



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

July 6, 2025



## Current Sermon Series:

# FAITH BEYOND EMPIRE

In *Faith Beyond Empire*, we'll be exploring the ways our Scriptures lead us to resist imperial impulses like the desire to conquer, control, exploit, and consume. From Genesis to Revelation, we'll examine stories, parables, and poems to determine how we identify and respond to empire in our midst today based on how God's people have responded in Scripture.

## Bulletin Art

### "A Choice" by Lauren Wright Pittman

Jesus offers the crowd (us) a layered and complicated choice, one that is as complex as his own dualistic nature. The first option is self-denial, a heavy burden, and a lost—but saved—life. The second is gaining the whole world, but forfeiting life. It's easy for a seasoned Christian to take this choice for granted. This choice that Jesus calls us into may even seem like a no brainer, but in this moment, Jesus teaches of the terrors that will befall him and invites the crowd to knowingly face that path alongside him. If we're honest, it is extremely difficult to reject the tempting power and wealth this world has to offer and allow our life to take the shape of good news for all.

The choice isn't an obvious one. One side looks like an opulent pile of riches, a crown, and endless power, while the other looks like tattered and worn hands with new life blooming out of wounds, work, burdens and relationships. This choice may seem like a distant decision made long ago, but it's a decision to be made every single day, one moment at a time. In working for and with the downtrodden, poor, orphaned, widowed, ostracized, and oppressed, we will find ourselves.

—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.

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### Reminders



Nursery care is available for infants and toddlers. There is also a glider in the back of the Fellowship Hall if you need to rock your little ones.



Transcripts of the sermon and large print bulletins are available at the sound table for those who need them.



Services are livestreamed and you may end up on camera.



Restrooms are located on the hallway off the Fellowship Hall. You are welcome to use the bathroom that best aligns with your gender identity (our gender-neutral, single-occupant restrooms are currently in a part of the building without HVAC).



# Announcements | Church Events and Updates

## ONE Wake Assembly (7/12)

We need to represent at the ONE Wake Assembly on July 12 at 12pm at Watts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church (3703 Tryon Road). We're hoping for 1,000 ONE Wake members to be there to hold our elected leaders accountable for pledges they made last fall. We need their continued commitment to affordable housing across the county, and your presence ensures it! RSVP at [onewake.org](http://onewake.org).

## Volunteer with the Summer Program Partnership

We've partnered with the Kirk of Kildaire and Cary Presbyterian for many years to provide summer enrichment activities for neighborhood children during the summer months. If you are interested in volunteering to help these programs succeed (your presence and kindness are all that's needed, no advanced planning or training), please email Rev. Spears-Newsome to get connected. The program takes place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30am to 12:30pm at the Kirk of Kildaire.

## July Faith Formation - Neighbors at the Border

During July, as we transition from our worship series about moving beyond empire to a series on friendship, we will consider how we can be better friends with our migrant neighbors. In churchwide Faith Formation in the Fellowship Hall, three lay people and Rev. Dr. Stacks will reflect on their trip to the border last year in conversation with scripture.

The schedule for these Faith Formation series is below.

July 6 - Lynn McLaughlin

July 13 - Mary Whitehouse

July 20 - Jazzmoné Sutton

July 27 - Stephen Stacks

## Next Sermon Series:



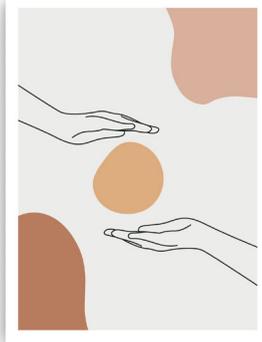
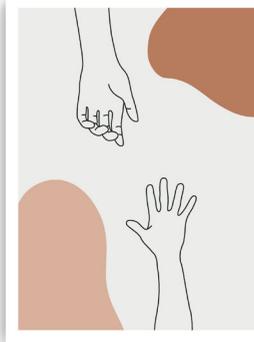
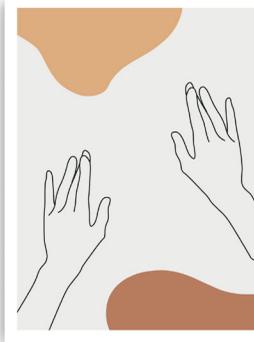
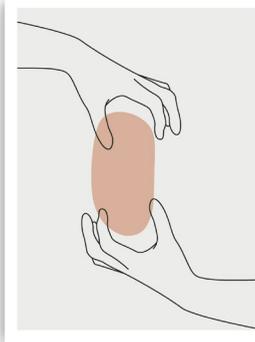
*friendship. connection. creation.*

