

**Greenwood Forest**  
**Baptist Church** December 24, 2025



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## Bulletin Art

*Good, New*

by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell

*Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 (acrylic on canvas)*

We often link fear and anxiety to bad news. But what about the moments when the news is good—almost too good to believe? The dream job offer arrives. The long-hoped-for pregnancy test is finally positive. The illness goes into sudden remission. Euphoria, the fear of good news, often stems from past losses, fear of change, or the pressure of new expectations. Joy and relief may come first, but they're often followed by a quiet dread. What now? What could this mean? In Luke's Nativity story, even angelic news stirs overwhelm. The shepherds tremble. Mary ponders. As she wraps her newborn in cloth, what thoughts rise in her heart?

The word "new" is nestled in "good news"—a reminder that even the best gifts lie beyond our control. In the birth of Jesus, we witness the mystery of it all: the terrifying, the unexpected, the good, and the new that hope often brings.

- Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell

## 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 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.



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# Announcements for the New Year

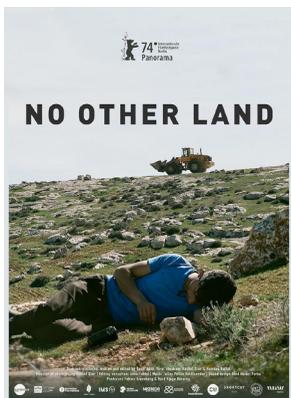
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## Family Promise Week (January 5-11)

Family Promise of Wake County helps house families with children who are experiencing homelessness. Caring for these families throughout the year depends on the generosity and participation of faith communities across Wake County. We're up on the rotation for January 5-11, which means we'll be supplying nightly meals during the weekdays and groceries for families. If you would like to sign up for either (it involves dropping off food at the Family Promise office, which is about 15 minutes from GFBC), visit [gfbccary.org/familypromise](https://gfbccary.org/familypromise).

## GFBC Welcomes Back Rev. Isaac Villegas (January 4)

Greenwood Forest will welcome back Isaac Villegas for Faith Formation and Worship on January 4, 2026! Villegas is the author of *Migrant God: A Christian Vision for Immigrant Justice* and is a Mennonite pastor in North Carolina. He will be kicking off a sermon series based on his book in worship (11am) as well as giving a book talk downstairs in the Fellowship Hall during the Faith Formation hour (9:45am). You can find his other writing in numerous publications, including *The Christian Century*, *Anabaptist World*, *Commonweal*, *Sojourners*, *Faith & Leadership*, and elsewhere.



## Documentary Screening: No Other Land (January 11)

The Agora Initiative, an organization dedicated to peace in Palestine and Israel, will host a screening of the Academy Award-winning documentary *No Other Land* on Sunday, January 11 at 3pm in the Fellowship Hall. The film was recorded between 2019 and 2023 and covers the destruction of a Palestinian community in the occupied West Bank. Directed by a collective of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, *No Other Land* is a moving diary of the experience of occupation. Following the screening, a panel conversation will follow featuring Khalil Sayegh (founder of The Agora Initiative) and Celeste Marcus (Executive Editor at *Liberties: A Journal of Culture & Politics*). The event is free and open to the public, but attendees need to register at [gfbccary.org/nooterland](https://gfbccary.org/nooterland) or scan the QR code to register.



# Order of Worship | Christmas Eve

† 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** | Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (pg. 6)

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

**Passing of the Peace** 📖

**Lighting of the Christ Candle** | Martha and Steve Glass

**Preparation for Worship** | Watchmen, Tell Us of the Night | Mark Hayes

**Call to Worship** 📖

On this holy night, we come,  
dazzled and awe-struck,

**ready to sing alongside the angels.**

On this holy night, we come,  
eager and hopeful,

**ready to journey alongside the shepherds.**

On this holy night, we come,  
quietly and tenderly,

**ready to worship alongside Mary.**

On this holy night, we come,  
singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming:

**good news is louder than fear.**

Let us worship our God of good news.

**Invocation** | Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome

† **Hymn** | Angels We Have Heard on High (vv. 1-3; pg. 7)

**Offertory Prayer** | Andy Jarrell

**Offertory** | On Christmas Night All Christians Sing | arr. Lloyd Larson

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: 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.*

**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 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** | Shout! (pg. 8)

**Reading** | Luke 2:1-20 | Rev. Spears-Newsome

The word of God for us, the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | O Holy Night | Adolphe Adam (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | Good News is Louder Than Fear | Rev. Hayes

**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 and Candlelighting** | Silent Night (pg. 9)

**Benediction** | Rev. Hayes

**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.

**Candlelighting**

During the final hymn, our pastors will walk down the center aisle lighting the candles of those they pass. Light the candle of the person next to you until everyone in the room has a candle lit. When we sing the a cappella verse of Silent Night, we raise our candles high.

# Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;  
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;  
3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild; God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
Late in time, be - hold Him come, Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see, Hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty!  
Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,

With an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus our Im - man - u - el.  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King."

# Angels We Have Heard on High

1. An - gels we have heard on high sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
4. See Him in a man - ger laid, whom the choirs of an - gels praise;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heaven - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ the Lord, the new - born King.  
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - ri - a

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!



When fear lies like a blan - ket thick and  
The pierc - ing song the an - gels bring to  
Sur - ren - der to the joy this night of



mutes the joy of li - ving When He - rod reigns with  
un - sus - pect - ing shep - herds Is hard to hear with  
God in - car - nate born for us Shout in the streets, wake



terr - or great, the an - gels break in, sing - ing  
frigh - tened ears so used to news of ter - ror  
those who sleep to join the an - gel cho - rus



Shout! Shout your glo-ri - as in all the earth and heaven a - bove



Shout! Shout the an-gels' news that hope is born in Je-sus

Shout!

# Silent Night

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright  
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep-herds quake at the sight.  
 3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light  
 4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, won-drous star, lend thy light;  
*Stil - le Nacht, hei - li-ge Nacht! Al - les schläft, ein - sam wacht*

round you vir - gin moth-er and child! Ho - ly In - fant so ten - der and mild,  
 Glo - ry streams from heav-en a - far, heav-enly hosts sing "Al - le - lu - ia,  
 ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,  
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our King;  
*mur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar. Hold - er Kna - be im lock - i - gen Haar,*

sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born."  
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.  
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.  
*schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh', schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh!"*

# Anthem O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and his gospel is peace.  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in his name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise his holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise his name forever!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!



## Connect

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## Leadership

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