

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



December 3, 2023

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP  
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2023

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the First Sunday of Advent, a four-week season of preparation for the coming of the Messiah and the beginning of a new Christian year. It is a season of penitence and reflection. Thus, we wear purple stoles and include time for confession and assurance. But it is also a season of expectation and preparation, patient waiting for the wondrous new thing God might do among us. So, we light the first Advent candle and sing hymns of hope and fulfillment.

Because we believe God's new thing often happens through us, we welcome to the pulpit Rev. Nell Green, recently retired CBF field personnel who continues to fulfill her calling through The Off Ramp and Threads by Nomad. Nell will speak to our Global Missions Offering, one way in which Christ continues to enter this world, and to her work with forcibly displaced people — refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and survivors of human trafficking. We listen with an openness to how we might participate more fully in ministry to the stranger and all in need.

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

Christopher Chapman

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

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"  
John Ferguson

Maureen Howell

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Claire Carothers and Charlotte Phillips

READER: Without hope, we have no direction, no purpose.  
As we begin the season of Advent,  
we wait in hopeful anticipation  
of the newness God has brought and is bringing to this world.  
We seek to live as a people of hope,  
with our hearts set on the life to come,  
and our eyes set on the work we're called to do in the meantime.

**PEOPLE: We light this candle to symbolize our hope in Jesus' birth.  
We gather to share this hope with one another.**

\*The Hymn of Praise, 133 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" VENI EMMANUEL

### CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

The Call to Confession (responsive)

from Psalm 80

LEADER: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before  
Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and  
come to save us!

**PEOPLE: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

LEADER: O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your  
people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears, and  
given them tears to drink in full measure. You make us the  
scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

**PEOPLE: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may  
be saved.**

The Prayer of Confession (unison)

**Shepherd God, we come to you now in need of restoration. We have  
wandered from your path in different ways. We have sought greener  
pastures. We have looked for a life with fewer obstacles. We have tried  
to make it on our own. But time and again we have found that there is  
no greener path, your burdensome way of service is the most  
rewarding, life in community with others and you is far more fulfilling  
than life in isolation. Call us back into the fold, welcome us home,  
restore us that we might be about the ministry of restoration for  
others in a world full of wandering souls.**

## The Silent Prayer

## The Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the Good News! No matter how far we have strayed or how much we have betrayed God while staying at home, God welcomes us in love as a Motherlike Father welcomes home the prodigal and pleads with the elder child to join in the celebration. God forgives our every shortcoming and willful act of disloyalty and restores us to our true place as beloved children. Thanks be to God!

## The Act of Praise

(Sung responsively in Call and Response)

The musical score is written for two voices, Treble and Bass clefs, in a 6/8 time signature with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with Spanish lyrics in italics. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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!*

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.*

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

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The Solo

“Beautiful Star of Bethlehem”  
R. Fisher Boyce

Eliza Meyer

<sup>1</sup>Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. <sup>2</sup>And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup>And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. <sup>4</sup>Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

<sup>5</sup>The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup>Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup>So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

<sup>21</sup>Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup>Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” <sup>24</sup>He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” <sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” <sup>26</sup>He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>27</sup>She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

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 Hymn of Devotion      "For the Healing of the Nations"

CWM RHONDDA

**For the healing of the nations,  
Lord, we pray with one accord;  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords;  
to a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word.**

**Lead us forward into freedom;  
from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase.**

**All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned:  
pride of status, race, or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow life's brief span.**

**You, Creator God, have written  
your great name on humankind;  
for our growing in your likeness,  
bring the life of Christ to mind,  
that by our response and service  
earth its destiny may find.**

Words: Fred Kaan, 1965  
John Hughes, 1907

RESPONDING IN FAITH

The Responsive Reading

LEADER: The God of peace equips the Global Church with every good thing.

PEOPLE: **We, the Church, both local and global, pray for and yearn for God's equipping. Equip us, O God, with every good thing.**

LEADER: The God of peace equips in order that the Global Church is able and ready to do God's will.

PEOPLE: **We, the Church, are the body of Christ. We are the hands and feet of Christ, ready to do God's work in our world. Show us, O God, your will.**

LEADER: The God of peace develops in us, the Global Church, the characteristics pleasing to God.

