

Welcome to Worship

Ginter Park Baptist Church

Zoom Meeting ID: 804 359 2475 • 3401 Brook Road, Richmond VA • 804-359-2475

Fourth Sunday of Advent • December 21, 2025 • 10:30 AM

GATHERING & REFLECTING (10:20 AM)

During this time of reflection, we invite you to take a few moments to prepare yourself for worship. Take a few deep breaths and settle into the quiet. Center yourself through art by coloring the attached picture. Slip off your shoes and remember that you are on holy ground. No matter what this time looks like for you, your whole self is welcome in this space.

CHIMING THE TRINITY

Lisa Horn

CALL TO WORSHIP

Shawne Soper

*Responsive readings like this one are a part of worship. The congregation's part is in **bold**.*

Leader: In a world filled with fear and uncertainty, God chooses love.

People: Love that comes quietly. Love that trusts deeply. Love that shows up.

Leader: Like Joseph, we listen for God's voice and follow with faith. Like Woodstock, we discover that love does not need many words.

People: Sometimes love simply stays close, offers comfort, and flies beside us.

Leader: Today we welcome Emmanuel—God with us—love made present among ordinary people.

All: Let your love flow, O God, into our hearts, our homes, and our world. Amen.

INVOCATION PRAYER

HYMN No. 142

"People, Look East, the Time Is Near"

BESANÇON

Some of us stand while singing, and others don't. Please join us in song in whatever way you are comfortable.

LIGHTING THE FOURTH CANDLE - LOVE

The word "Advent" comes from an ancient Latin phrase meaning "until the coming." It is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming of the Christ-child. In this time for reflection, we take each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus to reflect on some themes that center us as we wait with eager expectation for the glory of God to be revealed. This Sunday, many across the globe center on "Love."

One: Into the world's tiresome, weary, and impatient ways, God will give us a sign.

Many: A miracle is about to break forth, a sign as deep as the grave and as high as heaven.

One: A young woman will give birth to a son and name him Immanuel, God with us.

Many: He will learn to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, reject evil and choose good.

One: Today we light the candle of love, for God's love is soon to be born.

Many: In love, we wait for God-With-Us.

RESPONSE No. 128

"One Candle Is Lit"

CRADLE SONG

Come, wander where lion and lamb gently play, where evil is banished and faith takes the day,
a babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes. One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS

Shawne Soper

Prayer requests are shared out loud with the gathered community. If you have a joy or a concern to share, please raise your hand to request the microphone

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (ALL)

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

HYMN

“Joseph Heard the Troubling News”
(*"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*)

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM

Joseph heard the troubling news: Mary was expecting!
What should he, a just man, do? He sought God's directing.
Joseph thought to send her home — leave her, without blaming;
Then an angel in a dream spoke of joy, proclaiming:

"Go, take Mary as your wife; Joseph, don't you fear it —
God has formed a precious life by the Holy Spirit!
Mary soon will bear a son; you shall name him Jesus.
When the prophet spoke of him, he said, "God is with us!"

God of love, we too may face times of doubt and trouble.
May we know your daily grace, even when we struggle.
Just as Joseph answered, "Yes!" with new dedication,
We rejoice, for we've been blessed by your incarnation.
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SCRIPTURE

[Matthew 1:18-25](#)

Anita Laffoon

One: This is the Word of God, for the people of God
Many: Thanks be to God

SERMON

“Let Your Love Flow”

Anita Laffoon

TIME OF REFLECTION & RESPONSE “‘What Child Is This’ with ‘Let Your Love Flow’”

Arr. Horn

ANNOUNCEMENTS & THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

HYMN No. 517

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

HYFRYDOL

CLOSING COMMISSION

One: Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming. We wait filled with hope,

Many: Knowing your light will shine in the darkness.

One: We wait anticipating your peace,

Many: Believing that one day it will fill our world.

One:: We wait with joy,

Many: Bubbling up in expectation of your birth.

One: : We wait embracing your love,

Many: May we reach out to share it with our neighbors.

One:: Lord we wait,

Many: Come soon and fill us with your life.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ is with you.

Many: And also with you.

****Our services are hybrid, meaning there are cameras in the worship space to allow those joining us via Zoom to fully participate. If you would rather not be on camera, we have marked the areas where our cameras can't see you.****



Are you visiting with us today? We'd love to get to know you better!

Scan the QR code to tell us more about you.

Announcements

Metro Richmond at Prayer

During the week of December 21, we pray for the families of Metropolitan Richmond: For an end to child abuse; for healthy relationships between children and their caregivers. For the care and protection of infants, children, and youth; for the intimate knowledge that each one is a beloved child of God.

Pray for our Ministry Partners

Side by Side is dedicated to creating supportive communities where Virginia's LGBTQ+ youth can define themselves, belong, and flourish. They provide support groups and counseling for youth, housing services for young adults, and support for parents and caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth in Richmond.

Advent/Christmas Calendar

- Dec 21st – Love
- Dec 24th – 5pm Christmas Eve service
- Dec 28th - Guest Preacher - Braxton Wade

Guest Speaker

Rev. Braxton Wade is a business leader and pastor in Richmond, VA. Braxton is a graduate of University of Richmond and Chicago Theological Seminary. Braxton has served in multiple pastoral roles across multiple churches and denominations. After years in multi-unit corporate leadership, he's returning to full-time ministry to pursue racial reconciliation and justice, spiritual formation, and the restoration of human kind. Braxton will be our guest preacher on December 28th!

Left Brain News

Left Brain has some exciting news - a property that we have been looking at has become available to rent, and we think it would make a great home for GPBC! The property will be available February 1st, so we need to let the owner know ASAP whether we are interested in renting or not.

To that end, we would like to have a Church Check-in on December 28th right after worship. Following that, we would like to have a called business meeting on January 4th right after worship.

I know this may feel rushed, but we want to be fair to the property owner - they are not putting the property on the market until they hear from us, and we don't want them to lose a potential renter while waiting for us. Also, Left Brain has been looking at this property for several months, and we are excited to present it to you!

Page Turners' Book Club

The book club is reading "The Correspondent" by Virginia Evans, and they will gather for discussion on January 18 at 4pm at the home of Dixie Leathers.

Day for All People

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy's annual Advocacy Day in partnership with Virginia Interfaith Power and Light is coming up! They bring hundreds of people of faith and goodwill from across Virginia to Richmond to engage in the legislative process. Join them in- person for inspirational presentations, informative workshops, and effective advocacy on **January 21, 2026**. Register on their website -

www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday morning Bible study group will not meet December 25 and January 1, 8, and 15. All are invited to join when the class resumes January 22, 2026 at 10 am at the Ashland location, 10981 Richardson Road.

Save the Date!

Our annual Chili Cook-off and Bingo night will be January 31st! Mark your calendars, and start preparing your favorite recipes!

Backpack Update

Our backpacks are being prepared at 10981 Richardson Rd, Ashland 23005. Dixie and Connie will continue as co-facilitators of the program. Contact one of them to volunteer. Don't forget to bring in your paper bags!

Worship isn't the same without you...

...and we'd love to have your help! We need volunteers to help on Sunday mornings by leading the Call to Worship and the Prayers of the People, and to facilitate the Zoom room. Contact Anita to sign up!

Hymn Texts

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People, Look East, the Time Is Near

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the rose, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest;
take away the love of sinning, alpha and omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

