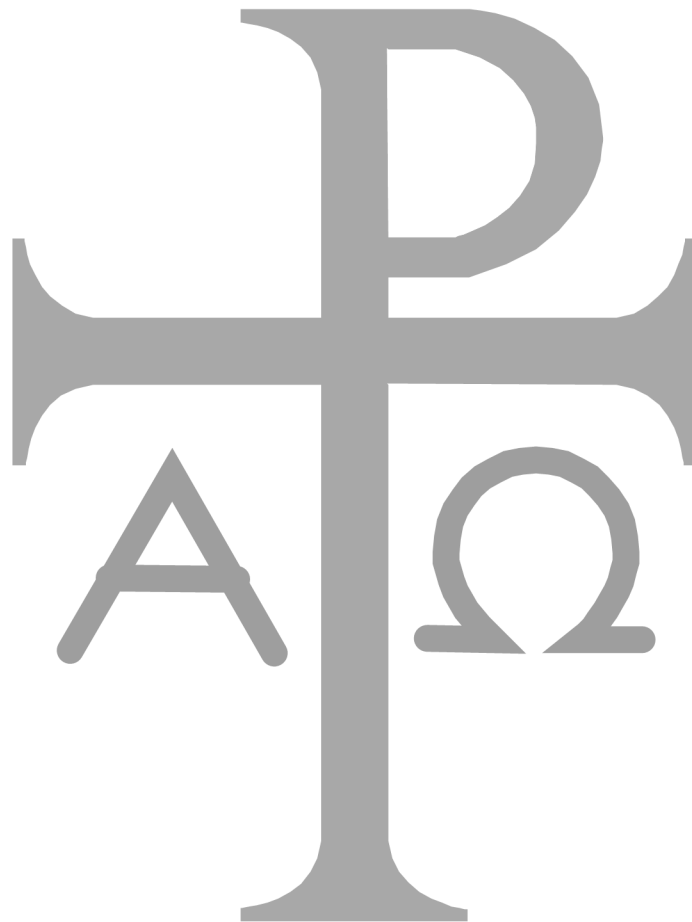


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



December 5, 2021

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 5, 2021

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the Second Sunday of Advent, a season of reflection and anticipation as we prepare for the coming of the Christ. We continue our tradition of involving new members in the lighting of the Advent candle, today the candle of peace. We create space for confession as we seek to welcome Christ more fully into our hearts and lives. We sing hymns of praise and lift up prayers to the God who enters this world as one of us. We hear texts that talk about preparing the way for God's gracious intervention and, in the sermon, explore the reading from Luke in more detail, noting the challenging nature of John the Baptizer's ministry. In light of his experience, we have no reason to think our calling to prepare the way for Jesus will be easy.

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

Lynn Lingafelt

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 Prelude

"Blest Be the God of Israel"
Jacob B. Weber, arr.

Maureen Howell, organ

The Introit

Sanctuary Choir

Prepare the way of the Lord!
Make a straight path for him.
Prepare the way of the Lord!

The Lighting of the Advent Candle†

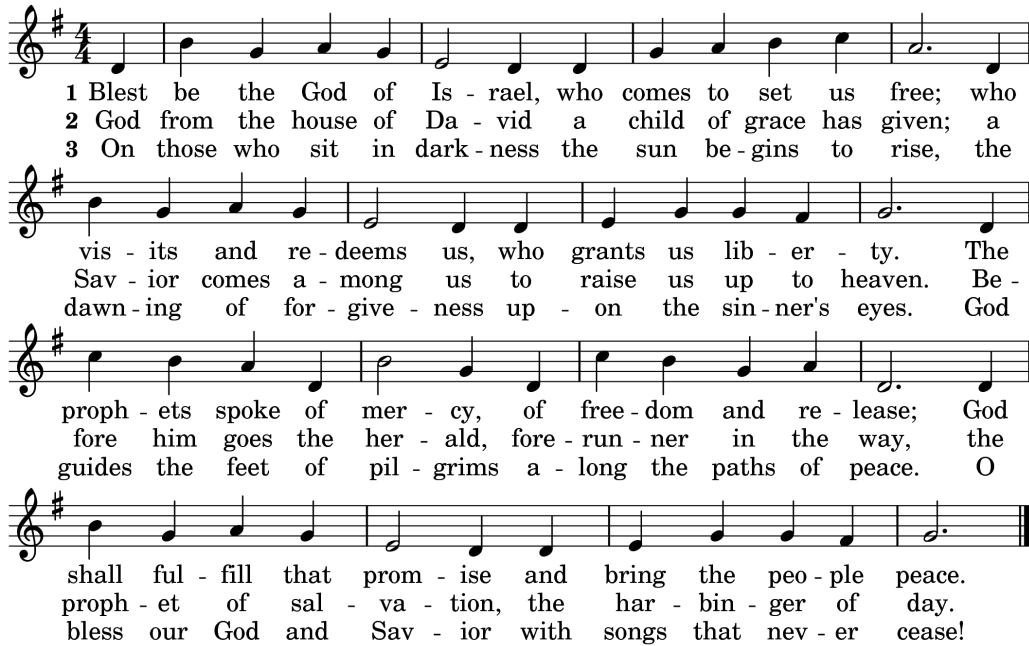
Coralie Schauviller and Brandon von Unruh

