



FROM  
GENERATION  
TO GENERATION...  
*God dwells with us*

## Cover Art: “Ponder”

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:15-21 | Paper lace with watercolor

The hope that Mary was pondering inspired the concept and flow in this watercolored paper lace work. Are you, as I am, most taken by the sense that Mary has given birth to the hopes and dreams of a people who are hurting?

During the pandemic, as I watched the news, I saw so much creativity bubbling up. I saw people imagining a world that could be, a world that should be. The hope that was emerging was palpable. Then, as a teacher, I went back to the classroom this year. Hope seemed absent among my students, among the faculty, among the parents. I began to research the science of hope. Perhaps it's teachable, I wondered. It turns out, there is a whole department at the University of Oklahoma dedicated to the study of hope. I watched a TED talk by their lead professor, Chan Hellman, entitled, “The Science And Power Of Hope.”

The next TED talk I watched was, “Hope is the Most Powerful Force in the World,” by Somnieng Houern who runs a school for girls, putting concepts of the science of hope into action. He says that he focuses on one person. There is no other way. One person focusing on one person at a time, creating space for hope. One person in a family was given a scholarship to a girl's school. She reached back and pulled her siblings forward into higher education as well. The ripple effect of hope was the power of which he spoke.

I was already putting this one-person-at-a-time focus into action before I saw these TED talks, however, understanding more about the science of hope has helped me realize that my work is making a difference. I am beginning to believe that the one-on-one moments I am making time for every few minutes all day long are having a ripple effect on my students. Relationships are improving, students are reconnecting with their studies, students are speaking up about their needs. It is hard to see the benefits of this last one because there is so much need, so much pain among them now. It feels like constant failure, but there is hope in hope. I want to be able to teach hope. The students need to know how to generate it, how to create it, how to expand hope into their daily lives—one person at a time.

In the midst of a difficult life, “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). One of these treasures was the hope that her womb had brought forth for the world to return to again and again—and to pass on, like a ripple, one person at a time.

—Hannah Garrity

*With Christ as the Cornerstone, we will build a church of living stones,  
where every member is a minister and is equipped to express God's love  
by word and deed to all people.*

*Based on 1 Peter 2:5, 6*

# The Worship of God

## Christmastide

January 1, 2023

### Prelude

“In the Bleak Midwinter”  
Cynthia Griesedieck

arr. Lorie Line

### Welcome

April Alston

### Call to Worship

Christian McIvor

One: I have good news!

**All: I have good news!**

One: Christ is born!

**All: Christ is born!**

One: Joy is alive!

**All: Joy is alive!**

One: God is here.

**All: God is here.**

(Repeat 3x)

One: Thanks be to God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

One: Amen.

**All: Amen.**

### † Carol 250

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth;  
And praises sing to God, the King, and peace to men on earth.**

(cont’d on next page)

† *Please rise in body or spirit.*

How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend on us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.

## Call to Confession

Cathy Perkinson, Ron Thompson  
Keith Vaughn, and Chris Austin

## Prayer of Confession and Words of Forgiveness

*Please respond each time the reader says "together we pray."*

...Forgive us for extinguishing hope.

...Forgive us for extinguishing peace.

...Forgive us for extinguishing joy.

...Forgive us for extinguishing love.

## Passing of the Peace

† Carol 256

"Love Has Come"

Love has come— a light in the darkness!  
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
Hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come share in the wonder;  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of His mother;  
What is the name her heart is saying?  
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;  
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come— He never will leave us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us;  
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas; Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!

## Prayer for Illumination

Amy Ng

## Poetic Scripture Reading

John 1:1-5

Anna Beth Cross and April Alston

## Response to the Word

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

## Offering

### † Christmas Doxology

“Christmas Doxology”

OLD HUNDREDTH;  
Words by Roger Lynn,  
Music from the *Genevan Psalter*

**Praise God for gifts of hope and peace  
Praise God for gifts of joy and love  
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell  
On earth for us – Emmanuel. Amen.**

## Creative Prayer of the People

Anna Beth Cross

## Closing Prayer

April Alston

### † Carol 258

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain:

**Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!**

Verse 1:

**While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold! thro'out the heavens  
There shone a holy light. (Refrain)**

Verse 2:

**The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth. (Refrain)**

Verse 3:

**Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born,  
And brought us God's salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)**

**Benediction**

Chrissy Williamson

**Postlude**

“Joy to the World”  
Pam Weis

arr. Robert J. Hughes

Thank you to Cranberry Tree Farms for their gracious donation of wreaths  
and for the beautiful Chrismon trees in the Sanctuary.

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Graphic design by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed | “Ponder”  
by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

Scan to Connect  
With Us:



*Greystone Baptist Church | 7509 Lead Mine Road, Raleigh, NC 27615*

Church Office Hours: 8:30-4:30 PM (M-Th) | Phone: (919) 847-1333 | Email: [office@greystonechurch.org](mailto:office@greystonechurch.org)  
Website: [www.greystonechurch.org](http://www.greystonechurch.org) | Facebook: @greystonebaptistchurch | Instagram: @greystonechurch