In July, we're beginning a new sermon and event series called "You've Got a Friend: Friendship. Connection. Creation." In worship, we'll be exploring biblical friendships and there will be several events through July and August you'll want to mark your calendars for:

- **July 20-23:** Youth Mission Trip with other local progressive churches to Western NC
- **July 27:** Toy Story Movie Night at GFBC
- **August 9:** Youth-led fundraiser for Western NC in Raleigh
- **August 15:** Makers Festival (more info to come!)
- **August 24:** Backpack Blessing for Children, Youth, and Educators in Worship
- **August 31:** Lilo and Stitch Movie Night

The series will also feature special Faith Formation sessions on friendship led by Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome.

# 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  
Barbara Dial (Carol Carter's Sister)  
Graham Family at the death of Barney Graham  
Doris Martin  
Jennie Pegram  
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.



Scan to Give  
Online Today!

# Order of Worship | Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

✝ 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** | Come Sing to God | arr. Lloyd Larson

**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 (Psalm 30)** 📖

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,

**And did not let my foes rejoice over me.**

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,

**And you have healed me.**

O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol,

**Restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.**

Sing praises to the LORD, O you faithful ones,

**And give thanks to God's holy name.**

For God's anger is but for a moment;

**God's favor is for a lifetime.**

Weeping may linger for the night,

**But joy comes with the morning.**

Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me!

**O LORD, be my helper!"**

You have turned my mourning into dancing;

**You have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,**

So that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

**O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.**

**Invocation** | Rev. Amanda Warren

✝ **Hymn** | The Church's One Foundation ( pg. 7)

**Offertory Prayer** | Diana McGahan

**Offertory** | Shall We Gather at the River | arr. Albert Mendoza 📖

Today's color is **green**, representing spiritual growth.

## 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: 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** | 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

† **Hymn** | I Want to Be Ready (pg. 8)

**Reading** | Revelation 21:22-22:5 | Rev. Warren  
The word of God for us, the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | O Day of Peace | CHH Parry

**Sermon** | The City of God | Rev. Spears-Newsome

**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** | This Little Light of Mine (pg. 10)

**Benediction** | Rev. Spears-Newsome

**Postlude** | The Church's One Foundation | arr. Victor Labenske

## 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.

\* = In the Lord's Prayer, you may say any name for God (e.g., Mother/Father/Parent).

## 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.

# The Church's One Foundation

1. The church-'s one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ her Lord;  
 2. E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,  
 3. Though with a scorn-ful won - der we see her sore op - pressed,  
 4. 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion and tu - mult of her war,  
 5. Yet she on earth has un - ion with God, the Three in One,

she is His new cre - a - tion, by wa - ter and the Word;  
 her char - ter of sal - va - tion, one Lord, one faith, one birth;  
 by schis - ms rent a - sun - der, by her - e - sies dis - tressed;  
 she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;  
 and mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion with those whose rest is won;

from heaven He came and sought her to be His ho - ly bride,  
 one ho - ly name she bless - es, par - takes one ho - ly food,  
 yet saints their watch are keep - ing, their cry goes up, "How long?"  
 till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,  
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord, give us grace that we,

with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.  
 and to one hope she press - es, with ev - ery grace en - dued.  
 and soon the night of weep - ing shall be the morn of song.  
 and Christ's great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.  
 like them, the meek and low - ly, on high may dwell with Thee.

# I Want to Be Ready

I wan - na be read - y, I wan - na be read - y,

I wan - na be read - y to walk in Je - ru - sa - lem just like John.  
*Last time*

## Verses

*Solo:*

1. 7 John said the cit - y was just four - square,
2. I've nev - er been to heav - en but I've been told
3. If you get there be - fore I do,

To

and  
that the  
tell

walk in Je - ru - sa - lem just like John.

he de - clared he'd meet me there.  
streets up there are paved with gold.  
all my friends I'm com - in' too.

To

D.C.