LEADER: Last Sunday we lit the first candle—the candle of hope. Today we light the second candle, the candle of peace. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive, and in some parts of the world, it is almost completely absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. And even where there is war and discord, whether between countries, within families, or within our own hearts, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

(The second candle is lit.)

ALL: Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope and peace you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ.

(Luke 1:68-79, paraphrased)



1 Blest be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free; who
 2 God from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given; a
 3 On those who sit in dark - ness the sun be - gins to rise, the
 vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty. The
 Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven. Be -
 dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes. God
 proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease; God
 fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way, the
 guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace. O
 shall ful - fill that prom - ise and bring the peo - ple peace.
 proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
 bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

Michael Perry, 1973

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

The Call to Confession (responsive)

LEADER: Lord God, the one who comes to walk beside us and be our God, fill us with your fire. Let all that keeps us away from you be burned away. Let all that harms our bodies, all that destroys our peace, all that eats away our hope be burned away.

PEOPLE: Let us prepare a way for the Lord.

LEADER: Lord God, the one who comes into the Temple, polish us like gold and silver. Let what darkness we have embraced be cleaned from our spirits. Let that which has attached itself to us, which weighs us down and keeps us from you be polished until it reflects only your love.

PEOPLE: Let us prepare a way for the Lord.

LEADER: Lord God, the one who has been with us through all of time, remember who we have been and believe in who we could be. Give us the vision we need to stay on your path, shine a light for us on the next right thing. Help us to keep that which is right and good and let go of all that distracts and delays us on your path.

PEOPLE: Let us prepare a way for the Lord.

The Silent Confession

The Assurance of Forgiveness

The Act of Praise

*Choir sings first time, then congregation sings.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 6/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: "Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God. Glo-ry in the high - est!". The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics: "Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!". The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

Jacques Berthier, Taizé, 1978

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The Hebrew Bible

Malachi 3:1-4

Allison Strickland

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Christian Testament

Philippians 1:3-11

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near! Let
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove. His
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace, and
 ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear. Greet
 rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love. Lift
 ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place. All
 One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.
Refrain
 O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

Frans Mikael Franzen 1812, tr. Augustus Nelson, 1958,
 adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.

The Morning Prayer

Christopher Chapman

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

Luke 3:1-6

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

The Anthem

“All the Earth Is Hopeful (Toda la tierra)”

Sanctuary Choir

Alberto Taulé/James Bobb, arr

Toda la tierra espera al Salvador, y el surco abierto, la obra del Señor;
es el mundo que lucha por la libertad, reclama justicia y busca la verdad.

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set everybody free.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him "God with us," our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!

We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

Text and Music: Alberto Taulé (1932-2007),
tr. Madeleine F. Marshall, b. 1946

The Sermon

“Preparing the Way Isn’t Easy”

Christopher Chapman

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.



1. On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2. Let ev - ery heart be cleansed from sin, make straight the
 3. For you are our sal - va - tion, Lord, our ref - uge
 4. To heal the sick, stretch out your hand, and make the
 5. To you, O Christ, all prais - es be, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh: a - wake and lis - ten
 way for God with - in, and so pre - pare to
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 fall - en sin - ner stand; shine out, and let your
 sets your peo - ple free; whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings.
 be the home where such a might - y guest may come.
 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.
 light re - store earth's own true love - li - ness once more.
 we a - dore and Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more!

