



WORDS

FOR THE **BEGINNING**

— YOU ARE A BLESSING —

# *Our Worship of God*

*December 1, 2024*

*11:15 am*

(† Indicates those who are able, please stand)

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## *~ First Sunday of Advent ~*

**Welcome**

Pastor Greg Hunt

**†Prelude**

**Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring**  
Colleen Ostercamp, *organ*

J.S. Bach

**†Call to Worship (responsive)**

God says,

**“Do not be afraid.”**

God says,

**“I have called you by name.”**

God says,

**“I will be with you.”**

God says,

**“You are precious and honored in my sight.”**

At the beginning of this season,

**at the start of this week,**

at the top of this hour,

**may we wrap ourselves in these words.**

May we begin again.

**Let us worship our Holy God!**

**† Opening Hymn 133**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

## **Blessing of the Christmas Tree**

Pastor Greg Hunt

God who created all things, bless these trees as we decorate them and make them joyful symbols for our Sanctuary. May their branches remind us of the shelter and shade you provide for us and for many creatures. May their trunks remind us of your strength. May their lights bring us peace. May we remember your gift to us this season, the gift of Jesus, Amen.

## **†Hanging of the Green**

Music provided by Carter Thiemann

## **Prayer for Illumination**

Pastor Brittany McDonald Null

## **Scripture Reading**

Ally Lautenschlager

### **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." 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.

The Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise be to Christ.**

# †Hymn of Blessing

## In Case No One Ever Told You



In case no one e - ver told you or  
You are the mas - ter-piece born of God's  
You are u - nique - ly cre - a - ted for

4



you have for - got - ten You are a bless - ing and  
i - ma - gin - a - tion E - ven the parts that are  
love and be - long - ing For - cing your - self to be

9



have been since you were be - got - ten  
cry - ing out for res - tor - a - tion  
some - one you're not is ex - haus - ting

13



Fash - ioned from love Sent to the earth from a - bove  
All that you are Born out of star - dust and scars  
You are a gift There is no box you must fit

18



You're no - thing short of a god - send  
Re - flects God's per - fect cre - a - tion  
Let your be - lov - ed - ness blos - som

## Lighting of the First Advent Candle

The Ray Family

In a weary and worn world,  
how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

**Let us begin with the good news!**

**Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing,  
loved by a gracious God.**

**Let us begin with music and singing!**

**Let us begin with warmth and welcome.**

**Let us begin with hope.**

Yes, let us begin with hope.

Today we light the candle of hope to  
shine a light in a worn and weary world.

*The first candle is lit*

**May this be our foundation.**

**May this be our fresh start.**

**May this be our new beginning.**

May hope flow forth from here.

Amen!

## Sharing Our Gifts

Pastor Greg Hunt

**Anthem**

**Joy of Longing Hearts**  
*Chancel Choir w/ Colleen Ostercamp*

by Mary McDonald

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free  
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart*

*Come, thou Savior of the world, come to us, we pray  
Cast our sin and enter in, come today*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a King  
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring  
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone  
By thine all-sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne*

**Message**

*You Are a Blessing*

Pastor Greg Hunt

**Litany of Communion and the Lord's Prayer**

God of blessings,

Once again, we find ourselves at the beginning of the month,

**at the beginning of this Advent season,**

at the beginning of this new day,

**bringing our hearts to you.**

Meet us here, gracious God.

**Hear our prayers and offer your words of blessing.**

Your first words to creation were words of love.

**You looked at this earth and said, "It is good."**

You spoke affirmations through the prophets.

**You spoke blessings over Mary.**

You spoke belonging through Christ.

**And at every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing,  
made in your image, held in your love.**

So in this spirit of blessings and beginnings,

**we come to your Table.**

Once more we ask that you would meet us here.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary meal,

that in this bread and cup we may glimpse a new day.

