



Keep Watch

**DECEMBER 15, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
WILSHIRE BAPTIST CHURCH**

Preparing for worship

As Christmas approaches, reminders to be joyful are everywhere. JOY is emblazoned on sweaters, ornaments and wrapping paper, urging us to feel this emotion.

This tinsel-covered joy feels out of reach for me this year. My heart is heavy with grief over systemic inequities, discrimination and the discouraging state of public discourse. I struggle to claim joy.

As our worship this morning reminds us, the other side of joy is fear. I'm doing pretty well holding on to fear. How about you? I'm well-versed, whether it's fear of failure, fear of what tragedy might befall my family or fear for the futures of my neighbors. How do I, how do we, find hope amid our fear to proclaim the good news of great joy to all?

I'm reminded that Advent joy isn't happiness or squeals and laughter. It's a choice — a deep and abiding choice. As author K.J. Ramsey observes, “joy is right on the outer edge of your longings.” It's a perspective that beckons us to reach beyond the visible, to see the light that

endures even in the darkness. The joy of Advent is the kind that doesn't dismiss the darkness but points us toward the light, encouraging us to trust in God's presence in the waiting. This echoes our call in Christ — we are, after all, the light of the world. Even the smallest flicker can guide us toward hope and joy.

Barbara Brown Taylor describes joy as “almost irreverent.” She writes, “Joy has never had very much to do with what is going on in the world at the time. The only condition for joy is the presence of God ... which means that it can erupt in a depressed economy, in the middle of a war, or in an intensive care waiting room ... it is a gift.” Joy transcends circumstances; it thrives in the presence of God.

This Advent, let us look for the light and choose joy — not as a denial of fear or sorrow, but as a declaration of God's enduring presence and love. In doing so, may we reflect that light into the world, inspiring others to move toward abiding joy with us.

—Abbey Adcox



4316 Abrams Road | Dallas, Texas 75214 | 214-452-3100 | wilshirebc.org

Building a Community of Faith Shaped by the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Partnered with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Member, Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists

December 15, 2024
11:00 a.m.
Third Sunday of Advent

Chiming of the Hour

We gather in community this morning to worship God.
To help center our focus in worship, please silence all electronic devices.

Welcome to Worshipers

Darren DeMent

Prelude

Appalachian Carol (I Wonder As I Wander)
Amy Lee, horn

Molly Ijames

+Processional Song

O Come, All Ye Faithful
No. 103

ADESTE FIDELES

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Linda and Ivan Martinez

Preparing for the Nativity

Hamilton Lee, June McNicholas, Everly Mitchell, Aaron Schultz, Sunny Schultz

+A Moment of Joy

Evelyn Carroum

Leader: Now the Lord who made you has this to say: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name and you are mine.”

All: We hear the one who calls us by name, but we are still so often afraid.

Leader: May the spirit of God move in this place: the spirit of faith, not fear; the spirit of looking ahead and not backward.

All: Lord, remind us again that you walk with us, whether we pass through the waters or walk through fire.

Leader: We will not fix our eyes on the former things but point our gaze toward the new miracles that God is working for us!

All: We will look ahead and be unafraid.

—From *Calling All Angels* by Erin Wathen

+All congregants are invited to stand in body or spirit.
Hearing devices are available in the Narthex and South Atrium.

+Congregational Response*Go, All Ye Faithful*

ADESTE FIDELES/text: R.G. Huff

Go, all ye faith - ful! Take the joy of Christ - mas! Car - ry the
 mes - sage far be - yond these walls. Hold for the Christ - light.
 Con - quer ev - ry dark - ness. Go forth, O church of Je - sus! Pro - claim the One who
 frees us! Speak peace! Reach out in mer - cy, in kind - ness and love.

Children's Moment

Julie Girards

Epistle Reading — Philippians 4:4-7

Mike Imhoof

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Offertory

Lo, How a Rose
 Carillon Ringers
 Ralph Manuel, director

Cathy Moklebust

+Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures — Zephaniah 3:14-20

Carolyn Murray

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; the LORD has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; the LORD will rejoice over you with gladness; God will renew you in God's love; the LORD will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival." I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear

reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
And for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

+Congregational Song

Angels We Have Heard on High
No. 125

GLORIA

Message

“The World Didn’t Give It”

Timothy Peoples

Anthem

O Come, Divine Messiah Michael McElroy/Joseph Joubert
Sanctuary Choir
Ariel Merivil, solo
Marques Garrett, guest conductor

O come, divine Messiah; the angels sing of your glorious birth.
The heavenly gates are open. O come reside on earth.

