# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

#### What is Advent?

The observance of Advent began in about the sixth century. Advent includes the four Sundays before Christmas Day and the inclusive weekdays. The word, ADVENT, consists of two Latin words: ad-venie, "to come to." Therefore, the message of Advent is that God in Christ is coming to the world. One of the most beautiful traditions of Advent is the lighting of the Advent wreath. The wreath is circular in shape to represent the eternity of God, without beginning or end. Evergreens are used to symbolize God's gift of life and growth and life to come. The candles, representing the four weeks of Advent, symbolize God's Son as the light of the world. Individual attributes (hope, faith, joy, love) are linked with the individual candles. Three of the candles are purple, representing royalty. One candle is rose-colored and is lit on the third Sunday and symbolizes joy. The fifth candle is white and larger and is placed in the center of the wreath to represent Christ and is therefore called the Christ Candle. We light this candle on Christmas Eve. The flame reminds us that Christ is the light of the world, the light which dispels all darkness.

#### JOINING FIRST BAPTIST

We receive new members in several ways. Those who have never publicly acknowledged Christ as Lord join by public profession of faith. Baptism is scheduled for a later date. Members of other Baptist congregations may transfer their membership to our congregation. We handle the details of contacting your current church. Members of other Christian faith traditions are invited to join by "statement of faith." Because other traditions vary in belief and practice, those joining by statement of faith are invited to speak with a minister before joining.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

There are several ways to financially support the ministries of First Baptist Church. You may place your offering in the offering plates during worship, mail in your contribution or give online through the church website or by using this QR code.



David Brooks Pastor

Keith A. Reaves Senior Associate/Minister of Worship

Tamara Tillman Smathers Minister of Education/Administration

Kristen Mathis Minister of Faith Development

Gwen Stephens Minister to Extended Family

Nick Georgian Minister to Students and Missions

Joan Hill, Organist Beverly Harris, Pianist

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

# CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE | 62ND ANNUAL CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Tonight's service begins at 5 p.m. and includes the reading of the Christmas story, carols, special music and a meditation from David Brooks. The service will be live-streamed on the church YouTube Channel and broadcast on Comcast Channel 44.

#### FAITH TALKS

Sunday, December 31 at 9:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Special guest speakers: Betty and Melvin Mosley, founders of Harmony Baptist Church in Summerville, Georgia. FBC member and historian Virginia Bolton help Stacie Marshall, Dirt Town Valley, Georgia, farm owner discover her family's connection to the Mosleys. Their story has been told through the movie, Her Name Was Hester. Visit Hester's Heritage Foundation at https://www.hestersheritage.org/

#### **UPPER ROOM DISCIPLINES**

The 2024 Disciplines are available. This daily devotional book is an excellent tool for those wishing to begin or deepen a devotional practice. Each day includes a Scripture to read, a short meditation and prayer. Copies may be picked up on the welcome desk near the elevator and outside the church office.

# WEEK AT A GLANCE ————

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

11:00 a.m. Worship

5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service | 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Carols by Candlelight

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

Church Office Closed

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

Church Office Closed

7:00 a.m. Students Depart for Winter Ski Retreat - Timberline Mountain, WV

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

FBC Serves Community Kitchen

#### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

FBC Serves Community Kitchen

6:00 p.m. Bridges Out of Poverty Class - Fellowship Hall & Community Room

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

FBC Serves Community Kitchen

9:00 p.m. Students Arrive from Winter Ski Retreat

For information on these and other activities see www.fbcrome.org or The Spire.

