



Lisle



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

December 14, 2025



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# Bulletin Art

## Mary's Yes

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 1:26-39

Photography with digital drawing.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angel goes to Nazareth to find Mary. I was six months pregnant with my second daughter when I reread this scripture and began this image, so at first, this detail seemed like a happy coincidence. But as I pondered it, I wondered if Elizabeth's pregnancy might have everything to do with Mary's willingness to say yes to this wild, wonderful—but risky and terrifying—undertaking. Elizabeth's pregnancy provides reassurance that Mary can trust the angel's impossible news. By the sixth month, Mary will be able to see for herself that Elizabeth is truly pregnant. By the sixth month, Mary can place her hands on Elizabeth's belly and giggle as the baby leaps and kicks. By the sixth month, the risk of miscarriage has significantly decreased. By the sixth month, Elizabeth will be emotionally, mentally, and physically preparing for birth. Her miracle is real, even as it is yet to be born. Therefore, Mary can rest her hope in an emerging—not empty—promise. Mary's willingness to say "yes" is also fortified by the assurance that she is not stepping forward alone. Even as fears surely surround her, Mary will go to Elizabeth for protection and comfort. She won't fulfill her calling without support. Her hope will be strengthened in solidarity.

In this image, we see the angel greeting Mary in the form of dappled light. Mary's back is turned to the angel, but we see her in the process of pivoting toward the warmth of the cascading light. I imagine this is the moment after the angel responds to her initial question, "How can this be?" After hearing the angel's response, Mary closes her eyes, imagining her cousin Elizabeth and perhaps her many ancestors holding her up as she prepares to step forward. The wrap around her head carries the angel's good news, anointing her with the promise that fear won't stop her. Embroidered along her neckline is Mary's willing response: "Here I am." Her lantern earring is a sign to each of us, to anyone who is fearful. It's as if Mary herself becomes a lantern, emanating courage in the face of a fearful calling, lighting a way forward.

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

## Sermon Series

This year's Advent theme is *What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent*. We'll enjoy art, poetry, reflections, and more from A Sanctified Art. The series looks closely at the fear and terror looming in the background during the time of King Herod and invites us to consider the fears we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us, and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Might we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work? This series gently invites us to identify where fear is present—both in the Advent story and in our lives—while also finding our way toward hope, with the angels' voices in our ears.



# 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, transcripts of the sermon, and large print bulletins are available at the back of the sanctuary.



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)



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

# Announcements | Church Events and Updates

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## Backpack Buddies Update

Our numbers are increasing and we are running out of plastic bags! We urgently need your double bagged, flat stacked plastic bags. If you'd like to be notified of opportunities to pack bags email [judyvaccaro@gmail.com](mailto:judyvaccaro@gmail.com).

## Newcomers Reception

All those new to GFBC are invited to a reception today after worship! Join us in the Narthex (the entrance/foyer area to the Sanctuary) to get more information about this community, make connections, and find your place here at GFBC.

## Teaching Series:

**The Bible and Reproductive Justice**

**November 30-December 14**

*Accompanying Podcast Recommendation: Liberty Lost*

Today is the last day of 'The Bible and Reproductive Justice' teaching series.

## Christmas Breakfast and Service of Lessons and Carols on 12/21

Join us in the Fellowship Hall from 9:45-10:45am on Sunday, December 21st for a festive Christmas breakfast followed by a Service of Lessons and Carols.

## HVAC Update

Things are moving forward with our HVAC campaign and we need your help! We have approved Piedmont to begin **Phase Two of the Boiler Project**- replacing our boilers!

If you have not yet contributed to the project and are able to do so, prayerfully consider making a donation today. **We still need to raise an additional \$25,000 to move into Phase Two of the project.**

If you have not yet fulfilled your pledge, please do so today or let us know when you will be able to do so. **We are still waiting for \$7,800 in unfulfilled pledges.**

We are truly grateful to everyone who has donated to our HVAC campaign already. Thank you for helping us keep GFBC a safe, warm, and inclusive space of worship and community.

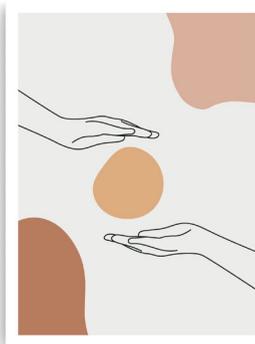
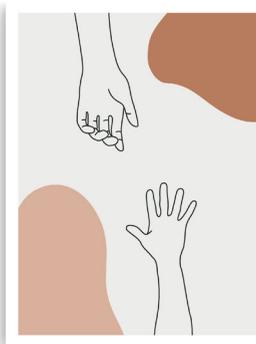
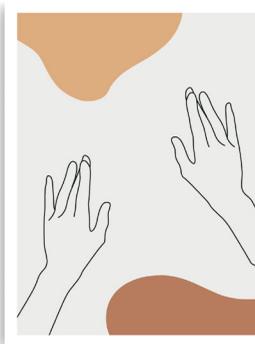
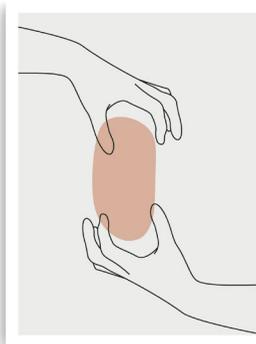
## Staff Love Offering

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 Andy Jarrell. 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 Sunday, Dec. 21. Thank you for your generosity!