O come, divine Messiah, we long to see your blessed face.
Break the chains of our captives, descend, reveal your grace.

O Savior come, lowly your cradle be.
In manger born this blessed morn, hear angels sound your nativity.
O Lord, hear our heart’s offering. Joy to all is the gift you bring.
O come, O Savior, come. Dwell here on earth, O Lord, we pray.
Come from above, reveal your love, you are the light to show us the way.
O Son of God don’t delay. Bring us peace in our world’s disarray.
O come, O Savior, come. Emmanuel, O come.

In wisdom, in power, in honor, in glory, in mercy,
In truth and grace, Messiah come!

Prayers of the People

Maggie Morey

Silence

We pause in silence to reflect and to be attentive to the Spirit of God

The Lord's Prayer

**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 sins,
As we forgive those who sin 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.**

+Congregational Song

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
NO. 122

IN DULCI JUBILO

Sharing of Decisions

Timothy Peoples

Benediction

Timothy Peoples

Postlude

Improvisation on themes of the day

Jeff Brummel

String Quartet:

Mark Miller, violin; Luis Peña, violin;
Ute Miller, viola; Gayane Fullford, cello

The flowers today are given in honor of Monna Brown on the occasion of her 90th birthday by her children, Denise Thompson (Paul) and Alan Brown (Lisa); grandchildren, Taylor Phillips (Alex), Travis Thompson, Caroline, Adam (Katie) and Jake Brown; and great-granddaughter, Dottie Phillips.

Meet today's worship leaders

Evelyn Carroum is a junior at the University of Arkansas, where she is majoring in psychology with a minor in anthropology. She is a 2022 graduate of Lake Highlands High School, was active in Wilshire Student Ministry and has been a Cooking Camp volunteer. Evelyn came to Wilshire in 2017 with her mom, Sunny, and sister, Grace.

Marques L. A. Garrett is Associate Professor of Choral Studies at the University of North Texas. He is an accomplished vocalist and composer whose published works are performed by festival, honor, all-state, professional and collegiate choirs. He regularly serves as a choral clinician and guest conductor throughout the country.

Mike Imhoof and his wife, Linda, joined Wilshire in 1982 and are members of Compass Class. Mike is a deacon emeritus, volunteers with Friday Friends and sings in New Song Community Choir. Mike and Linda have two adult children, David and Karen, who were raised at Wilshire.

Amy Lee joined Wilshire in 2003. She is married to Thomas, and they are the parents of Hamilton, a second grader, and Eleanor, who is 3. Amy plays French horn in Wilshire Winds, directs the Kindergarten Choir and attends Odyssey Class. She works as manager of community outreach at Ryan, a tax services firm.

Linda and Ivan Martinez have been attending Wilshire since 2018. They are members of Compass Class and have been part of Wilshire's Puerto Rico mission team. Linda serves on the Baptism Ministry Team, the Hospitality Ministry Team and the Belong Team. Ivan is a deacon, serves on the Missions Committee and sings in Sanctuary Choir.

Carolyn Murray grew up at Wilshire. Her parents are Bob and Charlene Law. Carolyn is mother to an adult son, Mason, who lives in Australia, and Lucy Kate, a sophomore at Santa Clara University. As Wilshire's coordinator of congregational life, Carolyn works to welcome guests and engage members in the life of the church. She directs Journey Class and serves as staff liaison to MomCo and the Committee on Committees.



We're glad you're here. If you're a guest today and would like to let us know, please scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to access our online response card. You can also scan the code to make a financial contribution or submit a prayer request. Response cards and offering envelopes are available in the pew racks and can be placed in the offering plate or offering boxes.

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Staff contacts

Phone numbers: 214-452- followed by extension shown below. **Email addresses:** first letter of first name and full last name followed by @wilshirebc.org (example: tpeoples@wilshirebc.org). Staff members with phone extensions have Wilshire email addresses.

