



**December 2024**

**Volume LXXVI, No. 12**

**Hanging  
of the Christmas  
Green**

**December 1, 11:00 am**

**Christmas Cantata  
Longing for the Light  
December 15  
11:00 am**

**Blue  
Christmas**  
*Service of Remembrance & Hope*

**Blue Christmas Service  
with Holy Communion  
December 22, 4:30 pm**

**An Opportunity for  
Holy Communion and  
Personal Reflection**

**December 22  
5:15 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Christmas Eve Service  
December 24  
6:00 pm**

**Childcare for nursery–2K  
beginning at 5:45 pm**



## A Note from the Pastor

Can you believe 2024 is close to an end? The turn from November to December in the church's life means Advent is upon us. As the Uldricks anticipate Advent, it's not lost on me that this will be my first Advent leading a new church family.

At its heart, Advent is about waiting for the Incarnation. Advent is our patient waiting for the inbreaking of the Divine into our world, for the Godhead to be revealed in the Christ child. As we wait, we prepare through the busyness. We decorate our homes, host parties, and travel to spend time with family. We busy ourselves with so much that time passes quickly, almost too quickly. Our busyness fosters a sense of separateness, driving many foolish and harmful actions. This separate self easily takes offense, fails to tell the truth, and acts unkindly. The separate self focuses on self-protection and defense, often consuming us.

Richard Rohr says, "A word for overcoming that false sense of separateness is heaven; in essence, that's what death offers—a return to the Creator, where all is one. The gospel's core message is of profound union with God, with others, and with ourselves. This, I believe, is why so many are drawn to church each week—to partake in communion and, ultimately, to recognize that we are in communion."

This Advent, would you consider waiting and preparing for the ultimate incarnation in different ways? Instead of busying ourselves, let's intentionally slow down and deeply connect with others. Make the time to connect with one another and, most significantly, with God, who created us and has never separated from us—offering community and communion at all times.

In an effort to help us slow down this Advent, First Baptist will offer two new experiences—opportunities for deep connection. We will host a Blue Christmas worship experience on Sunday, December 22, at 4:30 pm in the sanctuary. This short worship experience will guide participants through a time of reflection on the presence of God in our celebrations and our loss. We will hold space to grieve with those who have experienced significant loss in 2024. We will close the service offering communion to those who attend. As those participants depart worship, the ministerial staff will remain in the sanctuary, offering a time of Silent Lord's Supper to any who arrive from approximately 5:15 pm until 6:00 pm. We'll be waiting for you to arrive, spend some time in quiet reflection, receive communion, and depart in silence.

Will you join me as we wait patiently for the Incarnation of God to break through in our life this Advent?

Your Pastor,

John



## Worship in December

### Sunday—December 1 First Sunday of Advent *Hanging of the Green*

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36,  
Jeremiah 33:14-16

Meditation: "Hoping for the Light"  
John Ulbrick

Special Music  
"Pat-A Pan"—Jean O. Wood Handbells  
"Jesus, the Savior is Born"—Music Makers  
"Pat-A-Pan"—Young Musicians;  
"Come Join the Angels Singing"  
Voices of Grace Youth Choir;  
"Of the Father's Love Begotten"  
Chancel Choir

"Lullay, Infant Holy"  
Sounds of Grace Senior Adult Choir

### Sunday—December 8 Second Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6, Malachi 3:1-4

Sermon: "Preparing for the Light"  
John Ulbrick

Special Music  
"Tis the Winter of Our Longing"

"My Heart, Your Bethlehem"  
Sounds of Grace Senior Adult Choir

### Sunday—December 15 Third Sunday of Advent

Cantata:  
*Longing for the Light*  
with Chamber Orchestra

### Sunday—December 22 Fourth Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Luke 1:46b-55, Psalm 80:1-7

Sermon: "Waiting for the Light"  
John Ulbrick

Special Music  
"Mary Sat A-Rockin'"—Chancel Choir  
"Breath of Heaven"  
Tracie Rush and Byron Hilley

### Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20, Isaiah 9:2-7

Meditation: "God With Us"  
John Ulbrick

Special Music  
"Sweet Little Jesus Boy"—Keith Jameson;  
"Still, Still, Still" - Chancel Choir

### Sunday—December 29 First Sunday After Christmas

Cliff Cain preaching

Special Music  
"Masters in This Hall"—familiar Christmas  
Carols throughout the service

## INFORMATIONAL MEETING and Singing for Parents, Children, and Youth



Sunday, December 15, 2024  
5:00pm-6:00pm  
FBC Sanctuary

All are welcome. Parents—please invite your children's friends to come, as this is a true community presentation, with folks from different churches, schools, and organizations from Greenwood and the surrounding areas participating.