May the sight of everyone being welcomed at this Table

**remind us that all are loved by you.**

May the evidence that there is food for all

**remind us that no one is meant to go hungry.**

May the fact that our own sin, shame, and doubt

do not keep us from this Table

**remind us that you welcome and love us as we are.**

And may all of these Communion truths serve as building blocks

for a new day,

for a new beginning.

With hope in our hearts, we pray.

**With hope in our hearts, we gather.**

With hope in our hearts, we begin again.

**Meet us here.**

Allow this joyful feast to be the start of something new.

With joy and hope, we weave our voices together to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying . . .

**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 sin, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Communion**

**†Hymn of Response 309**

Wonderful Words of Life

**Life of the Church**

Pastor Brittany McDonald Null

**†Benediction**

**†Postlude**

**Immanuel / O Come, O Come**  
Colleen Ostercamp, *organ*

arr. Anna Laura Page



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# Worship Notes

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*Call to Worship*, by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

*Blessing of the Christmas Tree*, by Traci Smith in *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas*

*Prayer for Illumination*, by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

*Litany for Communion*, adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, Words: Latin Hymn, 12<sup>th</sup> C. ; tr John M. Neale. Music: Thomas Helmore, 1854; based on plainsong phrases.

*In Case No One Ever Told You*, Words: Anna Strickland, 2024. Music: *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, 1668.

*Wonderful Words of Life*, Words & Music: Philip P. Bliss, 1874.

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## Week at a Glance

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### Sunday, December 1 – Hanging of the Green

- 9:10 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal in the Sanctuary
- 9:15 am Awakening Service in the Fellowship Hall
- 10:15 am Spiritual Formation Hour –Adult, Youth & First Kids Sunday School
- 11:15 am Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

### Monday, December 2

- 1:00 pm Staff Meeting

### Tuesday, December 3

- 1:00 pm Crafty Critters in the Conference Room

### Wednesday, December 4

- 6:00 pm Youth Group
- 6:30 pm Chancel Bells

### Thursday, December 5

- 10:30 am First Baptist Women’s Zoom Book Study
- 6:00 pm Crafter Hours

## Pastoral Call Visit - Weekend Schedule

### Saturday, December 7

- 4:00 pm Congregation Candidate Introduction & Dinner - Fellowship Hall
  - 4:00 pm: Receiving Line with Candidate
  - 5:00 pm Dinner
  - 6:00 pm: Moderated Q&A with Candidate

### Sunday, December 8 –Pastoral Candidate Visit

- 11:15 am Combined Worship in the Sanctuary, Pastoral Candidate preaching
- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm Lunch & Called Business Meeting in the Fellowship Hall
- 1:00 pm Presentation by the Search Committee followed by a church vote

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# Announcements

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## Welcome Visitors!

If you are visiting, we are so glad to have you with us! If you would like to receive more information about First Baptist and our ministries, you can fill out a connection card from the pew back, scan the QR code in the bulletin, or visit our website at [fbc-columbia.org/connect](http://fbc-columbia.org/connect)



## Advent Worship Series – Begins Today

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to an end, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. But Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. Christ's birth offered a beautiful new beginning for shepherds and Magi alike—all the while, King Herod tried to bring Christ's story to an end. When we ourselves navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to find as we step forward into the unknown. *Words for the Beginning* offers us scriptures and reminders we need to hear again and again as we begin a new season rooted in love. Adult Advent Devotionals will be available in both worship spaces and family devotionals will be available in the Kids Ministry area. If you would like a digital copy of the adult devotional, contact Pastor Brittany.