Communications

- Mark McKenzie, Communications Director (3169)

Congregational Care

- Barbara Clayton, Pastoral Care Assistant (3125)
- Linda Garner, Parish Nurse (3151)
- Carolyn Murray, Coordinator of Congregational Life (3170)
- Heather Mustain, Associate Pastor (3110)

Early Childhood Learning Center

- Carole McClung, ECLC Administrative Assistant (3115)
- Ramona Randle, ECLC Director (3140)

Finance

- Lori Gooden, Director of Finance (3131)

Food Services

- Haley Garcia, Food Service Director (3117)
- Luke Munion, Food Service Staff
- Gillian Tinsley, Food Service Staff
- Wilfredo Velasquez-Cruz, Food Service Staff

Hospitality and Facilities

- Maricela Escutia, Facilities Supervisor
- Holly Irvin, Director of Hospitality (3150)
- Daniel Latin, Facilities
- Leticia Medina, Facilities
- Rachel Oney, Receptionist (3165)
- Kevin Sierra, Facilities
- Leticia Vega, Facilities

Missions and Advocacy

- Abbey Adcox, Missions and Advocacy Coordinator (3127)
- Heather Mustain, Associate Pastor (3110)

Music and Worship

- Jeff Brummel, Associate Minister of Music/Organist (3122)
- Carol Cabaniss, Music and Worship Coordinator (3106)
- Shana Gaines, Wilshire Winds Director (3163)
- Ralph Manuel, Handbell Coordinator (3161)
- Candy McComb, Children's Choir Coordinator (3124)
- Ariel Merivil, Minister of Music (3135)

Operations and Technology

- Rene Altamirano, Maintenance Technician
- Bryant Greer, Building Operations Manager (3146)
- Jim Tapley, Audio and Video Coordinator

Pathways to Ministry

- Debby Burton, Pathways to Ministry Assistant (3158)
- Charlie Fuller, Pathways to Ministry Director and Coach in Residence (3123)
- George Mason, Senior Pastor Emeritus and Pathways to Ministry Alumni Director (3133)
- Georgia McKee, Pastoral Resident (3152)
- Maggie Morey, Pastoral Resident (3153)

Senior Pastor

- Chelsea Hopkins, Executive Assistant (3132)
- Geri McKenzie, Executive Director of Administration (3159)
- Timothy Peoples, Senior Pastor (3132)

Spiritual Formation

- Kelly Akins, Minister to Preschoolers (3139)
- Becky Bridges, Spiritual Formation Coordinator (3130)
- Darren DeMent, Associate Pastor (3102)
- Julie Girards, Minister to Children (3104)
- Katie Murray, Minister to Senior Adults (3129)
- Barbara Peterson, Librarian (3114)

Tapestry



News & Announcements
December 15, 2024

Christmas Eve Services

TUESDAY, DEC. 24 | 4 & 11 P.M.



Two services on Christmas Eve

Our 4 p.m. family service is suitable for all ages, while our 11 p.m. service is more liturgical, with robed ministers and celebration of the Lord's Supper. Both will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel. Childcare will not be offered for either service.

Invite for youth alumni

Youth Choir will sing for the 11 p.m. Christmas Eve service, and Youth Choir alumni of all ages are invited to join in. Meet in Choral Hall at 10:20 for coffee, a cookie and a quick rehearsal.

Advent playlist

The publishers of *Calling All Angels*, the book we're studying during Advent, have created an Advent playlist on the digital music service Spotify. Find the link at [wilshirebc.org/advent](https://www.wilshirebc.org/advent) or search Spotify for "Advent Angels" from Westminster John Knox Press.

Sign up kids to build Nativity

Children are invited to help build the Sanctuary Nativity scene by carrying elements to the chancel during worship each week until it is complete at the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Sign up at [wilshirebc.org/nativity](https://www.wilshirebc.org/nativity).

Tree of Remembrance

Help decorate Wilshire's Tree of Hope and Remembrance in the South Lobby by writing the name of a loved one as a memorial or your name as a survivor of cancer or another disease. Blank ornaments and markers are provided at the tree, which is decorated with bracelets representing different forms of cancer. Hang your ornament on the tree anytime and feel free to take it home close to Christmas for your own tree.



