



FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...
We tell this story

Cover Art: “How God Shows Up”

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 | Silk painting with digital drawing and collage

This year, I come to this story with deep reverence for the complexity and beauty of childbirth. At the time of creating this art, I am about 6 weeks away from giving birth to my first child—who will be born in the same hospital where my mom died from cancer 20 years ago. My daughter will take her first breath in the same place where I heard my mother’s last exhale. Much of my pregnancy has been a journey of healing—of inviting joy into the house where my grief lives, of preparing to become a mother as a motherless child. The more I learn of others’ experiences around birth, I realize how closely joy and grief can coexist in each of our stories.

And so, as I return to Jesus’ birth story, my imagination leads me to wonder about how Mary experienced both grief and joy. Apart from Elizabeth, did she have support throughout her pregnancy? Was her own mother involved? Did she have generational trauma she needed to grieve? Did the stress of their travels to Bethlehem cause her labor to happen sooner than expected? As she labored, did a midwife come? Was she afraid?

In this image, as if looking past a curtain, we peer into this threshold moment when excruciating pain gives way to ecstatic joy as Mary draws her baby to her chest and he takes his first breath. As Mary holds her baby, additional hands reach in to support them both. Maybe these are the hands of strangers, of Joseph, or of a midwife who was summoned. Perhaps they are simply the hands of angels.

Each year, we tell this story because it is raw with joy, pain, and the complexities of being human. No matter how your story is unfolding, may you find that this sacred story holds space for you. For this is how God shows up—in a child who cries, in hands that hold, in human flesh, in life and in death.

—Lisle Gwynn 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

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2022

Gathering Music

Prelude

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”
Tim Hendrix and Pam Weis

arr. Carolyn Hamlin
and Faye Lopez

Call to Worship

“Children, Go Where I Send Thee”
GBC Choir

Black Spiritual;
arr. Kevin Phillip Johnson,
Rap Crafted by Ayana Davis

Welcome

Chrissy Williamson

† Opening Song

“From Generation to Generation”

Words and Music by
Christian McIvor ©2022

Verse 1:

**The future holds the past and present, it knows where we've come from;
The present holds the past and future, and the hope of what may come.
Traditions held to, the paths we've followed have led us here today,
May we be open to transformation as we make a new way.**

Verse 2:

**When we're consumed with doubt and worry, it seems there's no release;
Our world gets small, our fears take over, and we lose all sense of peace.
But there, God meets us to call us forward, distractions start to fade;
With courage rising, we'll meet the challenge, we will not be afraid.**

Chorus:

**From generation to generation, the seeds of love are sown;
As we take part in God's liberation, the promise is made known.
The story continues of the Christ in flesh and bone;
From generation to generation, we are not alone.**

Verse 3:

**When we're caught up in times of trouble, we have a choice to make;
Will we respond with strength and patience? Will we bend or will we break?
If we just listen and work for justice, to truth we will be led.
And to the story, we'll take great joy then in weaving our own thread. (Chorus)**

(cont'd on next page)

† *Please rise in body or spirit.*

Bridge:

**God's love connects us, it breaks down every wall;
So let God, from within us, reach out to the God in all. (Chorus)**

Interlude:

Christ is born! God is with us!

Christ is born! God within us!

(We are not alone! We are never alone!)

Ending:

Christ is born! Christ is born!

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Karen Brewer, Berno Kleinheins
Aaron Ng, and Walker Green

First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Mason Green

Children's Sermon

April Alston

† Carol 249

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him— born the King of angels!**

Refrain:

**O Come, let us adore Him! O come, let us adore Him!
O come, let us adore Him— Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye bright hosts of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! (Refrain)**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n:
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! (Refrain)**

Call to the Offering

Offertory

"Breath of Heaven"
Julie Green, Annie Hardison-Moody,
Laura Nelson, and Tim Hendrix

By Amy Grant and Chris Eaton,
arr. Craig Courtney

Second Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

Madison Ouzts

‡ **Carol 277**

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”**

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

**Christ by highest heav’n adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. (Refrain)**

**Hail, the heav’nborn Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that men no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. (Refrain)**

Third Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

Sebastian Heredia

Carol

“O Holy Night”
Christian McIvor and Tim Hendrix

Words by Placide Cappeau,
trans. John Sullivan Dwight,
Music by Adolphe Adam

Fourth Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

Bob Millikan

Homily

“We Tell This Story”

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Silent Reflection

Pastoral Prayer

Anna Beth Cross

Communion

Chrissy Tatum Williamson and April Alston

“Still, Still, Still”
GBC Adult Choir

Austrian Carol, arr. Norman Luboff

Fifth Lesson

John 1:1-14

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

† Carol 253

“Silent Night! Holy Night!”

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child. Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar; heavenly hosts sing alleluia.
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing alleluia to our King.
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

† Carol 270

“Joy to the World”

(Stanzas 1, 2, and 4)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Postlude

“I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

Tim Hendrix and Pam Weis

arr. Carolyn Hamlin,
and Faye Lopez

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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by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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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
Website: www.greystonechurch.org | Facebook: [@greystonebaptistchurch](https://www.facebook.com/greystonebaptistchurch) | Instagram: [@greystonechurch](https://www.instagram.com/greystonechurch)