



# Greenwood Forest Baptist Church

May 17, 2026



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# Bulletin Art

## Ascension of Christ from the Rabbula Gospels

This depiction of Jesus's ascension into heaven following the commission he gives in Acts 1 comes from the sixth century. Housed in the Rabbula Gospels, it accompanies a Syriac manuscript of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles completed in a remote monastery. The top half of the illumination includes multiple images from the Hebrew Scriptures, especially drawing on depictions of angels and heavenly beings in Ezekiel. Below, angels flank Mary, the mother of Jesus, surrounded by the disciples. Mary, not mentioned in the biblical accounts of this scene, is not befuddled or confused like the disciples but appears certain and confident. While not a part of the biblical narrative in this particular story, Mary is present in Jesus's life beyond the nativity. She is there to witness his wounds until the end, so it is fitting that she be here.

- Rev. Wesley Spears-Newsome



## Current Sermon Series: The Wounds are the Witness

If we are to become Easter people, people of the resurrection, people walking in the way of Jesus, we must learn from the witness of wounds, the wounds of Jesus and the wounds of the marginalized. It is only then that we can learn to become the church, the people we are called to be. As Yolanda Pierce says in her book, *The Wounds are the Witness: Black Faith Weaving Memory into Justice and Healing*, "If we are to love Jesus, we have to love the man with the still-healing wounds and not just the conquering hero. We have to love the broken Jesus and not just the triumphant one. Likewise, we have to love wounded people and wounded places. To work for flourishing and liberation in a broken world, we cannot look away from crucified flesh or be repulsed by the wounds" (144). For Christians in the United States, this means seriously reckoning with the wounds of Indigenous Americans and enslaved African people. It means understanding that the wounds that are continually inflicted on people of color in our country must be tended in order for all our wounds to be healed. In this Easter season sermon series, we will take the time to draw close to Jesus, our wounded healer, and learn to carefully tend both our own wounds and the wounds of those who've been marginalized, recognizing that the liberation of all God's people is bound together in the healing of all our wounds.

-Rev. Lauren Hayes

# 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)



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# Announcements | Church Events and Updates

## Upcoming Fellowship Events

The Fellowship Committee is excited for you to join us for any of the upcoming family-friendly events in the Spring and Summer:

May 30 (10am) | Local Nature Walk

Meet us at 1808 Lake Pine Dr at 10am for this family and pet friendly walk. Contact Susan Beck at [carygator1@gmail.com](mailto:carygator1@gmail.com) with any questions.

June 14 (4-6pm) | Picnic in GFBC Courtyard (BBQ provided, bring your favorite side dish or dessert!)

July 15 (6-8pm) | Game Night at GFBC (bring your favorite game and your dinner; desserts provided!)

## Newcomers Reception: Today!

All those new to GFBC are invited to a reception after worship today! 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.

## Women's Luncheon

Join the Women's Lunch Bunch every third Monday at 11:30 AM. Each month, we gather at a different restaurant to enjoy great food, warm fellowship, and meaningful conversation. We'd love to see you there! If you'd like to join the "Lunch Bunch," please contact Janice Medford at 919-612-8878.

## GFCC Move: Volunteers Needed on June 8th

The time has finally arrived! We are asking for 15-20 volunteers to help GFCC move to Building C on June 8th beginning at 9am. Lunch will be provided.

## Summer Book Club

This summer, Rev. Dr. Stacks will host a book club on Sue Monk Kidd's *The Book of Longings*. *The Book of Longings* is a feminist re-imagining of the "lost years" of Jesus and the events of the New Testament from the perspective of a first century woman named Ana. Stephen will pair recent scholarship on women and spiritual life in the first-century Middle East with sections of the book to guide our discussion.

Sign up at [gfbccary.org/bookclub/](http://gfbccary.org/bookclub/)

## Sign Up For Our Email List

If you would like to be added to our church email list, please send an email to [alex@gfbccary.org](mailto:alex@gfbccary.org) with your contact information. We'll make sure you're included so you can stay up to date on news, events, and important announcements.

## Spiritual Life Surveys

Please go to [gfbccary.org/survey](http://gfbccary.org/survey) to fill out our yearly spiritual life survey! This survey is helpful, as it allows us to identify how to best support and serve the GFBC community. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

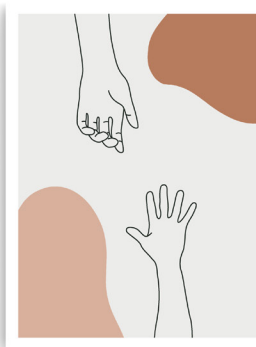
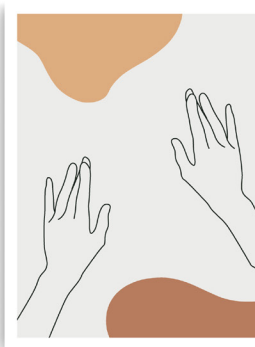
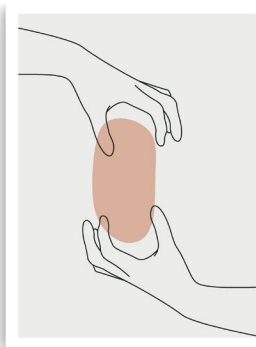
## Senior Class of 2026

Are you graduating from high school this summer? If so, we would love to shout you out during worship! If you are interested in being recognized, please email Wes at [wes@gfbccary.org](mailto:wes@gfbccary.org)  
Congratulations to our Senior Class of 2026!