Sundays: Worship at 11 a.m. Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 a.m. Our service livestreams at youtube.com/wilshirebaptist and at [wilshirebc.org/worship/livestream](https://www.wilshirebc.org/worship/livestream). Keep up with Wilshire by subscribing to our YouTube channel and following us on Facebook and Instagram.

New members

Melissa and Sean Henry with Ananda and Alden.

Condolences to

Mary Ann Hill on the death of her husband, Doug Hill, Dec. 10. The Hills are former longtime members of Wilshire.

Advent book study continues

Join us this season as we read *Calling All Angels: an Advent Study of Fearlessness and Strength* by Erin Wathen. The book examines four angelic encounters that began with the same refrain, “do not be afraid,” and challenges readers to apply this timeless message to our lives today. The book is available from major book retailers.

■ On Sundays from 9 to 9:45 a.m., Darren DeMent and Katie Murray are leading a **discussion group** on the book in Room 1205-G.

■ A **family study guide** is available for parents to use with children. Pick up a copy in the main office or near the north entrance, or download it at wilshirebc.org/advent.

Library help needed



The installation of the Library’s new shelving is complete, and it’s time to bring back the books. Volunteers are needed in the mornings this week, Dec. 16–20, so let Librarian Barbara Peterson (bpeterson@wilshirebc.org) know if you can help.

Wednesday nights on break

Wednesday Night Live is on a break for the holidays and will resume Jan. 8. Sanctuary Choir will rehearse on Wednesday, Dec. 18.



Wednesday, Dec. 18

All are invited the first and third Wednesdays every month for lunch (\$10 ea.) and Bible study. On Dec. 18, Associate Pastor Darren DeMent will teach on 2 Samuel 13–24. This will be the final Lunch & Learn of 2024. Lunch & Learn will resume Jan. 15 after a holiday break.

Dec. 29: worship only

Sunday School classes will not meet on Sunday, Dec. 29. Worship will be held as usual at 11 a.m.

Holiday closures

■ The church building will be closed and staff members on break from Tuesday, Dec. 24, through Thursday, Jan. 2. On Friday, Jan. 3, staffers will return to work but the building will remain closed.

■ If you have an urgent pastoral need over the break, contact Senior Pastor Timothy Peoples at 214-452-3171 or tpeoples@wilshirebc.org.

■ The Columbarium will be open Monday, Dec. 23, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 24, 3–6 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 29, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Year-end giving

■ While the church office will be closed starting Dec. 24, checks can be dropped into the secure black **mailbox** accessible from the south parking lot. Checks in the mailbox will be retrieved in time to count as 2024 giving.

■ Checks sent in the **mail** need to be post-marked by Dec. 31.

■ **Online gifts** can be made before midnight on Dec. 31.

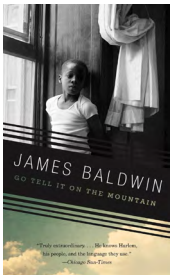
■ **Stock gifts** must arrive in Wilshire's Fidelity account no later than Dec. 30. Email Lori Gooden at lgooden@wilshirebc.org for account information and to let her know about the gift.

Women of Wilshire Book Clubs

■ **Brown Bag Book Club** | Jan. 9 | Noon | 1205-L | *The First Ladies* by Marie Benedict. Contact: Carolyn Murray (cmurray@wilshirebc.org)

■ **Tuesday Evening Book Club** | Jan. 14 | 6:30 p.m. | Parlor | *James* by Percival Everett. Contact: Debby Burton (dburton@wilshirebc.org)

Men's Book Club meets Jan. 21

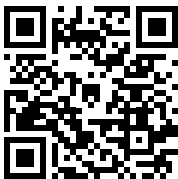


Wilshire's Men's Book Club will discuss James Baldwin's novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* on Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 7 p.m. in the Parlor. The group meets the third Tuesday each month but will not meet in December 2024. Contact: Scott Spreier (swspreier@gmail.com) or

Mike Meripolski (meripolski@att.net).

Rental assistance program

Wilshire's rental and utility assistance program is looking for more volunteers to meet



with those who apply for assistance. Training will be held in January. Email Associate Pastor Heather Mustain (hmustain@wilshirebc.org) or scan the QR code.