WORDS: Charles Coffin, 1736; tr. John Chandler, 1837, alt.
 MUSIC: Trier manuscript, 15th C.; adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1609; harm. George R. Woodward, 1910

PUER NOBIS
 L.M.

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

“On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry”
 John S. Dixon, arr.

Maureen Howell, organ

*The congregation may stand.

†Adapted from the Process & Faith web site, www.processandfaith.org. Used with permission.

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The tune and text of "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" are in the public domain.

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The Deacon on Call is Allison Strickland. A nine-year member of First Baptist, Allison is a member of the Nominating Committee and Secretary of Deacons, as well as a teacher for the High School Sunday School class. She and her husband Matt have two children, Alice and Hayes.

The rose on the altar is in celebration of the December 2 birth of Jennings Jett Reed to parents Leah and Chad Reed and grandparents Anna and LaCount Anderson.

Sympathy to Hal English on the November 22 death of his wife, Shirley English, and to Christina Davis on the December 2 death of her sister, Merle Filipowski.

The banner for the pulpit is given in loving memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Chamblee by Jan and Robert Ponton with a donation to the Day Mission Fund.

An offering for the Mike Morris Fellowship Fund is received the first Sunday of each month. This fund helps persons seeking emergency aid. Collection baskets are at each exit.

Our annual stewardship emphasis with the theme "First Fruits": please prayerfully consider your 2022 financial commitment and return your pledge card to the church office as soon as possible. As of November 30, 89 pledge cards totaling \$641,276 have been received.

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 \$644 toward our goal of \$20,000.

Centerpoint: Wednesday, December 8; meal served at 5:00 p.m., program at 6:15 p.m. This week, we'll work with Chris Gambill from the Center for Congregational Health on connecting what we have learned from the Dream Team panels to our gifts and resources as a church.

Wednesday night meal reservations may be made at the church website (www.fbcraleigh.org/foodservice), by email (dmast@fbcraleigh.org), or by calling the church office (919-832-4485), all by noon on Mondays. Menu for December 8: ribs, mac n'cheese, and green beans.

During December, our mission project is supporting our Clothing Ministry. See the *Rose Window Weekly* for their wish list of items and place your contributions in the bin inside the door of the rear parking lot.

Hanging of the Greens will be held this evening at 6:00 p.m., followed by a reception. With this year being different from years past, our Social committee has been working hard to make the Hanging of the Greens reception a success. Instead of serving savory foods and sweets, we will only have a sweet reception. Each person will be offered pre-bagged cookies and a small water to go. We are offering the garth for those who wish to mingle in a safer environment.

On December 11, we will assist in another Habitat build, this time in the Maybrook Crossing Townhomes. See the *Rose Window Weekly* for more details and the link to sign up.

Mark your calendar now for the churchwide retreat to Fort Caswell on April 22–24. Details are forthcoming; watch for information in future issues of the *Rose Window Weekly* and the Sunday bulletin!

Calendar Highlights

December 5–12

Sunday, December 5

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 Worship (S & YouTube)
Japanese Worship (302)
- 6:00 Hanging of the Greens (Sanctuary)
- 7:00 Hanging of the Greens Reception (Fellowship Hall/Garth)

Monday, December 6

- 10:00 Clothing Ministry Open
- 6:00 Music Made in Heaven Rehearsal (Sanctuary Balcony)

Tuesday, December 7

- 10:00 Staff Meeting (Conference Room)
- 10:45 WMU Group 2 (Springmoor)
- 7:00 Properties Committee Meeting (301)
- 7:30 Pathfinders Sunday School Class (Zoom)

Wednesday, December 8

- 5:00 Meal Served (Parking Lot/Fellowship Hall)
- 6:00 All Missions for Children
- 6:15 Centerpoint (Fellowship Hall)
- 6:45 Handbell Rehearsal (Sanctuary Balcony)
- 7:30 Adult Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room/Sanctuary)

Thursday, December 9

- 7:00 Band of Brothers (Zoom)
- 6:30 College Group (Garth/318)

Saturday, December 11

- 8:15 Habitat Build (Maybrook Crossing Townhomes)
- 9:00 Family Nativity Activity (Fellowship Hall)
- 4:00 Unity Christmas Party (Hoover Backyard)

Sunday, December 12

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 Worship (S & YouTube)
Japanese Worship (302)
- 12:15 Deacons Meeting (220/Zoom)
- 12:30 Everette Miller Friendship Christmas Party
- 6:00 Youth Christmas Party (Fellowship Hall)