PEOPLE: **We cultivate and bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Fill us, O God, with your Holy Spirit.**

LEADER: The God of peace calls us, the Global Church to encourage and equip each other as we bear witness to Jesus Christ, cultivate beloved community, and seek transformational development.

PEOPLE: **To God be the glory forever and always. Amen.**

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.*

## 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, O Come, Emmanuel”

Maureen Howell

Ron Boud

\*The congregation may stand.

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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 star shines above; Guiding the shepherds at night. Look up high to see; Look for our star in the loft.*

The Deacon on Call is Jeff Mercer. A 26-year member of First Baptist, Jeff is a teacher for Grains of Sand Sunday School class. He and his wife Becky have two children, Will and Cady.

The sanctuary flowers are given in honor of Alice Williams by her Sunday school class, the Everette Miller Friendship class, and by her church family. She will celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 6 after serving this church faithfully and lovingly for so long.

Global Mission Emphasis — today, we welcome Rev. Nell Green, recently retired CBF field personnel as our guest preacher. Nell and her husband have served in Senegal, Miami, Belgium, the Carolinas, and Houston for over 37 years.

Hanging of the Greens is tonight at 6pm, followed by a reception. We hope you will join us!

*Giving Generously with Gratitude*, our 2024 stewardship emphasis: so far, we have received 109 pledges in the amount of \$953,870. 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 need offering envelopes and haven't received them in the past or would like to stop receiving them or change the number of each envelope you receive, contact Wayne Hager ([whager@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:whager@fbcraleigh.org)).

Centerpoint: Wednesday, December 6; meal served at 5:15pm, prayer time and program at 6:15pm. This week, we will hear from Marc and Karen Wyatt with CBF Missions.

Wednesday night meal reservations may be made at the church website ([www.fbcraleigh.org/foodservice](http://www.fbcraleigh.org/foodservice)), by email ([dmast@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:dmast@fbcraleigh.org)), or by calling the church office (919-832-4485). The menu for December 6 is: baked pork chops with apple sauce, peas, and roasted potatoes; non-meat option: mock chicken patty; kids: buttered noodles.

As we approach Christmas, we want to provide an opportunity for our congregation to serve our neighbors a hot meal from *And Also With 'Cue*. We will be serving it to the clients of the Helen Wright Center on December 12. See the *Rose Window Weekly* for more information and the sign-up link.

Theology on Tap's next gathering will be on Thursday, December 7, at 6pm at Clouds Brewing (126 N. West Street, Raleigh). Please join us!

Come celebrate expectant parents Sara and Michael Hood at a baby shower on Sunday, December 10, from 2–4pm in the fellowship hall. The Hoods are registered at [babylist.com](http://babylist.com) and [Target](http://Target.com).

Our NC Missions Offering helps fund non-profit organizations doing work and providing services primarily in North Carolina. Through the generosity of FBC members, we have received \$1,366.36.

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 3–10**

### **Sunday, December 3**

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 FBC worship/Nell Green preaching, Global Missions emphasis  
(sanctuary/YouTube)
- JBC worship (226)
- 6:00 Hanging of the Greens (sanctuary)
- 7:00 Hanging of the Greens reception (fellowship hall)

### **Monday, December 4**

- 10:00 Clothing ministry open
- 6:30 Music Made in Heaven (302)

### **Tuesday, December 5**

- 10:00 Staff meeting (conference room)
- 10:45 WMU Group 2 (Springmoor)
- 12:30 Office volunteer luncheon (fellowship hall)
- 1:00 WMU Group 2 (Independence Village)
- 1:30 Yoga class (302)
- 6:00 Properties Committee meeting (Zoom)

### **Wednesday, December 6**

- 5:15 Meal served (fellowship hall)
- 5:45 Missions (PS/CS)
- 6:15 Centerpoint (fellowship hall)
- 7:15 Grade School Choir (sanctuary)
- 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal (310/sanctuary)

### **Thursday, December 7**

- 7:00 Band of Brothers (Zoom)
- 10:30 Thirty-Niners lunch outing (Meadows Village)
- 6:00 High school Bible study (Sasser home)
- Theology on Tap (Clouds Brewing)

### **Sunday, December 10**

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 FBC worship (sanctuary/YouTube)
- JBC worship (226)
- 12:15 Deacons' meeting (220/Zoom)
- 2:00 Baby shower for Sara and Michael Hood (fellowship hall)
- 5:00 Youth Christmas

First Baptist Church

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