WILSHIRE ADVENTURERS

SEDONA'S RED ROCK COUNTRY & THE GRAND CANYON

SEPT. 28–OCT. 4, 2025

Space is limited! For early access to registration, express your interest by Dec. 20 at wilshirebc.org/adventurers-trip





CELEBRATION OF THE GREEN

Wilshire's choral and instrumental groups performed at the annual Celebration of the Green last Sunday night, Dec. 8. In addition to music, the program brought the Christmas story to life through readings reflective of the theme, *Comfort! Comfort, Now My People! Tell of Peace*. If you missed it, you can watch it on our YouTube channel.



Help others as a Stephen Minister

BY MICKI LACKER, STEPHEN LEADER

Wilshire's Stephen Ministry program is calling for applicants for the next Stephen Minister training session, which starts in January and will meet weekly on Tuesday evenings through May. Our training covers a broad spectrum of useful and healthy topics that prepare the Stephen Minister with skills to work with others in need of support. As a secondary benefit, this type of training serves other work in church ministry, family relationships and life in general. In fact, many present and past Stephen Ministers have found the training empowering. During my training, I practiced the strategies and skills I was learning on my friends and family. Most of this was helpful (if not entertaining), and I believe I'm a better wife, mom, grandmother and friend.

What is this ministry about? Stephen Ministers are trained lay ministers led by seasoned Stephen Leaders and our ministerial staff. Stephen Ministers are matched to work one-on-one in a confidential way with those who are hurting and have asked to receive this benefit. Care recipients may have faced the loss of a loved one, received a diagnosis, lost a job or may be navigating through a stressful time. Stephen Ministers provide a compassionate, trustworthy, faithful presence during their storm.

Wilshire members who are attracted to Stephen Ministry tend to be gifted with mercy and love and typically prefer to listen, encourage and faithfully walk alongside and build up others. If this sounds like you or someone you know, contact one of our Stephen Leaders: Debbie Meripolski, Tim Morgan, Gail Brookshire, Linda Garner (214-452-3151) or me (214-676-2878). You can learn more and find a Stephen Minister application at wilshirebc.org/stephen-ministry.

Someone to talk with.

If you're facing a life challenge and would like to have a spiritual friend to walk alongside you for a season of healing, perhaps you would benefit from a Stephen Minister. Stephen Ministry pairs trained lay people with those in need of Christian companionship during times of crisis. Reach out using our dedicated email address, stephenministry@wilshirebc.org, or call 214-452-3176.

stephen
MINISTRY.

MISSIONS & CHRISTIAN ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

ADVOCACY

ACTION

GROUPS

The 89th Texas Legislature and 119th U.S. Congress convene in January.

Consider joining an Advocacy Action Group to receive educational resources and action alerts regarding local, state and national issues.



THANK YOU FOR GIVING

Your gifts are changing lives inside and outside our walls. Here are some ways to make a financial contribution to Wilshire.

ONLINE. Set up a recurring or one-time gift charged to your debit or credit card or as an ACH from your checking account. Get started at wilshirebc.org/give.

REALM CONNECT APP. Easily make gifts and see past giving on your mobile device. Available at your device's app store. Find download links at wilshirebc.org/realms.

AUTOMATIC BANK PAY. Visit your bank's website and set up Wilshire as a payee. The bank will send the church a check.

MAIL. Send to Finance Director Lori Gooden's attention at Wilshire.

TEXT. Text WILSHIRE and a dollar amount (ex: WILSHIRE 50) to 73256.

DONATE STOCKS. Contact Lori to learn how to donate appreciated stocks.

FROM YOUR IRA. For those over 70.5 years old, tax-free IRA gifts offer a financial benefit and may reduce future tax burdens.



Scan code with your smartphone camera to make an electronic contribution.

At Wilshire, we use a one-fund approach to giving called the Unified Budget. Your gifts support the basic mission, ministry and operations of the church. Once the Unified Budget is fulfilled, gifts overflow into visionary aspects of our mission.

This Week

Sunday, Dec. 15

- Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.
- Building and Grounds Committee, 1205-G, Noon

Monday, Dec. 16

- Wilshire Winds Christmas Party, Hampton home, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 17

- New Song Christmas Luncheon, Community Hall, 11:30 a.m.
- Wilkinson Center Pantry Assistants, Noon

Wednesday, Dec. 18

- Lunch & Learn, Community Hall, 11:30 a.m.
- Sanctuary Choir, Choral Hall, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 21

- Spencer Mihm Memorial Service, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 22

- Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 24

- Christmas Eve Family Service, Sanctuary, 4 p.m.
- Christmas Eve Liturgical Service, Sanctuary, 11 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 29

- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.