Dress rehearsal for this musical/opera will be 6:00 pm-7:00 pm, Wednesday, March 12. Noye's Fludde will be presented Thursday, March 13, 6:00 pm and Friday, March 14, 6:00 pm in the FBC Sanctuary.



## Music Notes

### "Longing for the Light" During Advent

Hoping...waiting...preparing...longing. During our Advent journey this season, we are searching and longing for the light. Our Advent Cantata will be *Longing for the Light*, with words by Pamela Stewart and music by John Purifoy and will be presented on Sunday, December 15. Incorporating elements of chant and lush chordal harmonies, it is a calm and thoughtful reflection of our anticipation of God's coming into our midst. This cantata was last presented at FBC in 2016 and we are delighted to present it again here and at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The service will feature the Chancel Choir, organist Will Thomas Cleveland, and a beautiful chamber orchestra of strings and winds.

John Purifoy writes about the work:

This service is based on the *O Antiphons* (sometimes referred to as the *Greater Antiphons*). The word "antiphon" means "mirrored voice," and it is simply a response spoken or sung in worship. The *O Antiphons* are a specific set of responses used in various church traditions during Advent. Called "*O*" *Antiphons* because each begins with the word "O," they are most widely known today as the verses that form the familiar hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Each one contains two parts: a reference to a specific prophesy in Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah, and a related Messianic title found in scripture. The seven titles represented are Wisdom, Ruler of the House of Israel, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Dawn, King of the Nations, and Emmanuel.

We look forward to presenting *Longing for the Light* on Sunday, December 15. Join us for a special service of music, candle lighting, reflection, and anticipation of the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God With Us.

Keith



### Advent Devotionals Available



Advent is a period of spiritual preparation for the birth of Christ. The Spiritual Formation Committee invites each family to take an advent devotional booklet from the narthex to use beginning December 1. Each family may choose one devotional booklet—either *Light Shines in the Darkness*, a resource designed to be used by families, or *The Light of Grace*, a resource designed for individual use.

### Spring Semester Building Blocks



#### January–February Building Blocks

(January 8–February 26)

January 8 and 15—two week Bible study led by John Ulbrick

January 22—Intergenerational CRAFT NIGHT in preparation for Noye's Fludde (Noah's Flood) - EVERYONE is invited.

January 29–February 26  
"The 10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Child" led by John Ulbrick

#### March–April Building Blocks (March 5–April 23)

March 5—Ash Wednesday Service

March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 23)

- "Lenten Practices" led by members of the Spiritual Formation Committee

- Series on the Lenten Season and loneliness led by John Ulbrick

March 19 (NO MEAL)—Building Blocks

March 26 (NO MEAL)—Building Blocks

Holy Week April 16 NO Activities  
April 17 Maundy Thursday  
April 18 Good Friday  
April 20 Easter

April 23 —End of Spring Building Blocks

April 30—M&M Night  
(Last Wednesday Night Meal until fall/new school year schedule begins)



## November Diaconate Update

The Diaconate met on Sunday, November 17, for their monthly meeting. In addition to approving minutes and receiving reports from the staff, the Diaconate approved the First Baptist Funeral and Memorial Service Policy. This policy will be used to assist families and the ministry staff in funeral planning. Copies of the policy are available in the church office or by contacting Keith Jameson (keithjameson@hotmail.com).

## Annual Meeting Update

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2024 Annual meeting. Special "thanks" to the Congregational Life Committee for the chili supper prior to the meeting. The chili was delicious!

As a result of the Annual Meeting, those in attendance approved the following agenda items.

