



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

January 4, 2026



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# Bulletin Art

## *King Tingz*

**By Rev. Nicolette Faison**

Inspired by Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18

*30"x40" Acrylic, paper, markers, synthetic hair on canvas*

If there is one thing I can't stand, it is when people disregard the spiritual use of herbs, metals, and the stars. For years, there has been a nasty practice of shaming indigenous practices, such as the usage of sage, when high church settings actively use incense in worship. We have come to a tension where anything that does not look like a particular type of Christian practice is perceived as pagan or satanic. For years, I have been reminding people that Jesus was gifted gold, frankincense, and myrrh by people who followed the stars to find him.

That is the heart of my piece, King Tingz. I wanted to emphasize the sky and the importance of the stars, a reminder that this was essential to their witness. I wanted to bless each king with a different gift which is found in different places of their attire. Of the magi, the one bowing is marked with the flower of frankincense on their robe. On their left shoulder is a map of modern Persia, reminding us of their journey back home having to take a new route because they defied the request of Herod. They are crowned with cornrows and covered with more greenery because of their position to the ground.

While we celebrate the stars, I wanted there to be some grounding to the earth. As Jesus is both divine and human, he holds space in both worlds. The king to the right has soft myrrh flowers on her elbow and collar. Her outer arm is holding an infant, not Jesus, while her sleeve holds the Palestinian flag with the Arabic word Nakba, reminding us of the genocide of 1947. She is weeping for the children that Herod commits to murdering because of their defiance. She holds a child in the palm of her hand with deep lament. Her golden crown is surrounded by a blue bandana, a quiet nod to Chola culture found on the West Coast, as Latino Christians have always emphasized the importance of los reyes. The one to the left is draped in a starry durag and plated in gold. He has a subtle gold bottom grill and his face is celebrated in a gold pattern. He looks up to the sky, more concerned about navigation, as he is the guiding force for the three of them. I gave this king a durag after some research on Persian magi showed me variations of headwear or turbans that emulated that of a durag.

Above all, if there is something I have learned from living in a Hispanic community and attending a Spanish-speaking church, it is that BIPOC communities do not play about los reyes. I wanted aspects of my culture and other American subcultures to be able to see bits and pieces of themselves in this art. But to also see our connection to the stars and the earth alike. I urge this to be a reminder that even if your church does not celebrate herbs, crystals, metals, and the stars, that does not mean they are not Christian practices nor that they are satanic.

**- Rev. Nicolette Faison**

# 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)



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# Announcements | Church Events and Updates

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## 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](http://gfbccary.org/notherland)

## 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](http://gfbccary.org/familypromise).

## Newcomers Reception

All those new to GFBC are invited to a reception after worship on January 11th! 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.

## Work Anniversary

Yesterday, January 3rd was Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome's 9 year work anniversary.

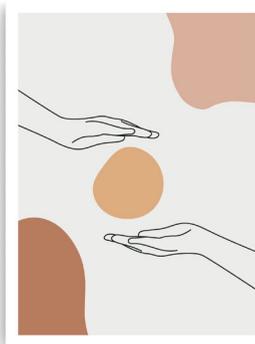
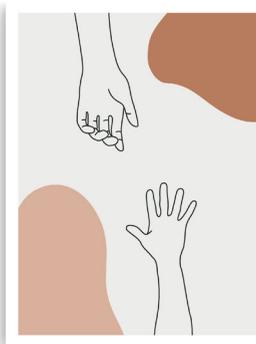
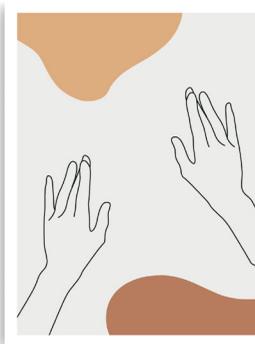
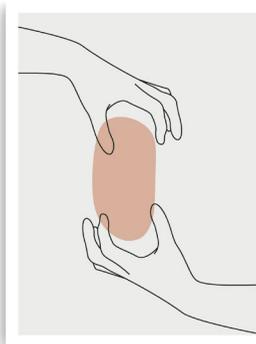
## Welcome Back Rev. Isaac Villegas

Welcome Back Rev. Isaac Villegas. Rev. Villegas is the author of *Migrant God: A Christian Vision for Immigrant Justice* and is a Mennonite pastor in North Carolina. You can find his other writing in numerous publications, including *The Christian Century*, *Anabaptist World*, *Commonweal*, *Sojourners*, *Faith & Leadership*, and elsewhere. Come join us in the Fellowship Hall before Isaac preaches in worship for a book talk.

## Chili Cookoff and Maker's Festival

Join us on January 25 for a special time of congregational sharing in food, fellowship, and craft! We want to share our gifts with one another, so if you're good at painting, pottery, quilting, music, writing, drawing, woodworking, or any other craft and want to share something you've made, we want to see it! Email Rev. Spears-Newsome ([wesley,spears-newsome@gfbccary.org](mailto:wesley,spears-newsome@gfbccary.org)) to sign up. We also want to award the Golden Spoon to the best chili chef in the congregation again! If you'd like to participate in the chili cookoff that will provide our meal for this event, email Rev. Spears-Newsome to reserve a spot.

# 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 Watson  
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!

# Order of Worship | Epiphany Sunday

✝ 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** | How Lovely Shines the Morning Star | arr. J. C. Bach

**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 the dark of morning,  
**the stars still shine.**

In the depth of winter,  
**the birds still climb.**

At the start of the year,  
tender and new,  
**God is here.**

**God is near.**

Do not rest in your fear.

