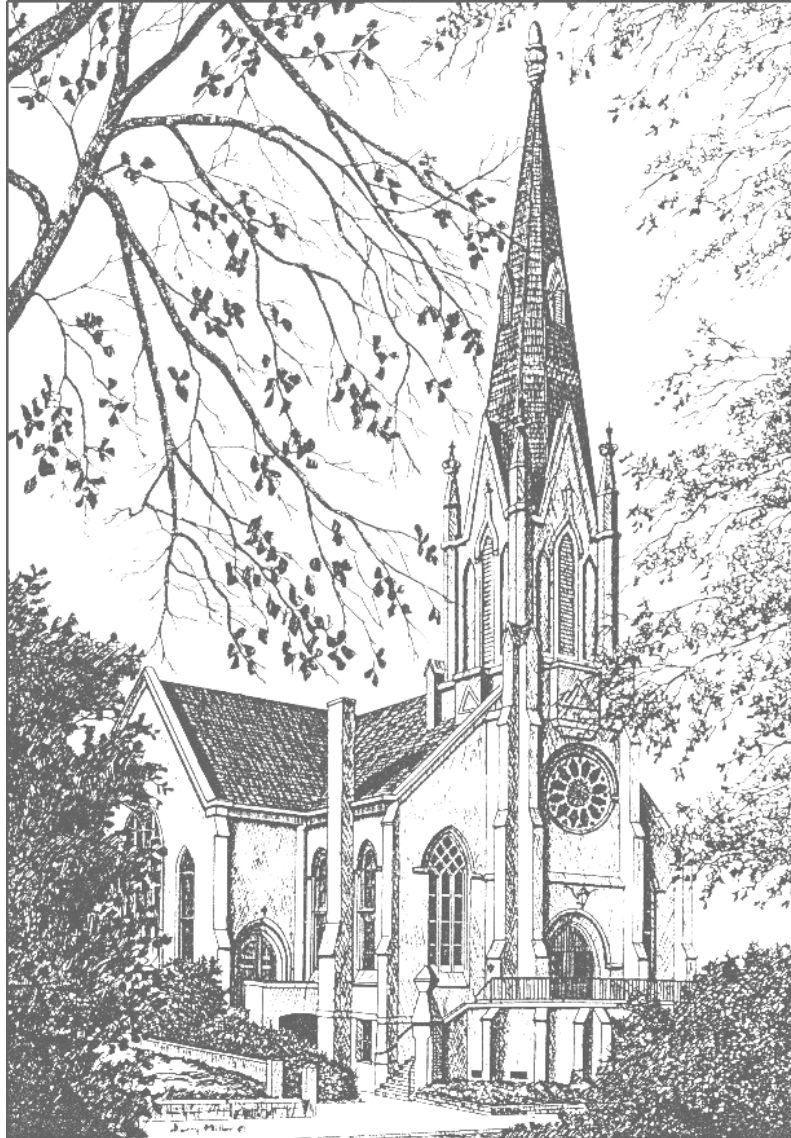


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



July 26, 2020

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP  
THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 26, 2020

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Welcome this morning to Graduation Sunday, the Sunday where we are led in worship by our graduating high school seniors. Their final year of high school has been a challenging one as they have navigated cancelations and other disappointing news. We are thrilled to be able to recognize them today and to have them lead us in worship. Likewise, our graduates are excited to worship with you today, wherever you are. For this year's theme, the graduates have chosen to reflect on where they see God, looking for metaphors or experiences that make God clearer to them. It is so difficult to grasp God; finding a glimpse of God in everyday life is almost a necessity. The graduates today hope to share these personal emblems of faith and to reflect on how God, through them, has shaped their lives. They invite you to reflect on your own spiritual identity, on the traits that you find at the root of your faith, and on the qualities that you hope to develop and cling to at your very core.

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

Jessica Helms

The Processional

"La Rejouissance"  
Donna Jolly, organ

Georg F. Handel

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 Call to Worship (responsive)

Brandon Faucette

LEADER: We gather this day to stand in the threshold, a place between what has been and what will be.

PEOPLE: **God, you are with us in the past, the present, and the future.**

LEADER: We look to our past and know that you formed us and breathed life into us. You shaped us in your own image and blessed us with a rich history.

PEOPLE: **We give thanks for the foundation you put beneath our feet and the blessing of life itself.**

LEADER: We look to our present, chaotic and jumbled but as real as anything we know. We trust that you are with us in each moment, constantly by our side wherever we may travel.