D.C.

walk in Je - ru - sa - lem just like John. Oh,

# This Little Light of Mine

1. This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
2. Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
3. Je - sus gave it to me, I'm gon-na let it shine.

oh

The first system of music features a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The word 'oh' is written below the bass staff.

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm gon-na let it shine.

oh

The second system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The word 'oh' is written below the bass staff.

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm gon-na let it shine.  
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm gon-na let it shine.

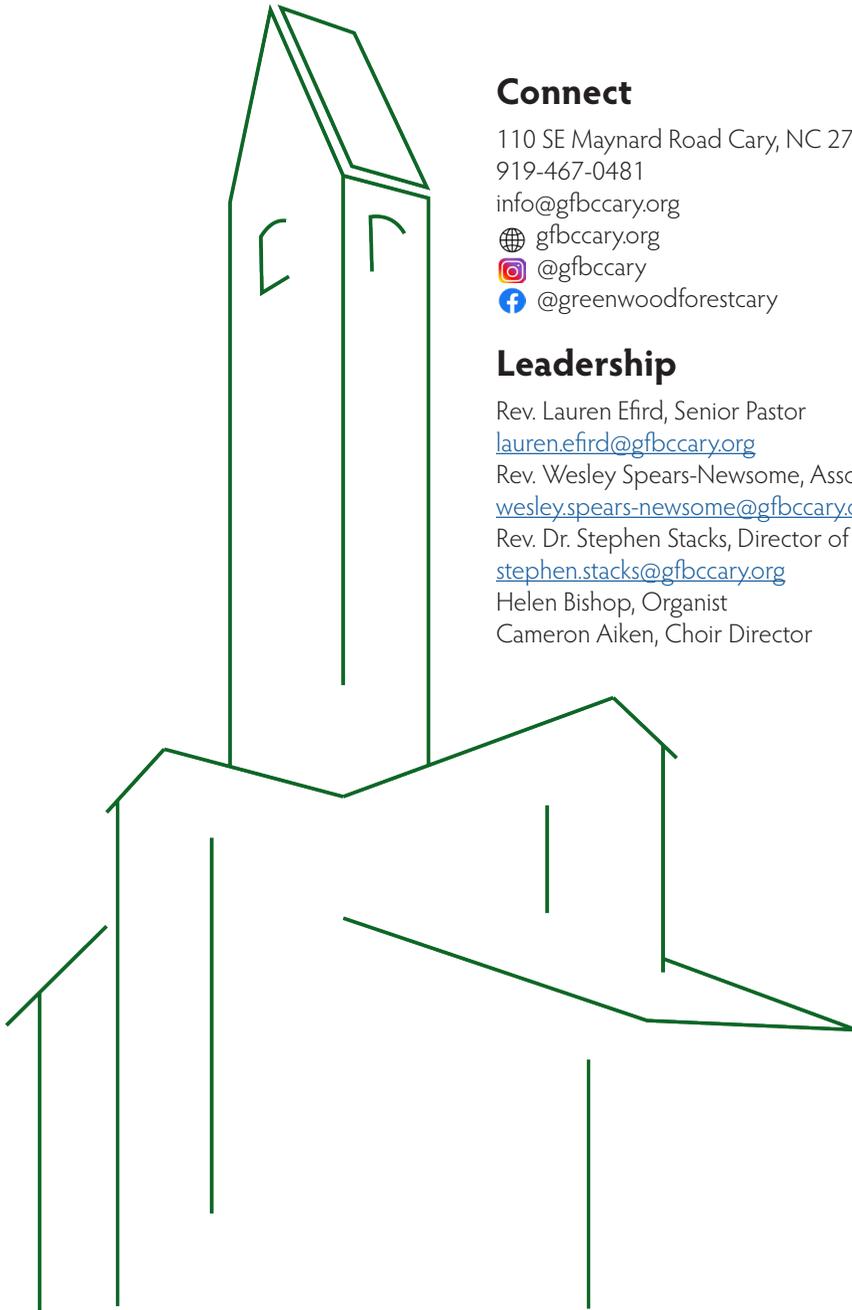
oh oh

The third system of music continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The word 'oh' is written below the bass staff at two points.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

The fourth system of music features a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

4. Shine, shine, shine, I'm gonna let it shine....
5. All in my home, I'm gonna let it shine....



## Connect

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 [@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

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Helen Bishop, Organist

Cameron Aiken, Choir Director

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