**God is here.**

So like the stars and the birds,  
**Let us worship holy God.**

**Invocation** | Rick Chappell

✝ **Hymn** | What Child is This (pg. 7)

**Offertory Prayer** | Rev. Evan Owoc-Edwards

**Offertory** | We Three Kings | arr. John Henry Hopkins

✝ **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. 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** | We've Seen God's Face (pg. 8)

**Reading** | Luke 2:15-21 | Rev. Spears-Newsome  
The word of God for us, the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** | A New Year Carol | arr. Benjamin Britten (pg. 10)

**Sermon** | Rev. Isaac Villegas

**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** | Be Thou my Vision and Help Me to See (pg. 9) 

**Benediction** | Rev. Hayes

**Postlude** | God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen | arr. Edwin McLean

## 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.

# What Child is This

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest on Ma-ry's lap is sleep-ing?  
2. Why lies He in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3. So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, come peas-ant, king, to own Him;

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet, while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tians, fear: for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en-throne Him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing:  
Nails, spears, shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.

haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!  
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!

# We've Seen God's Face



Like the ma - gi from the east we tra - vel in - to  
If we find our path has led us to King Her - od's  
We will trust that star to guide us to the place where  
When new threats de - rail our jour - ney from the path we



the un - known Step by step we make the jour - ney, called by  
den of fear Still we'll keep our fo - cus fixed on chas - ing  
we were called Find - ing God em - bod - ied in the humb - lest  
planned to take We won't let fear par - a - lyze us, no we



God to seek the throne O - ver moun - tains, through the des - erts  
down that star so clear Though the ty - rants rage and threat - en  
dwell - ing place of all As King Her - od sends his sol - diers  
won't stay locked in place Stay - ing nim - ble, we'll move for - ward



Seek - ing Christ we fol - low e - ver 'Til at last  
Noth - ing weak - ens our pro - fess - ion It is God's  
Time stands still while we be - hold him Here's where we  
Keep - ing safe by cross - ing bor - ders Move a - round

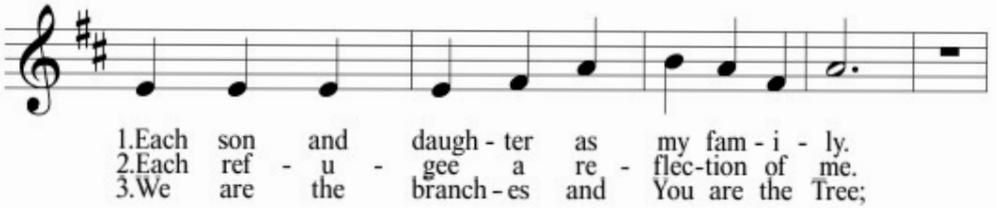


we reach the place Where we hope to see God's face  
voice we have heard Fear will not have the last word  
were called to be God's in - car - nate love to see  
the fear with grace For we know we've seen God's face

# 9 Be Thou My Vision and Help Me to See



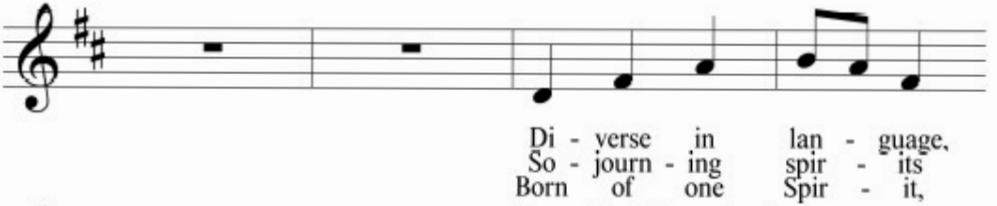
Be Thou My Vi - sion and help me to see



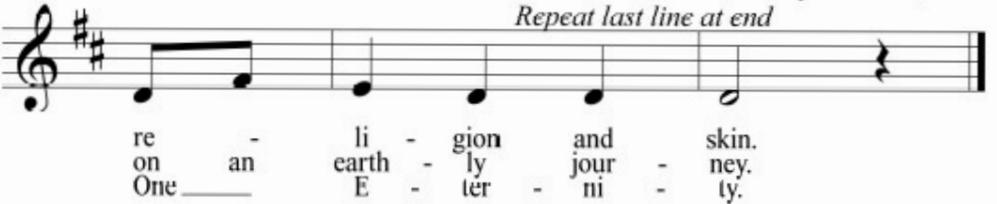
1. Each son and daugh - ter as my fam - i - ly.  
2. Each ref - u - gee a re - flec - tion of me.  
3. We are the branch - es and You are the Tree;



See ev' - ry — neigh - bor as my next of kin —  
See ev' - ry — im - mi - grant as my com - pan - ion  
One ge - ne - al - o - gy, One des - ti - ny, —



Di - yerse in lan - guage,  
So - journ - ing spir - its  
Born of one Spir - it,



*Repeat last line at end*  
re - li - gion and skin.  
on an earth - ly jour - ney.  
One E - ter - ni - ty.

# Anthem A New Year Carol

arr. Benjamin Britten

Here we bring new water from the well so clear,  
For to worship God with, this happy new year.

*Sing levy-dew, sing levy-dew, the water and the wine,  
The seven bright gold wires and the bugles that do shine.*

Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon her toe;  
Open you the west door and turn the old year go.

Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon her chin;  
Open you the east door and let the new year in.



## Connect

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

## Leadership

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Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome, Associate Pastor

[wesley.spears-newsome@gbccary.org](mailto:wesley.spears-newsome@gbccary.org)

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

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