

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



December 24, 2023

Advent IV, 11:00 am

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP  
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 24, 2023

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the final day this year to prepare for the coming of the Christ. We have almost but not quite made it. There are final steps of preparation in our hearts and lives. We sing of God's love and long to embrace it. We pray for a world that needs love more than ever before. We ponder what is asked of Mary in not just believing in what God can do but participating in it, and we realize that this is what is asked of us. Like Mary, we have a choice, but what will we do with it?

\*\*\*\*\*

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

"In the Bleak Midwinter"  
Michael Hassell

Maureen Howell

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Azamat Allaiarov

READER: Without love, we have nothing,  
wandering aimlessly in a world without hope.  
As the season of Advent comes to a close,  
we wait for love by practicing it,  
by embodying the truth we trust in God-with-us.  
We seek to live as people of love,  
reciprocating that which has first been shown to us.

PEOPLE: **We light this candle to symbolize the love we have in Christ's presence. We gather to share this love with one another.**

*(The candle is lit.)*



1. Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!  
2. Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.  
3. Love has come and nev - er will leave us!



Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all  
Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the  
Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is



heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of  
glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her  
Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our



joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a  
heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she  
hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of



Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.  
Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

## CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

### The Call to Confession

Lynn Lingafelt

As we draw closer to the manger, we tend to become even more impatient. Like children on a long journey, we just want to get there. We desperately await the dawning of peace. The arrival of love. Yet God still calls us to wait a little longer. We confess now our struggle, with the assurance that the One on whom we wait hears us with compassion and understanding.

### The Prayer of Confession (responsive)

LEADER: Faithful God, we know that you are always there to guide us, yet we often make plans without listening to you.

PEOPLE: **Our human agendas often drown out our ability to hear your will for us.**

LEADER: Our fear of the unknown prevents us from being open to the future.

PEOPLE: **We cling to our doubts when we should hold onto our trust.**

LEADER: We repent of these faults and turn to you in love.

PEOPLE: **Forgive our offenses and pardon our sins, that our lives may magnify your holy name forever.**

### The Silence

### The Assurance of Forgiveness

## The Act of Praise

*(Sung responsively the first time, and together on the second)*

Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry be to God on high!  
¡Glo - ria, glo - ria, glo - ria, en las al - tu - ras a Dios!

The first system of musical notation for 'The Act of Praise'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with lyrics underneath. The bass staff contains a bass line. The music is in 6/8 time and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

And on earth peace to all peo-ple in whom God is well pleased.  
Y en la tie - rra, paz a la gen - te que a - ma el Se - ñor.

The second system of musical notation for 'The Act of Praise'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with lyrics underneath. The bass staff contains a bass line. The music is in 6/8 time and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Words: based on Luke 2:14, Pablo Sosa, 1989  
Music: Pablo Sosa, 1989

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

### The Anthem

“Beautiful Is the Child”  
“Bring a Torch/The Holly and the Ivy”  
Maureen Howell, arr.

Sanctuary Choir  
Beth McCollum,  
violin

The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown,  
of all the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown.  
*The rising of the sun and the running of the deer,  
the playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a berry, as red as any blood,  
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good.

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella! Bring a torch, come hurry, and run.  
It is Jesus, good folk of the village, Christ is born and Mary's calling:  
Hush! Hush! Beautiful is the mother. Hush! Hush! Beautiful is the child.

Words and Music: Traditional English and French Carols

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. <sup>2</sup>I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. <sup>3</sup>You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: <sup>4</sup>I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.” Selah <sup>19</sup>Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: “I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. <sup>20</sup>I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; <sup>21</sup>my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. <sup>22</sup>The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. <sup>23</sup>I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. <sup>24</sup>My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. <sup>25</sup>I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. <sup>26</sup>He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!’

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

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 Solo

"I Wonder as I Wander"  
Appalachian Carol/John J. Niles, adapt.

Greg Flowers

The Gospel

Luke 1:26–38

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

The Sermon

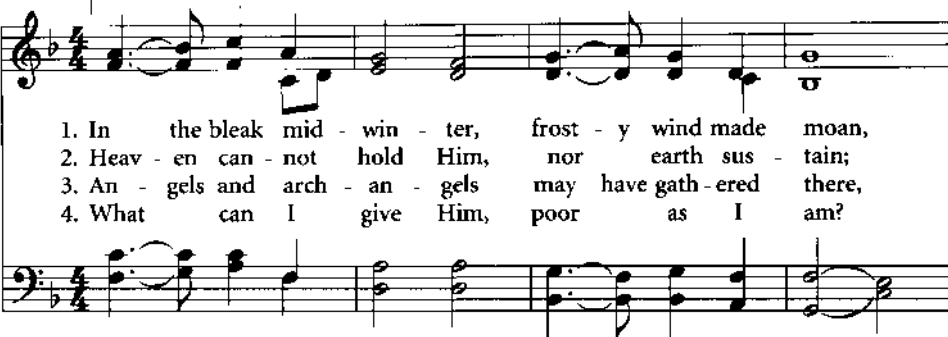
"Mary Has a Choice, So Do We" Christopher Chapman