Monna Brown

Hometown: Lewisville
Present City: Dallas

Tell us about your family.

I was the youngest girl in a family of eight. I married A.D. Brown in 1958, and we were married until his death in 2012. I have two adult children, Denise and Alan, five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

What brought you to Wilshire and when?

A.D. and I were newly married and bought our first home near the church. We visited and immediately felt at home. The people and staff were warm and inviting.

How have you served at Wilshire?

There are very few committees that I have not served on over the years. A.D. and I served together as directors in our adult Sunday School class for many years, and A.D. was a deacon. In the mid-70s Bruce McIver asked me to begin our homebound ministry. I launched the ministry to honor my parents, who I cared for as they aged and had died a few years before. We began with about 60 members, visiting them in their homes, and we served the Lord's Supper to them. In the mid-80s I became involved in the bus ministry, providing transportation for those who were unable to get to the church. To this day I am still passionate about this ministry and serve on the home-visitation ministry team.

What have you learned through your volunteerism?

Everyone has needs. Some are obvious, but many are not. Our job as members of the body



of Christ is to show the Lord's love through acts of service. It is important to know the spiritual gifts that the Lord has given us and use them. As a young woman I learned so much from those older than me. As I have grown older, I have leaned on those lessons. When I get discouraged,

I pick myself up by doing something for someone else. It puts everything in perspective and brings me joy.

What has been your greatest reward?

My greatest reward is knowing that my children, their spouses, my grandchildren (and their spouses) have professed a personal faith in Jesus Christ. There is nothing better.

What would you tell others about Wilshire?

Wilshire is my home. I think of my children's baptisms, my daughter's wedding, and my husband's funeral — all at Wilshire. Through this church community I have made precious lifelong friendships that have carried me through my life. The pastors I have known — Bruce McIver, George Mason and Timothy Peoples — have all cared deeply for the members of this church and have encouraged us to grow while nurturing our faith.

■ *Monna will celebrate her 90th birthday on Dec. 29. Join us in wishing her a happy birthday!*

End of year need: \$758,810

One Wednesday night not long ago, I walked down the stairs, and it just seemed quiet. The kiddos were having their usual fun, but something was missing. I walked around Community Hall and even led Bible Study trying to figure out why.

The next Sunday, it hit me. Wilshire Winds was playing beautifully, and Shana was directing like nobody's business! I looked over the group and saw the usual players and even a couple of new members. It was then tears began to roll down my face as I noticed George Gagliardi wasn't there — just as he wasn't at the piano on Wednesday.

It's been a little quiet without our friend around. A composer and musician, George played and sang many of his songs here at Wilshire. He was involved in the Dallas music scene, and as I learned from his obituary, gospel singer Cynthia Clawson recorded many of George's songs, including "Words and Music," nominated for a Dove Award, and "My Finest Hour," the title track from a Grammy-nominated album. George spent 12 years working with the Spotlight Players program for adults with disabilities at Highland Park United Methodist Church, helping them write songs and stage an original musical annually.

Watch this space each week as we decorate the tree to show our progress closing the gap between our 2024 budget and actual giving.



This past year George and I had lunch together, and he told me one of his greatest joys was getting to play on Wednesday nights for all those kids and adults. It seems it was not just a balm for our soul, but even his.

Such a legacy.

On All Saints Day we read the names of those who have passed in the last year. Like George, we could tell of each of their amazing legacies and ways they contributed their heart to Wilshire. Just think about the amazing siblings in Christ who have helped form us and guide us into the love of Christ and the formation of community.

Now I want you to think about

how your legacy and generosity is shaping another. Yes, this is a note about giving, and I realize the focus is on financial giving. Please believe me when I say that your financial giving can never replace your presence. We need all aspects of giving — time, money, service and actions — to continue the work of bringing the kingdom of God here on earth. As you and your family prayerfully consider your giving, we want to thank you for your generosity and invite you to continue the work of building God's bright future for Wilshire Baptist Church and our world. —*Timothy Peoples*

■ For more about giving, visit wilshirebc.org/give or see p. 14.