- 1) Approved the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting, January 21, 2024 Called Business Meeting, April 7, 2024 Called Business Meeting, and October 27, 2024 Called Business Meeting.
- 2) Approved the following church officers for 2025:
  - Pat Penn - Assistant Church Treasurer
  - Alan Ogles - Church Clerk
- 3) Approved the list of 2025 Committee Members
- 4) Approved the 2025 Ministry Plan



## 2024 Contributions

All contributions for the 2024 tax year must be received or postmarked **no later than December 31**. You may place a check in the mail, bring your contribution to the church office, or use the FBC online giving tool at <https://www.fbcgwd.org/giving>. Please note that the church office will close at noon on December 31. For more information about 2024 contributions, please contact Linda Miller at [lindamillerfbc@gmail.com](mailto:lindamillerfbc@gmail.com).

## Church Family News

Christian Sympathy is extended to the families of

- Ann Pickens, sister of Martha Roberts,
- Bob Ledet
- Robert Hill, grandfather of Gibson Hill

**Self:** Rose Whaley, Polly Harvin

**Greenville:** Bill Whaley

**Home:** Jackie Dewberry, Kenny Poston, Ken Richard, Andy Clawson

## Gifts "in Honor of"/"In Memory of" at Christmas

On Christmas Eve, FBC will publish a list of donors and those honored or remembered through a special offering during Advent (deadline for publication is Wednesday, December 18) This year donations may be designated for the purchase of poinsettias for the Christmas Eve service, the Offering for Global Missions, and the annual Ministry Plan.

**Poinsettias are \$22.00 each and must be ordered by Friday, December 13.** Checks for poinsettias should be made payable to **The Floral Case**. Please use the form in the church office for donations.



## 2025 Offering Envelopes

Beginning Sunday, December 8, the 2025 Offering envelopes will be available for pick-up in the narthex. You cannot locate your envelopes, please contact David Jennings ([jenningsdaj@gmail.com](mailto:jenningsdaj@gmail.com) or 229-5557).

## 2024 Financials

### October

October Receipts:	\$ 59,408.31
October Expenses:	\$ 78,718.59
October Deficit:	(\$ 19,310.28)
Revenue vs Expense YTD	(\$ 105,713.85)

### October 27 - November 24

Period Need	\$ 95,039.35
Period Gifts	102,207.80
Ministry Plan Req'd YTD	893,369.89
Ministry Plan Rcv'd YTD	729,187.74
Ministry Plan YTD Deficit (Under)	(164,182.15)
Sunday School Att. (Avg)	171
Worship Attendance (Avg)	217



## Upcoming Dates

**December 1:** *Hanging of the Green*

**December 4:** Children's Ornament Party



## Volunteer Openings

The following openings remain in the Children's Ministry:

Children's Church

Adult: first Sundays in August, October, December, February, April, and June

Adult: fourth Sundays in August, October, December, February, April, and June

3K/4K Sunday School teachers  
2nd Sundays

Please contact Anna Burch ([aeburchfbc@gmail.com](mailto:aeburchfbc@gmail.com)) to volunteer.



## Children's Family Ornament Party Wednesday December 4

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm

- There will be no children's choirs or Bright Beginnings Music activity..
- There will be no Wednesday Night meals.

We will use the classrooms from the toddler room to the Backyard. Childcare for the Ornament Party will be in the room beside the nursery and snacks will be in the kitchen.



## No Bright Beginnings or Children's Choirs

December 11, 18, 25 and January 1

## No Wednesday Night Activities

December 11, 18, 25 and January 1

**Choirs and CIAs will return  
January 8!**

Thanks  
for Your  
Help!

## Trunk-or-Treat

The Children's Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the Trunk-or-Treat event this year. Special thanks to the following.