## 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.*

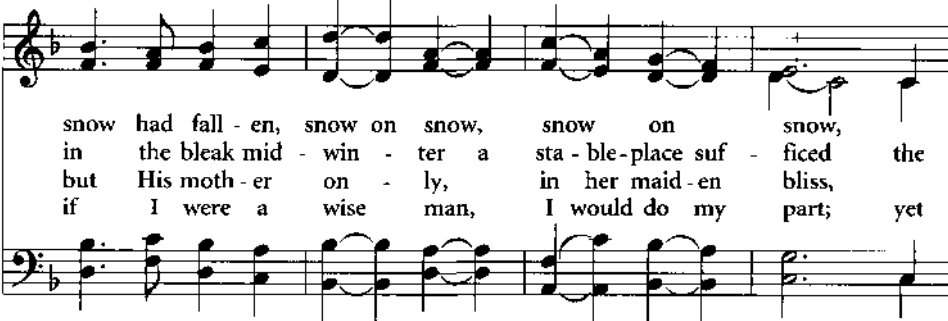




1. In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
 2. Heav - en can - not hold Him, nor earth sus - tain;  
 3. An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,  
 4. What can I give Him, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when He comes to reign:  
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim thronged the air;  
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble - place suf - ficed the  
 but His moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,  
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
 Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.  
 wor - shipped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss.  
 what I can I give Him: give Him my heart.

## 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

“Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella”

Maureen Howell

Mark Hayes

\*The congregation may stand.

\*\*\*\*\*

The following is reprinted and/or streamed with permission, all rights reserved, under ONE LICENSE #A-708116: *In the Bleak Midwinter*, Michael Hassell © 1998 Augsburg Fortress; *Love Has Come*, Words: Ken Bible © 1996, LNWhymns.com; *Glory, Glory, Glory*, Words and Music: Pablo Sosa © 1989, GIA Publications, Inc.; *Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella*, Mark Hayes © 2006 Lorenz Publishing Co.

The lighting of the Advent candle text is from liturgylink.net and was written by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Shelter Island Presbyterian Church, IL.

All scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

During the Sundays of this year's Advent season, the bulletin cover images are by artist LaCount Anderson, depicting scenes from the birth narratives of Jesus. Each picture features something from our sanctuary decor in the design. Here is LaCount's clue to this week's hidden design:

*The Holy Family’s manger;  
Is cozy indeed.  
Look up front to see our space;  
To complete the view.*

The Deacon on Call is Dolores Bailey. A ten-year member of First Baptist, Dolores is a member of the Everett Miller Friendship Sunday School class. She serves on the Counting Team and the Nominating Committee and as a volunteer in the Clothing Ministry. She and her husband Bob live in Garner.

2023 financial year gifts must be post-marked or given electronically by December 31 in order to be recorded on your 2023 contribution statement. Gifts brought to the church office must be in the office by December 29 since the 31<sup>st</sup> is a Sunday. The last Sunday to bring an offering is December 24. If you have a question about your giving in 2023, please contact Kathy Rattie ([financeadmin@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:financeadmin@fbcraleigh.org) or 919-832-4485).

The clothing ministry will be closed until January 7. Please hold all donations during this time, and do not leave items at the back door or in other places in the clothing ministry area. We will begin accepting winter items again (especially winter coats!) on Monday, January 8. Please hold spring/summer items until the end of February, as our limited off-season storage spaces are filling up quickly!

Our annual winter retreat and ski trip will be January 5–7 in Pipestem, WV. Everyone is welcome to join, whether you ski or not! Email Michael Hood ([mhood@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:mhood@fbcraleigh.org)) for more information.

Are you interested in providing care for our preschoolers during worship (10:45–12 noon)? Volunteers must be church members or actively involved in the life of the church for at least six months and would serve once a quarter (four days a year). Contact Lynn ([lilingafelt@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:lilingafelt@fbcraleigh.org)) as soon as possible if you're interested.

*Giving Generously with Gratitude*, our 2024 stewardship emphasis: so far, we have received 133 pledges in the amount of \$1,141,650. Please prayerfully consider how you can give generously and with gratitude to God through First Baptist Church. If you didn't receive a stewardship packet, please contact the church office.

If you have used offering envelopes this year or have requested them for 2024, you will find contribution envelopes for 2024 on the first floor corridor leading to the Clothing Ministry. If you would like some but have not requested them, please contact Wayne Hager ([whager@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:whager@fbcraleigh.org)).

Global Missions Offering supports CBF personnel around the world as they spread the Gospel. Please prayerfully consider your support of these missionaries. So far, we have received \$3,380.

In case of inclement weather, cancellation information about scheduled activities will be noted on a recorded greeting obtained by calling the office at 919-832-4485. Information will also be supplied to WRAL-TV (1st Baptist, Salisbury St), WTVD-TV (First Baptist Church-Salisbury St) and posted on our home page and on social media (X, Facebook, and Instagram).

Diaper changing stations are located in the men's and women's bathrooms on each floor of the Lewis building, and a nursing room is located in our preschool suite on the first floor.

Children of all ages are welcome in worship! Worship bags are located in the narthex and in the Gathering Room; preschoolers (birth – kindergarten) are also welcome to join the supervised play in the preschool suite on first floor.

Visiting? We'd love to get to know you. Scan the QR code to the right to share your contact information.



## Calendar Highlights • December 24–31

### **Sunday, December 24**

- 9:45 Intergenerational potluck breakfast (fellowship hall)
- 10:00 JBC Sunday School (227)
- 11:00 FBC worship (sanctuary/YouTube)  
JBC worship (226)
- 5:00 Candlelight Christmas Eve service/communion (sanctuary)

### **Monday, December 25**

Church office and clothing ministry closed

### **Tuesday, December 26**

Church office closed

### **Sunday, December 31**

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 FBC/JBC combined worship (sanctuary/YouTube)
- 8:00 *First Night* activities (sanctuary)

First Baptist Church

99 N Salisbury St ❖ Raleigh NC 27603

919-832-4485 ❖ [www.fbcraleigh.org](http://www.fbcraleigh.org)