

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 23, 2018

Eleven O'clock

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Prelude "Gesu Bambino Pastorale" Pietro A. Yon

The Trinity Chimes

Three chimes are sounded, awakening us to the presence of God, alerting us to the voice of Christ, centering us in the embrace of the Spirit. As we gather, we present ourselves "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship."

The Lighting of the Advent Candle¹ Hannah Hinson, Jackson Underwood

(text omitted)

(The fourth candle is lit.)

The Invocation

Holy God, we seek to live as your people, reflecting the love we have known in Christ for those who need it most. Fill us with your love today so that mercy and compassion cannot help but spill over into the lives of others. Stir our hearts with the good news of Christ's birth that we may experience the kind of joy that cannot be expressed by words alone, but must break forth into singing. In the name of the Christ who comes we pray, amen.

*The Hymn of Praise, 142 PERSONENT HODIE
"Long Ago, Prophets Knew"

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

The Call to Confession

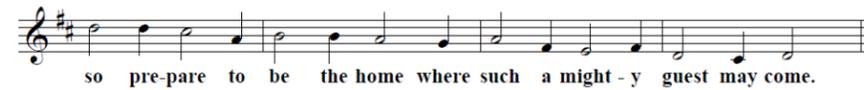
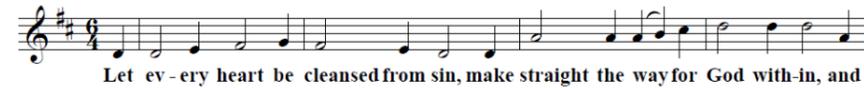
The Prayer of Confession (unison)²

(text omitted)

The Silent Confession

The Assurance of Pardon

The Act of Praise PUER NOBIS



The Greeting of Worshipers Mary Alice Seals

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The Hebrew Bible Micah 5:2-5a (p. 756)

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Christian Testament Hebrews 10:5-10 (p. 976)

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Morning Prayer and Lord's Prayer

The Gospel Luke 1:39-55 (p. 831)

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

PEOPLE: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

*The Hymn Anthem "Christmas Choral Fantasy" arr. Craig Courtney
The congregation is invited to sing as directed.

#146 "Joy to the World! the Lord is Come" (stanza 1)

#170 "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (stanza 1)

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" (Choir only)

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" (Choir only)

#150 "What Child Is This?" (refrain only)

*#173 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (stanzas 1 and 3)

The Sermon Christopher Chapman
"Lessons from a Place Where No Man Ought to Go"

RESPONDING IN FAITH

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship

If you desire membership in this congregation, you are invited to present yourself during the singing of the Hymn of Discipleship. As an open membership church, we honor your previous baptism in any other Christian community. If you have not made a confession of faith, we invite you to do so and receive Christian baptism. Church members are invited to use this time to reflect upon their covenantal relationship with God and their commitment to Christian service.

*The Hymn of Discipleship, 156 TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM
"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

*The Offertory Prayer John Smith

The Offertory "Carol of the Bells" arr. Linda Lamb
Youth Bells

*The Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings PUER NOBIS
To you, O Christ, all praises be whose advent sets your people free; whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit evermore!

DEPARTING TO SERVE

*The Benediction

*The Chimes

Three chimes are sounded, sending us into the world with the love of God, the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. As you go, remember, "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people."

*The Postlude "Toccata on Adeste Fideles" Thomas Richner

*The congregation may stand.

¹Adapted from liturgy developed by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, used by permission.

²From *Call to Worship*, Vol. 49, used by permission.

YOUTH BELL RINGERS are Elaine Holley, Isaac Poteat, Olivia Poteat, Emily Taylor, and Emma Tyndall; many thanks to Kimberly Taylor for assisting today for Mary Hauser.

DEACON ON CALL is John Smith. An 8-year member and first-term deacon, John serves on the Sunday Welcome Committee. He is a member of the Personnel Committee and the Pathfinders Class. John is the chair of the ad hoc Safety and Security Committee and is a teacher for the Unity Class. He is married to Harriet Smith.