- **Set Up:** Claudia Burch, David Jennings
- **Hayride:** Keith Snead
- **Fire Trunk:** Andrew Waldron
- **Games:** Youth and Lauren Coker
- **Trunks:** Tracie and Jeff Rush, Lewis and Betty Walker, Mary Frances Thompson, Lou Hilley, Reed and Brenda Rickborn, Nick and Julia Nichols, Erin Nichols, Kaitlin Nichols, Hillary Craigo, Kathleen Snead, Shawn Snead, Claudia Burch, Terry and Alice Gilchrist, Ana and Eli Fitzgerald, Michelle Timmons, Amanda Moon, Velma and Jesse English, Nan Smith, Jeanne Hughston, Jennifer and John Uldrick, Kelly McWhorter, Gibson Hill, Lynn Waldron
- **Clean Up:** Youth, Lauren Coker, Claudia Burch, David Jennings, Keith Jameson



## Children's Sabbath

Thanks also to those who assisted with Children's Sabbath.

- CIA leaders (practice and help in worship) Claudia Burch, Jennifer Hudson, Amanda Moon, Erin Nodine, Ellison Rowe, Kathleen Snead, Catherine White
- Mary Frances Thompson
- Choir leaders: Kayla Beard, Lou Hilley, Lily Martin, Sam Smith

# Youth News



**December Sunday Night Live**  
**Sunday, December 1**  
**5:00 pm-7:00 pm**  
**Hosted by the Uldricks**

## MARK Upcoming Youth Events

- December 4:** Youth help with the Ornament Party
- February 9:** Souper Bowl Fundraiser



## Committee Orientation

**January 5 at 3:00 pm**

The First Baptist Church 2025 Committee Orientation meeting is **Sunday, January 5, at 3:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall**. Everyone serving on a committee in 2025 is asked to gather for a time of orientation. Following an orientation for all committee members, individual committees will break into their groups to beginning planning their work for the new year. The January Committee Orientation serves as the first meeting of the year. Regular meeting dates and times will be set during the Committee Orientation meeting. Committees will also choose their chair, vice-chair, and secretary for 2025. Committee members, please add this date to your calendar.



The Stewardship Committee voted during their November meeting to pay Fourth Quarter Mission in full and on time. In addition to funding CBF Global and CBFSC, the payment of Fourth Quarter Missions (\$12,830.00) also supports six local mission partners. Thank you for your gifts to the annual Ministry Plan that supports our mission partners.



**Never Grow Old**  
**(NGO) Fellowship**

## Christmas NGO Fellowship

**December 10**

Sounds of Grace Senior Choir will help us celebrate Christmas as they present a program of beautiful, sacred Christmas music. The choir is directed by David Corbitt and accompanied by Stephanie Turner. The catered meal will be turkey and dressing, cranberry sauce, broccoli casserole, and cobbler. **If you are not an NGO member, please call the church office no later than December 4 to make your reservation.** The cost of the meal is \$10.00. The program will begin at 11:45 am, followed by the meal. All ages are welcome to participate in this special time of Christmas fellowship.



## FBC Christmas Post Office

**Opens**  
**December 1**

The Rosemary Benjamin Circle Christmas Post Office will begin on December 1, 2024, and run through December 24, 2024. Please bring your **unstamped** Christmas Cards for **active** church members (members able to attend church in person and who are likely to attend church during December) to the post office in the Narthex. To "mail" cards at church, please make your check payable to **Greater Greenwood United Ministry**. Please place checks and cash donations, in the envelope that is provided and place the envelope in the donation basket. Do not forget to go by the post office each week and pick up cards addressed to you.

## Church Office Schedule for the Holidays



The church office will be closed Tuesday, December 24, and Wednesday, December 25, for Christmas.

The church office will close at noon on Tuesday, December 31, and will be closed New Year's Day.



722 Grace Street Greenwood, SC 29649  
 (864) 229-5557 (864) 229-2561 Fax  
 Website: fbcgwd.org

## Cheerful Cherubs

(864) 229-2787 [www.cheerfulcherubsfbc.com](http://www.cheerfulcherubsfbc.com)

### Ministers and Staff

John Uldrick  
 Anna Burch  
 David Jennings  
 Keith Jameson  
 Lauren Coker  
 Will Thomas Cleveland  
 Claudia Burch  
 Mary Frances Thompson  
 Linda Miller

Senior Pastor  
 Minister to Children  
 Minister of Administration  
 Church Music Director  
 Part-Time Youth Leader  
 Organist  
 Director of Cheerful Cherubs  
 Ministry Assistant  
 Financial Assistant

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Helping Hands Ministry Information Line

**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**