



Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

January 12, 2025



Scan for Digital

Bulletin Art

Detail from "Beloved" by Rev. 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.

— Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman (A Sanctified Art)

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.

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.



Announcements | Church Events and Updates

Business Meeting Sunday after Worship (1/12)

As announced in the Business Meeting today (January 5), we'll be having another meeting next Sunday (January 12) immediately following worship. The subject of that business meeting will be the agreement with DHIC (called an Option to Lease Agreement) to build on our land for the Property Repurposing Project. The text of that agreement will be available after our attorney and DHIC's attorney finish drafting it together.

The headlines of the agreement will be GFBC receiving \$1.08 million in exchange for a lease of a portion of our land for 75 years. If you have questions about other particulars, reach out to Blair Biser, Chair of Deacons, Natalie Patten, At-Large Deacon, or Revs. Lauren Efird or Wesley Spears-Newsome this week.

Rev. Spears-Newsome will be available beginning at 9:00am on January 12 in the conference room with the document and able to answer your questions about it.

It's an exciting milestone for the project and we're excited for you to join us in this next step forward. **Plan to stay after worship on January 12!**

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.

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."

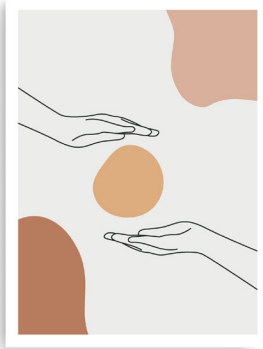
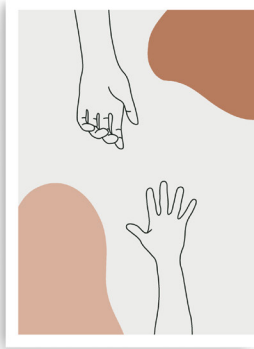
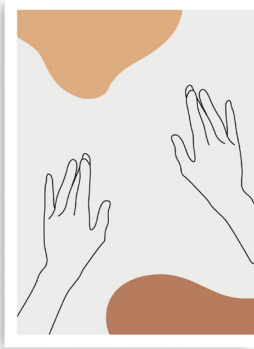
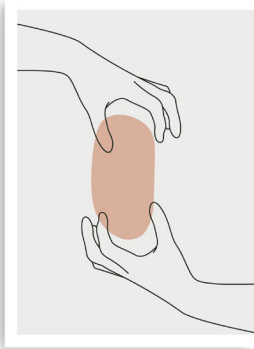
Teaching Series on the Lord's Prayer begins Jan. 12 in Fellowship Hall

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.

Ministry Monday (1/27)

We will have our quarterly committee meetings on January 27. Look out for details from your committee chair soon!

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.

Jo Brooks
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
- 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. The next meeting is February 18 at 7pm via video call.

Order of Worship | Baptism of our Lord

✝ 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 (Psalm 29) 📖

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of God's name.

Worship the Lord in holy splendor.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters.

The God of glory thunders over mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful.

The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.

The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl.

The voice of the Lord strips the forest bare.

In God's temple, all people say "glory!"

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood.

The Lord sits enthroned forever.

May the Lord give us strength!

May the Lord bless us with peace!

Invocation | Lydia Hoyle

✝ **Hymn** | Nothing But the Blood (pg. 7)

Offertory Prayer | Susan Beck

Offertory 📖

5

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.

† **Doxology** | Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH
Transcendent God, we bless your name
Incarnate Christ, the risen one
The Spirit with us, Immanent
The Source, the Word, the Breath of life. Amen.

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** | How Firm a Foundation (pg. 8)

Reading | Isaiah 43:1-7 | Rev. Spears-Newsome
The word of God for us, the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem | Waymaker (pg. 10)

Sermon | You Are Mine | Rev. Efrid

Reaffirmation of Baptism

† **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.

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!

Nothing but the Blood

words: Stephen Stacks

1. What makes us all ci - ti - zens? Nothing but the blood of
 2. What tears down our bor - der walls? Nothing but the blood of
 3. What se - cures our lib - er - ty? Nothing but the blood of
 4. What calls us to move past hate? Nothing but the blood of

4
 Je - sus. What re - names us as God's kin? Nothing but the blood of
 Je - sus. What force can u - nite us all? Nothing but the blood of
 Je - sus. What dis - arms the pow'rs that be? Nothing but the blood of
 Je - sus. What trans - forms our bro - ken state? Nothing but the blood of

8
 Je - sus. O pre - cious is the flow that de - stroys the
 Je - sus.
 Je - sus.
 Je - sus.

12
 sta - tus quo, — No oth - er fount I know, nothing but the blood of Je - sus!

How Firm a Foundation

1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
4. "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
5. "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose

is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;

What more can He say than to you He has said,
I'll strength-en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
the flame shall not hurt thee, I only design shake,
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
up-held by my righteous, omnipotent hand.
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.
I'll never, no, never, no, never for-sake!"