## Thank You!

The Ruegg family sincerely thanks the GFBC community for the love, prayers, gifts, food, flowers and support shown following the passing of Gene Ruegg.

# 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  
Carolyn Camp  
Rick Hollings (Mary Whitehouse's father)  
Lee Taylor  
Nancy Watson  
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 | Ascension 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** | Look, Ye Saints! The Sight Is Glorious! | arr. Cindy Berry

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

**Passing of the Peace** 📖

**Call to Worship (Psalm 47)** 📖

Clap your hands, all you peoples!

**Shout to God with loud songs of joy.**

God has gone up with a shout,

**The Lord with the sound of a trumpet!**

Sing praises to God, sing praises;

**Sing praises to our sovereign, sing praises.**

For God is ruler of all the earth;

**Sing praises with a psalm.**

God rules over the nations;

**God sits on the holy throne.**

The shields of the earth belong to God;

**God is highly exalted!**

**Invocation** | Lee Webb

✝ **Hymn** | Come Down, O Love Divine (pg. 8)

**Offertory Prayer** | Andy Jarrell

**Offertory** | That We Might Overcome | Porter's Gate

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: 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** | Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks  
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** | Crown Him with Many Crowns (pg. 9)

**Reading** | Acts 1:1-11 | Rev. Hayes

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

**Anthem** | If Ye Love Me | Philip Wilby (pg. 11)

**Sermon** | Will You Be A Witness? | Rev. Spears-Newsome

† **Hymn** | I Love to Tell the Story (pg. 10) 📖

† **Benediction** | Rev. Hayes

**Postlude** | Alleluia! Sing to Jesus | arr. Gregg Sewell

**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!

**Thank You!**

Our hymn leader today is Rev. Dr. Stephen Stacks.

# Come Down, O Love Divine

1 Come down, O Love Di - vine; seek out this soul of mine,  
2 O let it free - ly burn, till earth - ly pas - sions turn  
3 And so the yearn - ing strong, with which the soul will long,

and vis - it it with your own ar - dor glow - ing.  
to dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing.  
shall far out - pass the power of hu - man tell - ing.

O Com - fort - er, draw near; with - in my heart ap - pear,  
And let your glo - rious light shine ev - er on my sight,  
For none can guess God's grace, till Love cre - ates a place

and kin - dle it, your ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.  
and clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.  
where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes a dwell - ing.

# Crown Him with Many Crowns

1. Crown Him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on His throne;  
2. Crown Him the Lord of life, who tri-umphed o'er the grave,  
3. Crown Him the Lord of peace, whose power a scap - ter sways  
4. Crown Him the Lord of love! Be - hold His hands and side,

hark! how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own:  
and rose vic - to - rious in the strife for those He came to save;  
from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise:  
those wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glo - ri - fied:

a - wake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,  
His glo - ries now we sing who died, and rose on high,  
His reign shall know no end, and round His pier - ed feet  
all hail, Re - deem - er, hail! for Thou hast died for me!

and hail Him as thy match-less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.  
who died e - ter - nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.  
fair flowers of par - a - dise ex - tend their fra-grance ev - er sweet.  
Thy praise and glo - ry shall not fail through-out e - ter - ni - ty.

# I Love to Tell the Story

1. I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove, of  
2. I love to tell the sto - ry; 'tis pleas - ant to re - peat what  
3. I love to tell the sto - ry; for those who know it best seem

Je - sus and His glo - ry, of Je - sus and His love: I  
seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet: I  
hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it, like the rest: and

love to tell the sto - ry be - cause I know 'tis true; it sat - is - fies my  
love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard the mes - sage of sal -  
when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old

long - ings as noth - ing else can do.  
va - tion from God's own ho - ly Word. I love to tell the sto - ry, 'twill  
sto - ry that I have loved so long.

be my theme in glo - ry to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and His love.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are arranged in three verses, with the first verse having three lines of text. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

# Anthem | If Ye Love Me

Philip Wilby

If ye love me, keep my commandments,  
And I will pray the Father,  
And he shall give you another comforter,  
That he may abide with you forever;  
E'en the spirit of truth.

And ye know him,  
For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.  
I will not leave you comfortless.  
I will come to you.

# Offertory | That We Might Overcome

Porter's Gate

Four hundred years of silent nights  
In anxious prayer, the world awaits  
At war within, a hopeless fight  
Yet mercy was on its way  
Eternity identified  
Among the low and broken  
The hope of all the world arrived  
All praise to Jesus Christ

Lift every voice and let us sing  
Under the banner of his peace  
Who overcame that we might overcome

The Word immersed in our affairs  
And complicated human strife  
The weight of which all came to bear  
Behold the man, him crucified  
Eternity undignified  
At watch o'er the suffering  
And not a word on Saturday  
We wait with Jesus Christ

Arise, in him arise

When Christ arose, the empire fell  
The gates of hell were torn apart  
The arc of all the universe  
Is bending toward the Son of God  
Eternity now glorified  
Behold his humble body  
Where two or three are gathered in  
The name of Jesus Christ



## Connect

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## Leadership

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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 & Interim Choir Director

Alex Filby, Director of Administration and Facilities

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

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