



How does a  
weary world  
rejoice? *We acknowledge  
our weariness*

**Cover Art:** “Annunciation to Zechariah”, by Lauren Wright Pittman, inspired by Luke 1:1-23, Acrylic and ink on wood panel

Zechariah is dressed in a breastpiece, ephod, robe, checkered tunic, turban, and sash, just as the book of Exodus specifies. In my painting, gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns are woven together and bejeweled with engraved stones which bear the names of the sons of Israel (Exodus 28:4).

Zechariah stands in the Holy Place wearing the most meticulous of garments. Does he expect to encounter the divine? Or is he just going through the motions, lighting the incense as an all-too-familiar scent fills the air?

After all these years of fulfilling priestly duties and “living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord” (Luke 1:6), Zechariah and his wife are still childless. Regardless of their desire for children, in their culture and context, childlessness bore the implication of God’s contempt.

I ruminated on this image... a weary priest wrapped in layered fabrics, colors, symbols, textures, and rare stones that proclaim God’s providence and power. The contrast is not lost on me.

I often try to neglect my weariness by putting on a veneer of unwavering trust in God—while feeling like I may suddenly unravel into a pile of beautifully-curated threads, stones, and gold accessories.

In this image, I decided to depict the angel as smoke from the altar of incense. Zechariah has one hand over his mouth in fear and disbelief, while his other hand cradles the notion—not yet hope—of his son’s existence.

Do you bind up your weariness in a neat and tidy bow, put your head down, and project okay-ness like me? What would it look like to acknowledge our weariness, quit powering through, and open ourselves up to what God might have in store for us? Perhaps we’ll meet an angel.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

*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

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

## Gathering Music

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” VENI EMMANUEL; Latin Hymn  
Text trans. John M. Neale and Henry S. Coffin,  
Music adapt. from *Plainsong* by Thomas Helmore

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” TRURO;  
Words by Georg Weissel, trans. Catherine Winkworth,  
Music from *Music Sacra*

“Do Not Be Afraid” Words and Music by  
Christian McIvor ©2018

“Be Still, My Soul” FINLANDIA;  
Words by Katharina von Schlegel trans,  
Jane L. Borthwick, Music by Jean Sibelius

## Prelude

“‘Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring’ with  
‘Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus’” arr. Tom Fettke  
Sandra Hunt

## Welcome

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

## ✠ Call to Worship

Christian McIvor

One: In God’s house, we can be joyful.

**All: We can be grateful. We can be hopeful.**

One: In God’s house, we can be weary.

**All: We can be anxious. We can be grieving.**

One: In God’s house, we can be honest—

**All: inspired or tired, delighted or doubtful, connected or curious,  
and everything in between.**

One: This is God’s house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

**All: Let us worship our loving God.**

One: How does a weary world rejoice?

How do we give peace and love a voice?

How do we find joy in suffering?

In grateful hope, together we will sing.

✠ Please rise in body or spirit.

† **Opening Song**

“God, Be with Your Weary People”

HYFRYDOL;  
Words by Hannah C. Brown,  
Music by Rowland Hugh Prichard

God, be with your weary people,  
rise from sacred ancient root.  
Branch of ages, bud among us,  
leaf and blossom, fill with fruit.  
We await your new beginnings,  
dreams deferred and hopes delayed.  
Meet despair with sweet assurance,  
strengthen hearts so long afraid.

God, be with your hungry people,  
serve a feast for all to eat.  
Bread of life, abundant blessing,  
bring a justice more complete.  
We have yearned for peace and plenty,  
snared by greed and worn by war.  
Make our weapons fit for farming,  
move our hands to share once more.

God, be with your hardened people,  
ease each brittle mind and soul.  
Source of stirring, righteous waters,  
free us as your mercies roll.  
We have longed for life unbounded,  
fresh and flowing, clear and bright.  
Baptize us with fire and spirit,  
birth among us new delight.

*During the last stanza of our Opening Song,  
all children are invited to come forward for today's children's sermon.*

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**

Blair Andrew, Jerry Chiles

**Children's Sermon**

April Alston

**Family Dedication**

The Gardner Family

**Pastoral Prayer**

Anna Beth Cross

## Offertory Anthem

“The Coming of the Lord”  
GBC Choir

by Pepper Choplin

### Refrain 1:

Lift up your heads, O gates, and make the highway straight,  
prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord.

Your waiting soon will end, God's glory will descend,

rise up and welcome in the coming of the Lord, the coming of the Lord!

*(cont'd on next page)*

### Refrain 2:

Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

The ancient words foretell,

God with us, He will dwell,

Christ, our Emmanuel,

and all will see the glory of the Lord! (Refrain 1, Refrain 2)

O come, O come, Emmanuel

(O come, O come, prepare the way! O come, prepare the way!)

and ransom captive Israel.

(O come, prepare the way, the way of the Lord.)

And then the deaf will hear, the blind will see him clear,

the mute will find their voice, the lame will leap for joy,

prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, our God, will come to us.

Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

## ✠ Doxology for Advent

“Doxology for Advent”

VENI EMMANUEL;  
Words by Thomas Ken,  
15th Century French Melody

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**praise Christ, all people here below;**

**praise Holy Spirit evermore;**

**praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel**

**shall come to thee, O Israel.**

## ✠ Prayer of Dedication

Keith Vaughn

## Scripture Reading

Luke 1:1-23

Karen Brewer

## Sermon

“I’m Not Tired!  
(We acknowledge our weariness)”

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

# Silent Reflection

## Invitation

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

## † Musical Response

“My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout  
(Canticle of the Turning)”

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN;  
Words by Rory Cooney, Irish Melody

### Verse 1:

My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west shall my name be blest.  
Could the world be about to turn?

### Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn.

### Verse 2:

Though I am small, my God, my all,  
you work great things in me,  
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,  
for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

### Verse 3:

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,  
not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
every tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed,  
for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

*(cont'd on next page)*

**Verse 4:**

**Though the nations rage from age to age,  
we remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us  
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.**

**This saving word that our forebears heard  
is the promise which holds us bound,  
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,  
who is turning the world around. (Refrain)**

**Celebrating Community**

Anna Beth Cross

**Benediction**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

**Postlude**

**"The Sussex Carol"**

Pam Weis

arr. Robert Lau

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## Judson L. Gardner

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. - Colossians 1:9-10

We welcome to Greystone this morning Judson Gardner, son of Scott and Heather, brother to Roman. Through this dedication, the family pledges to raise Judson in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and Greystone pledges our support in their efforts so that when Judson reaches an appropriate age he may choose for himself to follow Jesus Christ as Lord.

### Greystone Staff

Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Senior Pastor  
April Alston, Associate Minister, Children and Preschool  
Anna Beth Cross, Associate Minister, Students and Digital Discipleship  
Christian McIvor, Minister of Worship, Music, and the Arts  
Pam Phillips, Weekly Preschool Director  
Steve Rose, Property Manager  
Annette Variano, Administrative Assistant

### Scan to Connect With Us:



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

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