Come Thou Fount

1. Come, Thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
2. Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith - er by Thy help I'm come;
3. O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be!

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise:
and I hope, by Thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home:
Let Thy good - ness, like a fet - ter, bind my wan - dering heart to Thee:

teach me some me - lo - dious son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove;
Je - sus sought me when a stran - ger, wan - dering from the fold of God;
prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;

praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of Thy re - deem - ing love.
He, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed His pre - cious blood.
here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts a - bove.

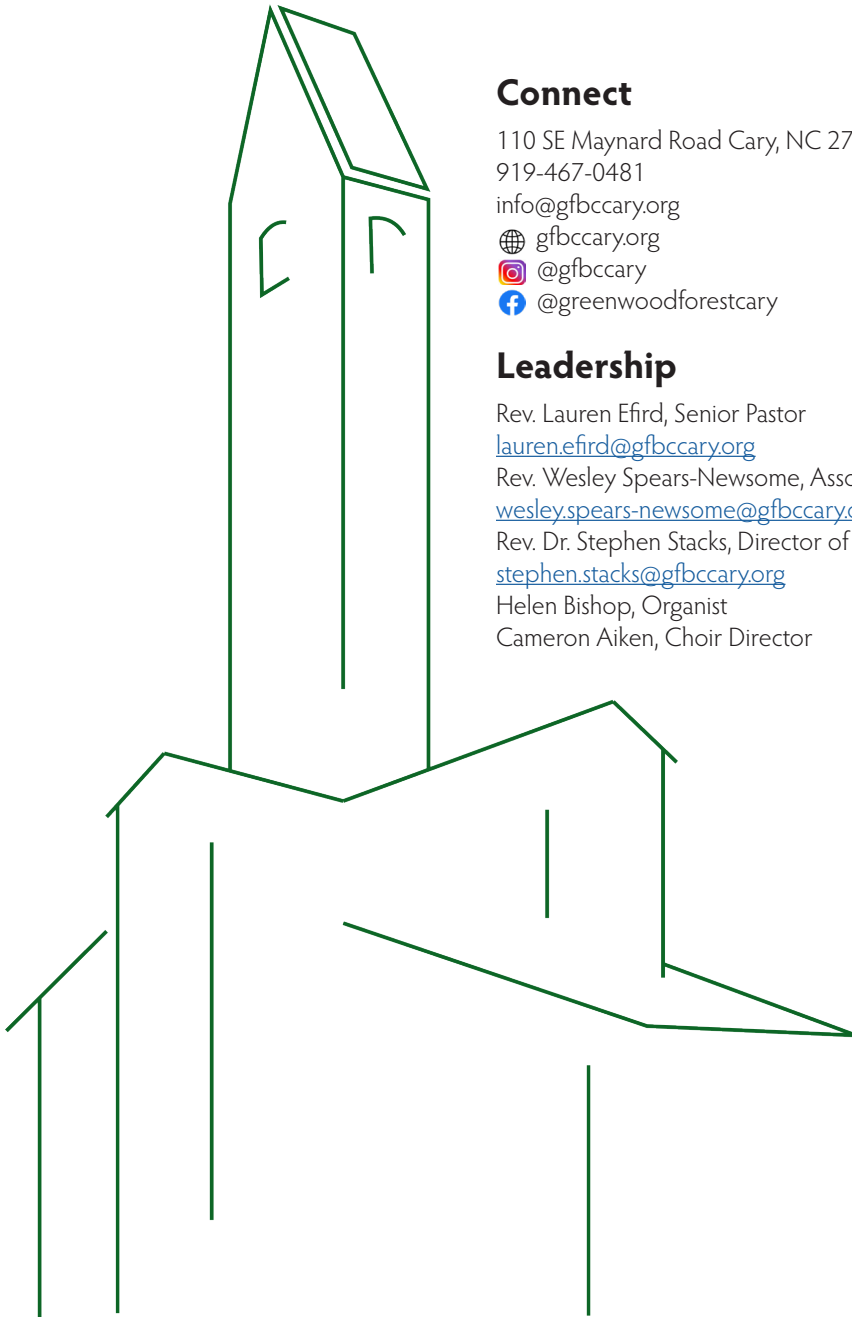
Anthem Waymaker

Sinach

You are here, moving in our midst
I worship you, I worship you
You are here, working in this place
I worship you, I worship you
You are here, turning lives around
I worship you, I worship you
You are here, mending every heart
I worship you, I worship you

You are
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper
Light in the darkness
My God, that is who you are

You are here, touching every heart
I worship you, I worship you
You are here, turning lives around
I worship you, I worship you



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Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

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

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Helen Bishop, Organist

Cameron Aiken, Choir Director

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