## Service of Lament

On Wednesday, December 17th we will host a Service of Lament. This service is a time for grieving losses this holiday season. Whether you're experiencing loss or not, we invite you to join us in this time of remembrance, grief, and support.

# 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.*

Bess Averre

Jo Brooks

Carrie

Mac Graham

Ken Prillaman (Susan Beck's Brother)

Nancy Walters (Susan Beck's mother-in-law)

Steven (friend of GFBC)

Kathleen Wicker

Our partners at Ebenezer Baptist in Cuba



Scan to Give  
Online Today!

## 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.

YEAR END GIVING REMINDER - If you wish your financial gift to be counted with your 2025 calendar year contributions, please be sure that you make your in-person contribution, mail your check or complete the online transaction BEFORE December 31, 2025. Annual giving statements will be mailed in January.

# Order of Worship | Third Week of 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

✝ **Processional Hymn** | Joy to the World (pg. 7)

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

**Passing of the Peace** 📖

**Lighting of the Joy Candle** | Caroline and Brandon Suther

**Preparation for Worship** | How Great Our Joy | arr. Jack Schrader

**Call to Worship** 📖

Jeremiah said, "I am only a boy!"

**Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"**

Mary said, "How can this be?"

**We often say, "But God, I am afraid."**

Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer. So may we trust the inviter.

**May we heed God's invitation.**

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

**Let us worship our courageous, inviting, calling God.**

**Amen!**

**Invocation** | Betsy Sisley

✝ **Hymn** | O Little Town of Bethlehem (pg. 8)

**Offertory Prayer** | Andy Jarrell

**Offertory** | O Come, O Come Emmanuel | arr. Robert W. Thygeron

✝ **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 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 Newsome-Spears

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.**

**Reading** | Luke 1:26-39 & Matthew 1:18-25 | Rev. Spears-Newsome

The word of God for us, the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | Beautiful Star of Bethlehem | Ralph Stanley (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | We Are Called Forward | Rev. Hayes

**† Hymn** | O Come, Take Heart (pg. 9) 

**Benediction** | Rev. Hayes

**Postlude** | Good Tidings of Great Joy | arr. Claude L. Bass

## 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).

## 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!

# Advent and Christmas

at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

**November 30** - First Sunday of Advent (11am)

**December 7** - Second Sunday of Advent (11am)

**December 14** - Third Sunday of Advent (11am); Youth Advent Party (5pm)

**December 17** - Service of Lament (6pm)

**December 21** - Christmas Breakfast (9:45am) & Lessons and Carols (11am)

**December 24** - Children's Christmas Eve (11am) & Candlelight Christmas Eve (8pm)

**December 28** - First Sunday of Christmas (11am)

**January 4** - Epiphany Sunday (11am)



# Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth re - ceive her King;  
 2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; let men their songs em - ploy;  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the ground;  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions prove

let ev - ery heart pre - pare Him room,  
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 He comes to make His bless - ings flow  
 the glo - ries of His righ - teous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 and won - ders of His love, and won - ders of His

1. And heaven and na - ture sing,

1. And heaven and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of His love.

heaven and na - ture sing,

# O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove,  
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is given!  
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
while mor - tals sleep the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.  
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of His heaven.  
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day!

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
No ear may hear His com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth!  
where meek souls will re - ceive Him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.  
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

# O Come, Take Heart



O come, O come though tim - id and un - sure And  
O come, O come though you feel un - pre - pared When  
O come and join God's kin - dom work And



trust that God de - clares your worth Re - mem -  
cour - age fails you, do it scared Don't let  
be God's hands and feet on earth You're called



ber when you're feel - ing small That ev - ery child of  
the fear of ma - king mis - takes Im - pede you from the  
ex - act - ly as you are To love the world with



God is called  
path you're called to take Take heart, take heart! The One  
ev - ery bro - ken part



who calls to you Will give you strength and see you through

# Anthem Beautiful Star of Bethlelem

Ralph Stanley

Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem  
Shining afar through shadows dim  
Giving the light for those who long have gone  
Guiding the wise men on their way  
Unto the place where Jesus lay  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem (Star of Bethlehem)  
Shine upon us until the glory dawns  
Give us a light to guide the way  
Unto the land of perfect day  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem, shine on (shine on)

Oh beautiful star the hope of light  
Guiding the pilgrims through the night  
Over the mountains till the break of dawn  
Into the light of perfect day  
It will give out a lovely ray  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on (shine on)

Oh beautiful star the hope of rest  
For the redeemed the good and blessed  
Yonder in glory when the crown is won  
Jesus is now the star divine  
Brighter and brighter he will shine  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on (shine on)



## Connect

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

## Leadership

Rev. Lauren Hayes, 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@gbccary.org](mailto:stephen.stacks@gbccary.org)

Helen Bishop, Organist

Cameron Aiken, Choir Director

Alex Filby, Director of Administration and Facilities

[alex.filby@gbccary.org](mailto:alex.filby@gbccary.org)

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