

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812

*Gloria  
in excelsis  
& Deo*

December 31, 2023

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP  
THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the first Sunday after Christmas, part of a twelve-day celebration of the birth of Christ and the good news of incarnation. All of our scripture passages point to God delighting in the overlooked and outcast, calling us to give more attention and resources to those who tend to escape public notice. The gospel reading comes from Luke, and it tells the story of Mary and Joseph presenting the infant Jesus at the Temple. It is the only retelling of this scene in all four gospels, so it is one that the gospel writer must have found important. We'll learn about two faithful people, Simeon and Anna, who see the Christ child and immediately take notice. They recognize him as sacred, and see God's specific intention for his life. Did Simeon and Anna have some special gift that allowed them a unique power to see things others could not? Perhaps they simply cultivated a practice of seeing the world around them through God's eyes.

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

Michael Hood

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

"Carols Around (and a Round)" Elaine & John Holley,  
Carl J. Nygard, arr./adapted violin-violita duet

The Call to Worship

based on Psalm 148

READER: Praise the Lord! Heavens and heights,

**PEOPLE: Praise the Lord, you sky-bound shining lights!**

READER: Praise God, you hosts and messengers of the Most High.

**PEOPLE: Praise in the rain, and the snow, and the forest below!**

READER: Praise the Lord, you winds and seas,

**PEOPLE: Praise God, all you hand-clapping trees.**

READER: Every beast and bird and swimming thing,

**PEOPLE: creeping or crawling, your praises bring.**

READER: Every living, breathing thing, praise the Lord.

**PEOPLE: All heaven and nature sing: Praise the Lord!**

The Invocation

\*The Hymn of Praise, 151

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

GO TELL IT

LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD

The Hebrew Bible

Isaiah 61:10–62:3

Libby Barnes

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. <sup>1</sup>For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. <sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. <sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

**PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.**

The Christian Testament

Galatians 4:4–7

<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

\*The Hymn of Devotion, 170

CAROL

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

The Morning Prayer

Leah Reed

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 2:22–40

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are

dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

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

The Solo	“Quiet Breeze” Marty Haugen	Warren Howell Elaine Holley, violin
The Sermon	“Ordinary Prophets”	Leah Reed

## 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.*

\*The Hymn of Discipleship, 161

IRBY

“Once in Royal David’s City”

## 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

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”  
Lloyd Larson

Maureen Howell

\*The congregation may stand.

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The Deacon on Call is Libby Barnes. A 41-year member of First Baptist, Libby serves on the Music Ministry Council, Hospitality Committee, and *Housing All* board and is a member of the Prayer Shawl group. She and her husband Walt are the parents of three grown children and have one grandchild.

Sympathy to Val Wilson and Sarah Collins on the December 26 death of their mother and grandmother, Janet Parker Forvendel.

Please keep the 22 people going on the winter retreat and ski trip in your prayers. They leave Friday, January 5, and return on Sunday, January 7.

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!

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 ([llingafelt@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:llingafelt@fbcraleigh.org)) as soon as possible if you're interested.

*Giving Generously with Gratitude*, our 2024 stewardship emphasis: so far, we have received 138 pledges in the amount of \$1,160,660. 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 \$3,955.

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 (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 31–January 7

### Sunday, December 31

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

### Monday, January 1

Church office and clothing ministry closed

### Tuesday, January 2

- 10:00 Staff meeting (conference room)
- 10:45 WMU Group 2 (Springmoor)
- 1:00 WMU Group 2 (Independence Village)
- 6:00 Properties Committee meeting (Zoom)

### Wednesday, January 3

- 5:15 Meal served (fellowship hall)
- 5:45 Children's music (301/307/311)
- 6:15 Centerpoint (fellowship hall)
- 6:30 Children's missions (children's and preschool suites)  
Handbell rehearsal (302)
- 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal (310/sanctuary)

### Thursday, January 4

- 7:00 Band of Brothers (Zoom)
- 10:30 Thirty-Niners (fellowship hall)

### Friday, January 5–Sunday, January 7

Winter retreat and ski trip (Pipestem, WV)

### Sunday, January 7

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 FBC worship (sanctuary/YouTube)  
JBC worship (226)

First Baptist Church

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