



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

December 28, 2025



# Bulletin Art

## *Stay with Me*

by Rev. T Denise Anderson

*Inspired by Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23*

*18 x 24 Acrylic on canvas board*

I used to think my mother was cheap. When we'd go on road trips, she'd spend the night before preparing food for the trip. I thought it was because she didn't want to spend money on fast food. She didn't. But her reasons had nothing to do with a drive-thru. My mother was a Black child in the U.S. in the 1950s and 60s. When they went on road trips, they had to leave in the dead of night with everything they'd need for the trip. For Black folks, there was no casual stopping along the way. If you stopped at the "wrong" place, you might not make it home. Her elders taught her what they had to learn themselves, often the hard way. My mom grew up in the Steel Belt, but the family had moved there after leaving the Jim Crow South during the Great Migration for greener (and ostensibly safer) pastures. Her preparations were vestiges of a circumspect upbringing designed to keep her safe. I was well into adulthood when I realized my family had been refugees in their own country. The story of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt takes new significance as I consider not only the experiences of dear ones around the world, but also my own ancestors. My piece focuses on a parent's desperate grip of their child's hand as they escape a despot's fiery wrath, possibly in the dead of night. The colors subtly recall the Pan-African, Palestinian, and Sudanese flags. I remember those left behind, and the lower part of the composition depicts the anguish of mothers whose children were not spared. Rachel still weeps (Matthew 2:18). Our fears aren't unfounded. Salvation may have arrived, but the world still isn't safe. How will we remember Rachel's children as we resist and rebuild?

—Rev. T. Denise Anderson

## 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.

### Contents

- 3 | Community Notes
- 4 | Announcements
- 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, 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)

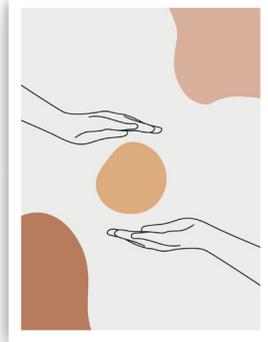
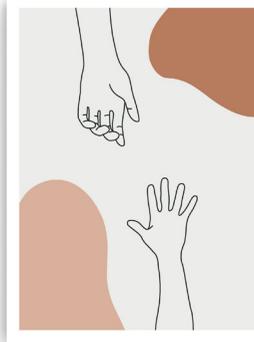
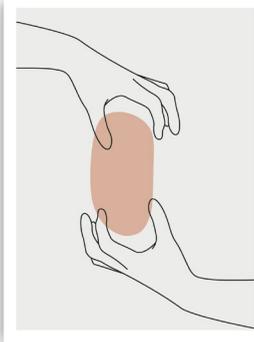


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# Community Notes | Prayer Requests and Giving



## 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  
Nancy Walters (Susan Beck's mother-in-law)  
Steven (friend of GFBC)  
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!

## Faith Giving Sundays

We ask you to consider making a special investment of \$20 on the last Sunday of every month. This collective effort is essential in ensuring our budget remains on track, allowing us to continue making a difference in our community and beyond. Contact Susan Beck if you have any questions or want to give a Gratitude Testimony about what GFBC means to you and why you give.

# Announcements for the New Year

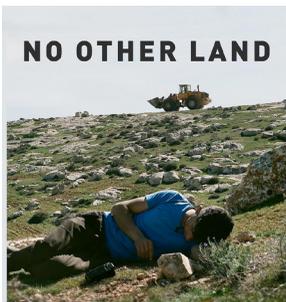
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## Family Promise Week (January 5-11)

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/notherland](https://gfbccary.org/notherland) or scan the QR code to register.



# Order of Worship | First Week of Christmas

✝ 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** | He is Born | arr. Brant Adams

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

**Passing of the Peace** 📖

**Call to Worship** 📖

In worship, we hear God's story and we ask,  
**"What did God do long ago?"**

In worship, we hear God's story, so we ask,  
**"What is God doing, here and now?"**

In worship, we hear God's story, then we ask,  
**"What can I do to respond to it all?"**

Listen, God is speaking.

**Listen, it may be time to act.**

Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God.

**Amen.**

**Invocation** | Nathan Bullock

✝ **Hymn** | Go, Tell it On the Mountain (pg. 7)

**Gratitude Testimony** | Bucky Sydnor

**Offertory Prayer** | Susan Beck

**Offertory** | Angels We Have Heard On High | arr. Hugh S. Livingston

✝ **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 **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. Hayes 

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 Heard the Bells on Christmas Day (pg. 8)

**Reading** | Matthew 2:13-23 | Rev. Spears-Newsome

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | The First Noel | arr. Richard Walters (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | Let Fear Fuel a Fire for Justice | Rev. Spears-Newsome

**† Hymn** | Let the Fires of Justice Grow (pg. 9) 

**Benediction** | Rev. Hayes

**Postlude** | Behold That Star | arr. Mark 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.

\* = 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.

# Go, Tell it On the Mountain

## Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry-where,

Go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.

## Verses

1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! a - bove the earth,  
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger The hum - ble Christ was born,

## D.C.

Be - hold, through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho - ly light.  
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

# I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

1. I heard the bells on Christ - mas day Their  
2. I thought how, as on the day had come, The  
3. And in de - spair I bowed my head: "There  
4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God  
5. Till, ring - ing, sing - ing on its way, The

old fa - mil - iar car - ols play, And wild and sweet the  
bel - fies of all Chris - ten - dom Had rolled a - long th'un -  
is no peace on earth," I said, "For hate is strong, and  
is not dead, nor doth night He sleep; The wrong shall fail, the  
world re - volved from night to day A voice, a chime, a

words re - peat Of peace on earth, good will to men.  
bro - ken song Of peace on earth, good will to men.  
mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men."  
right pre - vail, With peace on earth, good will to men."  
chant sub - lime, Of peace on earth, good will to men.

# Let the Fires of Justice Grow



Fear is grow-ing all a - round us, plant - ed there by  
Bind the chaff and light the mat-ches, let the fires of  
A - ny - where God's chil-dren suf - fer, a - ny - where they



hu - man power Chok - ing out our li - ber - a - tion  
jus - tice grow Watch the flames con - sume our bon-dage,  
live in fear A - ny - where op - pres - sion deep - ens,



as King He - rod o'er us towers Yet the force of hu - man  
trans - form - ing our fear to hope May the fire that we ig -  
a - ny - where they sow in tears Let us shine the light of



em-pires can't take root in kin - dom ground We'll up - root  
ni - ted fuel us for the work a - head Free the cap -  
jus - tice, fueled by fear that had us bound Hand in hand,



the fear they plan - ted, li - ber - ate those whom they bound  
tive, heal the bro - ken, fol - low - ing where Christ has led  
pro - claim God's kin - dom 'til we top - ple ev - ery crown

# Anthem The First Noel

arr. Richard Walters | Performed by Catherine Glasgow

The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the king of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star  
shining in the east beyond them far  
and to the earth it gave a great light  
and so it continued both day and night.

This star drew nigh to the northwest  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest  
and there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
and hath made heaven and earth of nought  
and with his blood mankind hath bought.



## Connect

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## Leadership

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