## Quilts For Display During Advent

Our Advent theme was inspired by the storied tradition of quilting. The visual concept of quilting inspired us because this series feels like a blanket wrapped around you, providing warmth and comfort as you begin again. Like a quilt formed by scraps of old fabrics and meaningful family items, this worship series stitches together the ancient scriptures and reminders we need to hear again and again. Do you have a family quilt or one that has special meaning to you? Would you be willing to share it with the church? We want to display your quilts in our building to lean into the feeling of warmth and protection they offer. If you would be interested in allowing one of your quilts to be displayed and could provide a brief paragraph about your quilt, please email Brenda Rice: [brice@fbc-columbia.org](mailto:brice@fbc-columbia.org)

## Voluntary Action Center - Holiday Giving Program

First Baptist will sponsor two families as part of Voluntary Action Center's (VAC) 2024 Holiday Giving Program, bringing Christmas cheer to two of our adult neighbors and eight children and youth. Cards with requested/suggested gifts are available on the Bulletin Board in the central hallway between worship spaces. You will not need to wrap your gifts, ***but please attach your card to the gifts, and bring them to Church by Sunday, December 8.***

## First Baptist Christmas Dinner - Sunday, December 15 at 5pm

We invite you to join us for our Annual Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 15, at 5:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The meat and beverages will be provided by the church, and excellent side dishes and desserts prepared by you and your First Baptist friends. To help ensure we have a variety of food, we encourage you to bring a side dish if your last name begins A-M and a dessert if your last name begins with N-Z. Come feast and celebrate with us!

## Blue Christmas – December 19 - 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall

We know that while the holiday season is full of cheer and expectation, many also hold grief and sadness. As a way to make space for difficult emotions during the holiday season, particularly grief around endings and anxiety around new beginnings, you are invited to a contemplative Blue Christmas service on December 19. Our service will provide space for silence, prayer, and lament.

## Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Pastor Search Committee is excited to announce that we have identified a candidate to present to the congregation for the position of Senior Pastor.

The pastoral call visit is scheduled for the weekend of Sunday, December 8, 2024. On that Sunday, we will gather for a combined worship service at 11:15 AM, followed by a special called business meeting and luncheon. During the weekend, the candidate will meet with various ministry teams and committees. On Saturday evening, December 7, the Pastor Search Committee will host a reception and dinner for the entire congregation from 4:00–7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. This special event will include a receiving line, allowing each person to meet the candidate and the candidate's family. Following dinner, the candidate will share her spiritual journey and respond to questions during a Q&A session.

To honor the confidentiality of the candidate, we will not disclose the name at this time. On Sunday, December 1, the Pastor Search Committee will formally introduce the candidate by name, provide a resume, and share additional details in a letter to the congregation and through The Spire. We kindly ask that communication regarding the candidate remain within our church family to maintain confidentiality.

The Pastor Search Committee wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to the congregation for their prayers, support, and patience throughout the process. We firmly believe that the Holy Spirit has been at work, guiding and leading our church, staff, committee, and this candidate to this moment. May we continue to seek God's will together as we move forward in faith.

Please join us for us at the events below to meet and hear from the candidate:

**Saturday, December 7:**

- 4-7:00 pm: Congregation Candidate Introduction & Dinner - Fellowship Hall
- 4:00 pm: Receiving Line with Candidate
- 5:00 pm Dinner
- 6:00 pm: Moderated Q&A with Candidate

The search committee co-chairs will interview the candidate utilizing a combination of questions selected by the search committee as well as questions submitted by the congregation. Congregation members will have an opportunity to submit questions ahead of time or that night at the event.

**Sunday, December 8:**

- 11:15 am: Combined Worship - Sanctuary  
The candidate will preach and lead in worship.
- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm: Lunch & Called Business Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- 1:00 pm: Presentation by the Search Committee followed by a church vote.





**First Baptist Church**  
columbia, mo

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*Rev. Dr. Greg Hunt, Interim Senior Pastor*  
*Rev. Brittany McDonald Null, Pastor of Families and Spiritual Formation*  
*Jonathan Ray, Music Director-Traditional Worship*  
*Shelby Myers, Awakening Worship Praise Band Director*  
*Colleen Ostercamp, Pianist and Organist*  
*Noah Hartsfield, Handbell Director*  
*Susan Goudie, Administrative Assistant*  
*Brenda Rice, Administrative Assistant for Web, Facilities, and Arts*  
*Mike Ide, Custodian*  
*Nellene Martin, Childcare Director*