First Baptist Church, 100 East Fourth Avenue, Rome, GA 30161 Phone: 706.291.6850 Website: www.fbcrome.org



#### ROME, GEORGIA FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

**DECEMBER 24, 2023** 

11:00 A.M.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

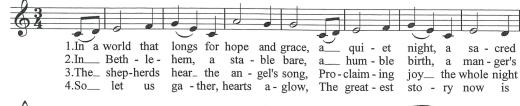
ORGAN/PIANO CALL TO WORSHIP "The Holly and the Ivy"...arr. Eleanor Whitsett

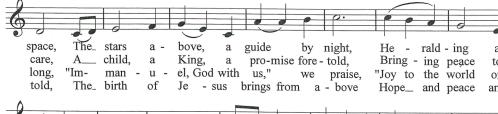
### WELCOME TO WORSHIP

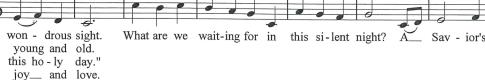
Keith A. Reaves

#### 2023 ADVENT HYMN

"What Are We Waiting For?" This hymn is written to the glory of God and in honor of the ministry staff of First Baptist Church.











#### LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

Danny and Ginger Alexander

Once God's plan was a mystery, hidden from our sight. Now God has disclosed what was kept secret for so very long; God has brought it out in the light. In the brighter light on this fourth Sunday in Advent, may we see more clearly the glory of God in Christ and sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever.

"With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens." (Psalm 89:1b-2)

The fourth Advent candle is lit.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** "What Are We Waiting For?" What are we waiting for in this silent night? A Savior's birth, a guiding light. Let us find our hope, let us make our peace, let us share the joy, let love increase.

## READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38

Laurie Brooks, reader

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

<sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>38</sup> 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

## **ADVENT DOXOLOGY...**Roger Lynn

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 – Immanuel. Amen. (Children ages four through fourth grade may depart for children's worship.)

#### MUSICAL OFFERING

Sanctuary Choir

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"...arr. Benjamin Harlan
(The text to this anthem may be found in Hymn 143.)

**MORNING PRAYER** (with the Lord's Prayer)

Tamara Tillman Smathers

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass 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.

SPECIAL MUSIC James Douglas

"Gesu Bambino"...Pietro Yon

SERMON Rev. Brooks

"Waiting on God's Favor"

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 139

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

PRAYER OF STEWARDSHIP

Nick Georgian

#### PIANO/ORGAN OFFERTORY

"Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming"...arr. Mark Hayes/Marvin Gaspard

Meditation Text:

For people with bodies, important things like love have to be embodied. That's all. God had to be embodied, or else people with bodies would never in a trillion years understand about love. Jane Vonnegut Yarmolinsky

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Rev. Georgian

AFFIRMATION OF PUBLIC DECISIONS

PASTORAL BLESSING

PASSING OF THE PEACE

#### HYMN OF COMMISSIONING

"What Are We Waiting For?"

What are we waiting for in this silent night?

A Savior's birth, a guiding light.

Let us find our hope, let us make our peace,

let us share the joy, let love increase.

ORGAN POSTLUDE

"Angels from the Realms of Glory...arr. Fred Bock

# CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

A CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

5:00 р.м.

The service will be broadcast live on Comcast Channel 44 and through the church Youtube Channel.

# WELCOME!

We are honored you are with us today! Please fill out this form if you are a guest or in need of prayer support and place it in the offering plate or hand it to a minister. We promise to use it only to contact you about our church.

CityState Cip Code  E-mail Marital StatusMarriedSingleWidow(er
AddressState  Zip Code  E-mail  Marital StatusMarriedSingleWidow(er
Zip Code E-mail Marital Status MarriedSingleWidow(er Telephone
MarriedSingleWidow(er Telephone
E-mail Marital Status MarriedSingleWidow(er Felephone
Marital Status MarriedSingleWidow(er Telephone
Telephone
TelephoneChildren at Home (Name/Age/Grade)
Children at Home (Name/Age/Grade)
I am new to Rome.
I am interested in knowing more
about First Baptist Church.
Please have a minister contact me.
I am interested in becoming a member of First Baptist Church.
Add me to the newsletter email list.
I am a guest of:
Please pray for:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God."