ABOUT OUR WORSHIP

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, a final day of preparation for the coming of the Christ into the world and our lives. We continue with several Advent practices that help us prepare space in our hearts for the Spirit of Christ – the lighting of an Advent candle by new church members, the confession of sin and assurance of pardon, and the singing of an Advent hymn ("Long Ago, Prophets Knew"). As we draw close to Christmas, however, we also weave in more straightforward links to Christmas itself – familiar carols (both sung by the choir and congregation and played by the Youth Bells), texts that point to sacred birth, and prayers of thanksgiving. The sermon explores Luke's story about an interaction between two women who are pregnant with babies destined for a central place in salvation history. What can we learn from these women that might inform our faith today, that might help us on the last two days of our journey to Bethlehem?

SYMPATHY to **Judy Whitley** on the December 20 death of her mother, **Charlotte Lewis**.

Our FIRST GRADE OFFERING HELPER is Lucy Willis. As she presents the offering on behalf of our preschoolers, may we remember that God gives all of us opportunities to reach out in Christian service to others and reach up to honor God.

THOSE WHO ARE VISITING are invited to the Gathering Room after worship to receive information about the church. Use the door to the left of the pulpit; church members will greet you.

REACHING OUT FOR EACH OTHER; REACHING UP TO TOUCH GOD: What's your favorite part of FBC Raleigh? Is it a small group, or a portion of worship? Is it a mission or outreach team? Hanging of the Greens or Wednesday night supper? Every week hundreds of people are touched by the ministries of our wonderful church, and everything we do is possible because of generous gifts and faithful tithing. Please help us prepare for 2019 by returning your pledge card to the church office. (You may also pledge online at: bit.ly/FBC-pledge.) As of December 20, 151 pledge cards totaling \$979,284 have been received.

2019 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES are available on the first floor corridor leading to the Clothing Ministry.

GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFERING supports CBF personnel around the world as they spread the Gospel. Please prayerfully consider your support of these missionaries. We have received \$5,342 toward our goal of \$20,000.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 24. This service will include scripture, carols, and celebration of the Lord's Supper. Children are welcome.

CENTERPOINT resumes on January 9 with dinner at 5:00 p.m., children's missions and music at 5:45 p.m., and Centerpoint seminar at 6:15 p.m.

CHURCHWIDE RETREAT: Mark your calendar for the churchwide retreat at Caswell on April 5-7, 2019. Details may be found in the December 14 edition of *First Foundations*. Space is limited so contact Lynn Lingafelt (llingafelt@fbcraleigh.org) by February 1.

COMMUNICATION CHANGES COMING: Beginning in January 2019, we're working to streamline our communication with a weekly e-newsletter with brief updates and a one-stop-shop to sign up for events. *First Foundations* will become a quarterly magazine with more in-depth stories about the people and programs that make up our community. If we have your email address, you will automatically receive both the electronic publications. If you currently receive a printed copy of *First Foundations*, you should have received a postcard in the mail asking for your response. If you need us to print the weekly email and mail it to you, we're glad to do that. Please indicate your preference on the card and we'll make sure you get the information the way that works best for you.

Calendar Highlights December 23-30, 2018

Sun, December 23
9:45 Sunday School
11:00 Worship Service (S)
Japanese Worship (227)

Mon, December 24
Church Office closed
5:00 Candlelight Communion Service (S)

Tues, December 25
6:00 Christmas Breakfast at Raleigh Men's Shelter
Church Office closed

Wed, December 26
10:00 Clothing Ministry closed
No afternoon/evening activities

Thu, December 27
11:00 Library Committee (L)
1:00 Clothing Ministry closed

Sun, December 30
9:45 Sunday School
11:00 Worship Service (S)
Japanese Worship (227)

⇒ CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on December 24 and 25 and on January 1.

⇒ CLOTHING MINISTRY will be closed December 26 through January 3.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RALEIGH
Affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
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Christopher C. F. Chapman, Pastor
Trey Davis, Youth/College
J. Daniel Day, Pastor Emeritus
Wayne Hager, Church Administrator
Donna G. Jolly, Organist

Lynn Lingafelt, Children
Jun Matsuzaki, Japanese Ministry Pastor
Leah Anderson Reed, Community
Mary Alice Seals, Music/Senior Adults

A place of grace, a place of challenge, a place for you.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



December 23, 2018

*"I am the Alpha and Omega," says the Lord God,
who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Revelation 1:8