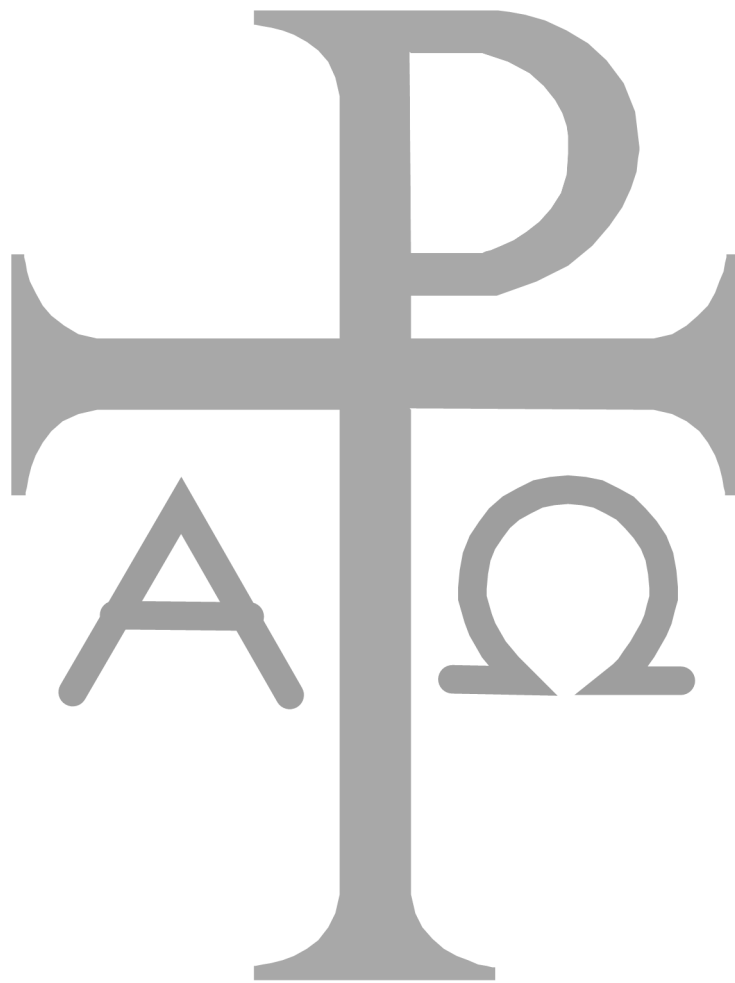


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



December 6, 2020

*"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

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 6, 2020

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the second Sunday of Advent, a season of preparation and expectation for the coming of the Messiah not just into a Bethlehem stable but into our hearts and world. Last week we focused on our longing for something more, our hope for a better future which is based not simply on wishful thinking but in our trust in God. This week we focus on the ways we can prepare for something more. The reading from Isaiah speaks about preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness, the reading from Mark describes John the Baptist's role of preparing the way for Jesus, and thus we are called to consider how we might prepare the way for Christ's realm in our time. As we ponder this calling, we light an Advent candle, sing familiar hymns of hopeful expectation, and lift up prayers for a world in need of more light and hope. We also hear special music that stirs our hope and a brief word from CBF field personnel Laura and Carson Foushee as a part of our annual Global Missions emphasis. The Foushees remind us that a part of how we prepare the way for the coming of Christ into our world today is by supporting others who lift up valleys and make rough places a plain.

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

The Prelude

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"
Sue Crocker, organ

arr. John Ferguson

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 Introit

"A Child Shall Come"
Cady Mercer, chorister

Mark Patterson

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Daniel, Anne, and George Maloney

Reader 1: This is the second Sunday of Advent, the time of preparing for the coming of Christ our Savior. Today our word is *witness*. In this season we are called to do more than prepare for the coming of Christ. We are also called to give witness to our experience with Christ. We must not keep the good news to ourselves but rather are called to share it with others. The prophet Isaiah describes the message we have to share with these words (Isaiah 11:1-9).

Reader 2:

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Reader 1: We lit the first candle as a sign of our willingness to prepare for the coming of God's reign in Christ. We light the second candle today as a symbolic way of reminding us of our calling to give witness to our experience.

(Light candle)

Reader 2: (Let us pray) Holy God, we find it difficult to share the good news but the world is longing to hear it. Help us witness to our Savior, that others may be attracted to the light and experience the same grace we have. In the name of the Christ who comes we pray, amen.

