shine with all your glo - ry.

13  
You re - veal the way — a - head. By your star may we be led.

# The Road Winds Ever On

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Plainsong melody, 12th cent.



Fears of stray - ing from the path - way Plant - ed deep  
All our best laid plans can sha - tter Leav - ing us  
A world con - stant - ly in mo - tion E - vades our



in child - hood Come to haunt us when the road ends  
to mourn the loss Of the fu - ture we im - a - gined  
at - tempts to know What may be a - round the cor - ner



And the way a - head is ob - scured Then the Spi - rit  
And feel like our life is on pause At the edge the  
Or where a - ny road\_\_ will go So the Spi - rit



wraps a - round us To pro - tect and re - as - sure  
Spi - rit's wait - ing There to fer - ry us a - cross  
stirs with - in us To be car - ried by the flow

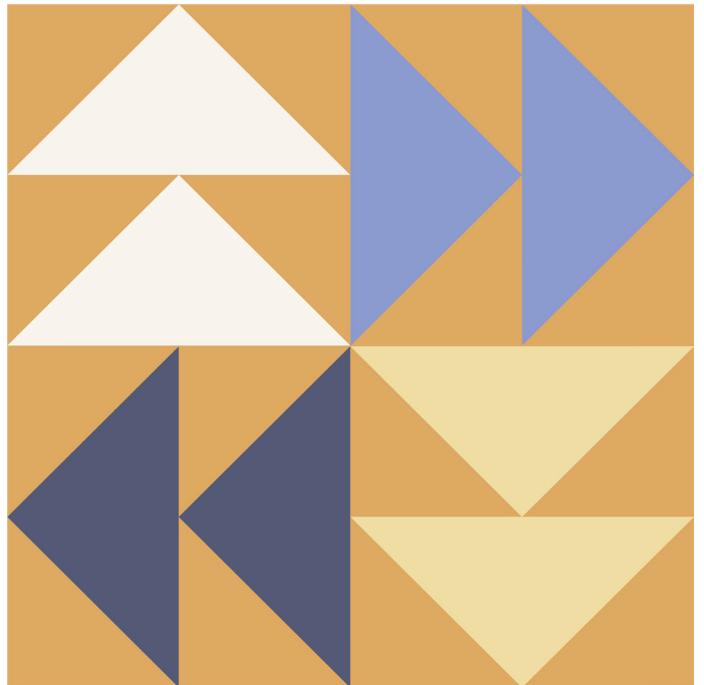


And the road winds e - ver on \_\_\_\_\_

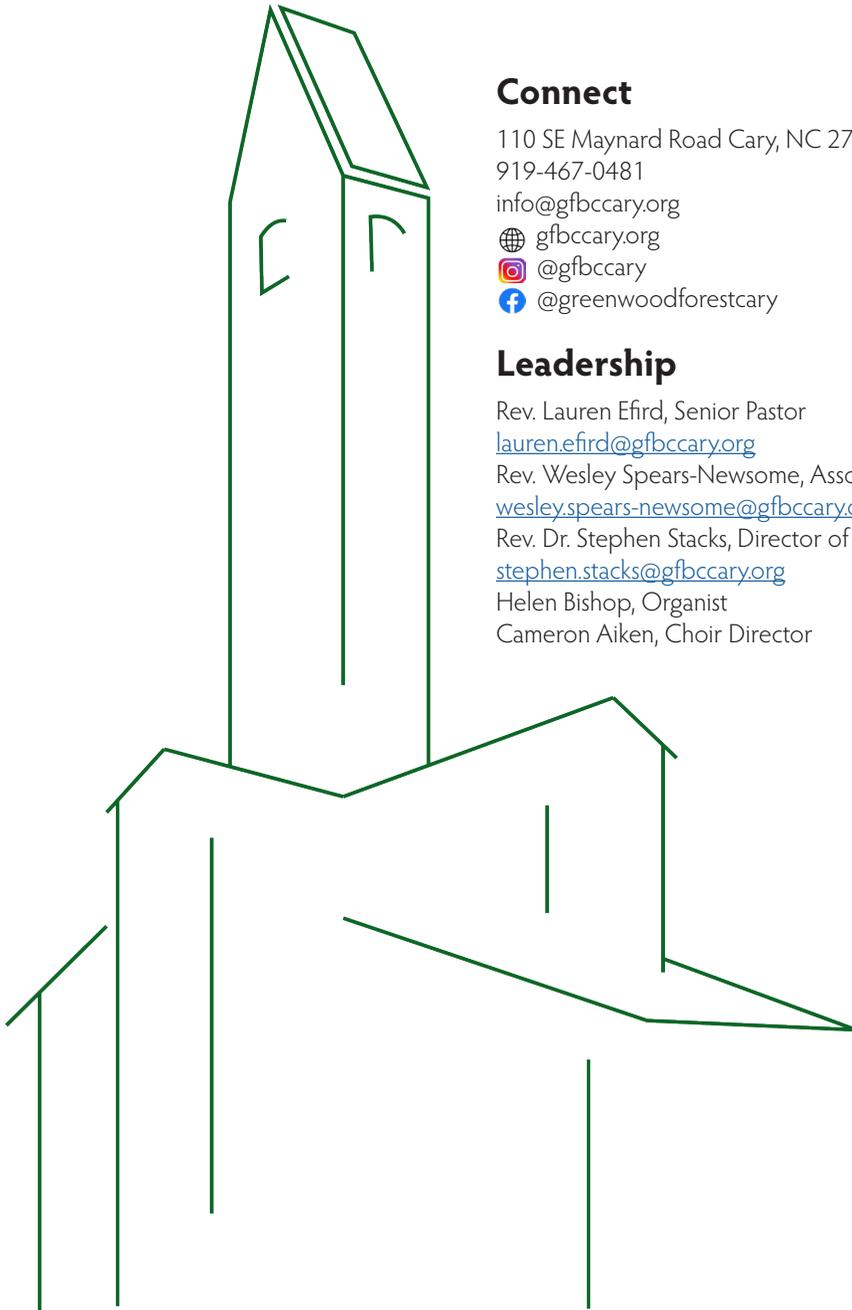
# Anthem Siyahamba

arr. Rao

Siyahamb' ekukhanyeni kwenkos  
We are marching in the light of God.



*Can you find this square on the pulpit quilt?*



## Connect

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919-467-0481

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

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

## Leadership

Rev. Lauren Efird, Senior Pastor

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Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

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Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks, Director of Liturgy & Formation

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

Helen Bishop, Organist

Cameron Aiken, Choir Director

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