PEOPLE: **We give thanks that you accompany us through all things, that within your love we can have faith that we never walk alone.**

LEADER: We look to our future, ethereal and mysterious and unformed, and we know that you are also hard to grasp. You represent our best opportunity and outcome, even if we do not comprehend it fully.

PEOPLE: **We give thanks that you instill within us hope, the belief that we continue to grow, to serve, to love. We give thanks that you make us better throughout our lives.**

ALL: **We gather this day to stand in the threshold, a place between what has been and what will be. God, you are with us.**

The Invocation

Sarah Ford

The Anthem

“Psalm 139”  
Youth Choir; Rhonda Lowe, piano

Allen Pote

### LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD

The Hebrew Bible

Daniel 3:13–21

James Clary

<sup>13</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. <sup>14</sup>Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” <sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. <sup>17</sup>If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. <sup>18</sup>But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, <sup>20</sup>and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. <sup>21</sup>So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel

John 3:8–15

<sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

The Meditations

Anna Yerxa and Jacob Poteat

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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

The Christian Testament

Acts 9:1-9

Evanna Edward

<sup>1</sup>Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup>He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Meditations

Catherine Carter and Claudia Dare

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

The Prayer of Response

Amelia Wade

The Solo

"It Is Well with My Soul"  
Caleb Carter, trumpet

arr. John Ness Beck/Courtney

The Charge to the Graduates

Jessica Helms and Sarah Catherine Rhodes

LEADER: Jacob departed from his parents and set out on a journey of self-discovery. Night fell, and Jacob—alone and cold—slept beneath the stars, using only a rock for a pillow. In the stillness of night, he dreamt of the angels, and received a blessing from God.

GRADUATES: *Dear God, we are grateful that you bless us. We pray that we will take time to be still and that by doing so we might find comfort, especially when we are alone.*

LEADER: Samuel lay in bed and heard a voice calling his name. He ran to the priest Eli, thinking that Eli wanted him. Eventually, Eli helped Samuel to realize that the voice was the voice of God. Samuel responded to God’s voice and delivered God’s message.

GRADUATES: *Dear God, we are grateful that you call out to us, especially when you call out repeatedly. Help us to listen for your voice, to trust that we hear you when we are alone. Help us to seek out others who can help us listen for your voice.*

LEADER: Mary learned from an angel that she would give birth to the Son of God. The events surrounding that birth were terrifying and confusing. While she had every right to be afraid, we are told that she “pondered these things in her heart,” solitarily meditating upon her love for God and God’s love for her.

GRADUATES: *Dear God, we are grateful that you offer us calm. When we are anxious or afraid, help us to ponder you, to contemplate our lives, to think upon our world. Help us to recognize and appreciate your ability to steady us when we are shaken.*

LEADER: Jesus spoke to a crowd of over 5000, fed them with loaves and fishes, and then dismissed the mob. He even sent his disciples away in a boat. The crowd dispersed, and Jesus went alone to a mountaintop to pray. Exhausted by the work that he had done and the daunting future that lay ahead, Jesus took time to be alone, to sit in nature, to pray, and to recharge.

GRADUATES: *Dear God, we are grateful that you help us to recharge. May we turn to you when we are weary. May we remember that there is power in solitude. May we seek renewal in your love.*

LEADER: Church, what have you to say to these graduates?

PEOPLE: **We promise to continue to teach, to nurture, to comfort, to challenge and to love these high school graduates. They are members of our family, and we will hold them in our hearts. May they find God wherever they are going, and may they love God with all their hearts. Amen.**

The Presentation of Gifts

DEPARTING TO SERVE

The Benediction

Trey Davis

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

“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”  
Mary Alice Seals, piano

arr. Anna Laura Page

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Our acolytes today are Isaac and Oliva Poteat.

The Heck-Jones offering provides a way for our congregation to connect to great mission work with ties to our church. Details may be found in the *Rose Window Weekly*. As of July 21, we have received \$6,070 toward our goal of \$10,000.

Due to staff shortages at the post office which is holding our mail for pick up, we may experience delays in receiving mail for the next few weeks. Please be aware that it might take a bit longer to receive any mailed correspondence or donations during this time.

## THE GRADUATES



Noah Burnette  
Leesville Road High School



Catherine Carter  
Enloe High School



James Clary  
Athens Drive High School



Claudia Dare  
Garner High School



Evanna Edward  
Broughton High School



Brandon Faucette  
Heritage High School



Sarah Ford  
West Johnston High School



John Hollowell  
St. Andrew's School



Ben Petty  
Leesville Road High School



Jacob Poteat  
Millbrook High School



Amelia Wade  
Broughton High School



Anna Yerxa  
Broughton High School



Daniel Yerxa  
Broughton High School