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2. O come, thou Rod of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's
 3. O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine
 4. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our
 5. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here un -
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save and
 ad - vent here; and drive a - way the shades of night, and
 heaven - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

Refrain

til the Son of God ap - pear.
 give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
 pierce the clouds and bring us light! Re - joice! re - joice! Em -
 close the path to mis - er - y.
 all the world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

The Call to Confession¹

Michael Hood

Waiting and watching for Christ to come, we lose hope; we give in to despair and cease to trust in the providence of God. Yet God, whose faithfulness never fails, does not turn from us. In confidence, let us confess our need that the Lord's face may shine on us, and we may be saved.

The Prayer of Confession (responsive)¹

LEADER: When our days are punctuated by angry words of hatred and ingratitude,

PEOPLE: **Forgive us and grant us peace.**

LEADER: When the pained cries of the oppressed grow louder around us because we have not shown compassion or love,

PEOPLE: **Forgive us and grant us peace.**

LEADER: When war's cacophony silences the sweet voices of children,

PEOPLE: **Forgive us and grant us peace.**

LEADER: When we heed the call of commerce and ignore the cries from the manger,

PEOPLE: **Forgive us and grant us peace.**

LEADER: When the sinful noise of this world aggrieves you, Holy One, hear again the call from the cross, "Forgive them; they know not what they do," and, in mercy,

PEOPLE: **Forgive us and grant us peace.**

The Silent Confession

The Assurance of Pardon¹

Rejoice! And believe the promise! In a daring act of hope and imagination, God moves ever near to us, gracefully pouring light over our dark places. Hear the glad tidings of the gospel: the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

The Act of Praise²

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!

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The Hebrew Bible

Isaiah 40:1-11

Leah Reed

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

⁸But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. ¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God**

The Morning Prayer

Lynn Lingafelt

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 Gospel

Mark 1:1–8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

The Hymn of Devotion

“Blest Be the God of Israel”³

ELLACOMBE

**Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free,
who visits and redeems us and grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.**

**Now from the house of David a child of grace is given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the messenger of the day.**

**Where once were fear and darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner’s eyes,
to guide the feet of pilgrims along the path of peace;
O bless our God and Savior, with songs that never cease!**

Song of Zechariah, Luke 1:68–79; para. Michael Perry, 1973

The Sermon

“Preparing for Something More”

Christopher Chapman

RESPONDING IN FAITH

The Musical Reflection

“Advent Song”
Ron Sanders, soloist

Ron Sanders

The Global Missions Moment

Laura and Carson Foushee

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

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”
Sue Crocker, organ

Arr. Hermann Keller

¹Words by Susan Gleason, from *Call to Worship, Year C*, Volume 43.1, p. 55. Published by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Used with permission.

²The tune and text of “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” are in the public domain.

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Our annual stewardship emphasis has begun with the theme *In the wilderness prepare a way for the Lord... And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed*. Please help us to meet our budget goal by returning your pledge card to the church office (you may also pledge online at: <https://fbcraleigh.org/pledgecard/>). As of December 3, we have received 142 pledges totaling \$1,008,861 for the 2021 budget.

End-of-year giving: Please continue to be faithful to your financial stewardship commitment. Your generous support toward this year’s budget will allow us to end the year with a solid base on which to begin 2021. Year-end contributions must be received or postmarked by December 31.

There is no better gift than to share the love of Jesus Christ to the world. One hundred percent of our offering sends CBF field personnel to share this love both here at home and in foreign lands. When we give to the offering for Global Missions, we help plant new churches and share the hope of Christ with people who have never heard the Gospel, we offer food and teach children how to succeed in school, and help refugees adapt and thrive in their new homes. Please give prayerfully to the CBF Global Mission Offering.

Calendar Highlights • December 6–12, 2020

Sunday, December 6

- 10:00 6th Grade Sunday School (Virtual)
- 7th and 8th Grade Sunday School (Zoom)
- High School Sunday School (Zoom/In-person TBD)
- 11:00 Virtual Worship Service (YouTube)
- 6:00 Virtual Hanging of the Greens (YouTube)

Monday, December 7

- 7:00 Adult Ministries Committee (Zoom)

Tuesday, December 8

- 10:00 Ministerial Staff Meeting (Library or Zoom)
- 11:00 Open Sanctuary (Sanctuary)
- 5:00 Open Sanctuary (Sanctuary)
- 6:00 Theology on Tap (Zoom/In-person TBD)
- High School Bible Study (FH/302)
- 6:15 Middle School Small Group (Zoom or 1107 Marlowe Road)
- 7:30 Pathfinders Sunday School (Virtual)

Wednesday, December 9

- 5:30 GAs All Mission Night (Wade yard)
- 6:00 Centerpoint (Zoom)

Thursday, December 10

- 7:00 Band of Brothers (Zoom)
- 11:00 Open Sanctuary (Sanctuary)
- 5:00 Open Sanctuary (Sanctuary)
- 7:00 Nominating Committee Meeting (Zoom)