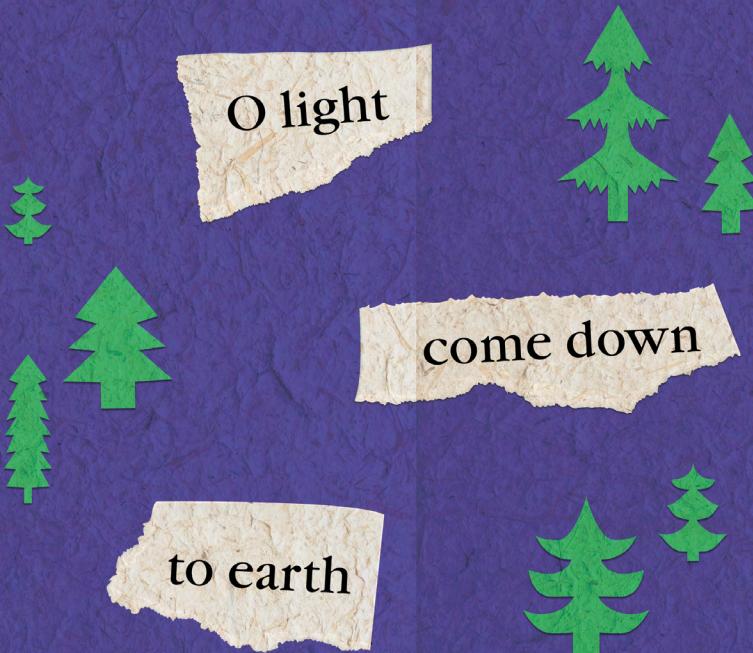


O light

come down

to earth



December 21, 2025 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

Wilshire Baptist Church

Preparing for worship

Christmas is upon us! The decorations are up, the lights twinkling and the music playing — magnificently here at Wilshire.

But for me, something — someone — is missing.

The Son of God.

Personally, I've only caught fleeting glimpses of Christ this supposedly holiest time of the year.

It's not the usual fog of consumerism that rolls in during December, obscuring his presence. No, it's a darker, more sinister apparition — an unholy atmosphere of anxiety, fear and anger that sometimes approaches hate.

I can't escape it. It envelops me the first thing in the morning when I open my iPhone or watch the news. It intrudes when I'm visiting with friends and family. It even pops up uninvited in Sunday School.

We live in disturbing times. Mass shootings like the tragedies of the past week, wars and rumors of war, our democracy in turmoil, global warming, social media and the digital gods of AI. The list goes on.

Like many others, I often find myself despising those in power, including The One Who Shall Not Be Named, and no, I'm not speaking of Lord Voldemort. As a choleric Christian snob, I silently ridicule fellow believers whose perspective on faith is far different from mine.

Jesus understood such behavior, but he certainly didn't approve it. As he said in today's Gospel reading: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

For someone who can't maintain an exercise routine for more than a week, perfection is a pipe dream. But I understand his point, and it's one worth striving for. (Note: If you're perfect, you can stop reading. I'll try to still love you, but it will be hard.)

If we are to find joy and love in this holy season, we must replace our vilifying and finger pointing with understanding and empathy. We must listen more and argue less.

We must, as Jesus did, speak truth to power. We must protest, volunteer and voice our concerns. We must do what we can to protect the immigrants. We must help the poor, the homeless and the "invisible others" in our community. If necessary, we must even be willing to do our own version of Jesus' table-turning temple tantrum to thwart evil.

To truly experience love and joy this Christmas, we must do everything in our power to create a world of love and joy for all of God's children.

What better gift can we give the Birthday Boy?
—Scott Spreier



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

Building a Community of Faith Shaped by the Spirit of Jesus Christ
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship | Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists

We acknowledge that this land where we gather once held the sacred voices of Indigenous peoples and bore the suffering of the enslaved.

On the cover: Advent art by Wilshire member Abi Hrbacek.

Sunday, December 21, 2025
11:00 a.m.
Fourth 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

Jordann McMahan

Prelude

Arise, Shine, Thy Light Has Come
Carillon Ringers
Ralph Manuel, director

Kevin McChesney

Preparing for the Nativity

Bly Mustain, Jimmie Mustain

+Processional Song

O Come, All Ye Faithful
No. 103

ADESTE FIDELES/arr. Willcocks

Lighting the Candle of Love

Dietrich, Sarah, Logan and Brennen Knabe

+A Moment of Love

One: We turn our hearts toward the One who is Love.

All: Because God is love, we are never left to wander alone.

One: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love as we remember and light the flames of hope, peace and joy.

All: May this candle remind us of the vastness and closeness of love everlasting.

One: May love rise into the shadows of this world,

All: Into the shadows of hatred, despair, grief and pain.

One: Help us move toward love in our words and actions,

All: Caring for all we encounter better each day.

One: As the candle of love steadies, we are invited into the fullness of love and light as we call out:

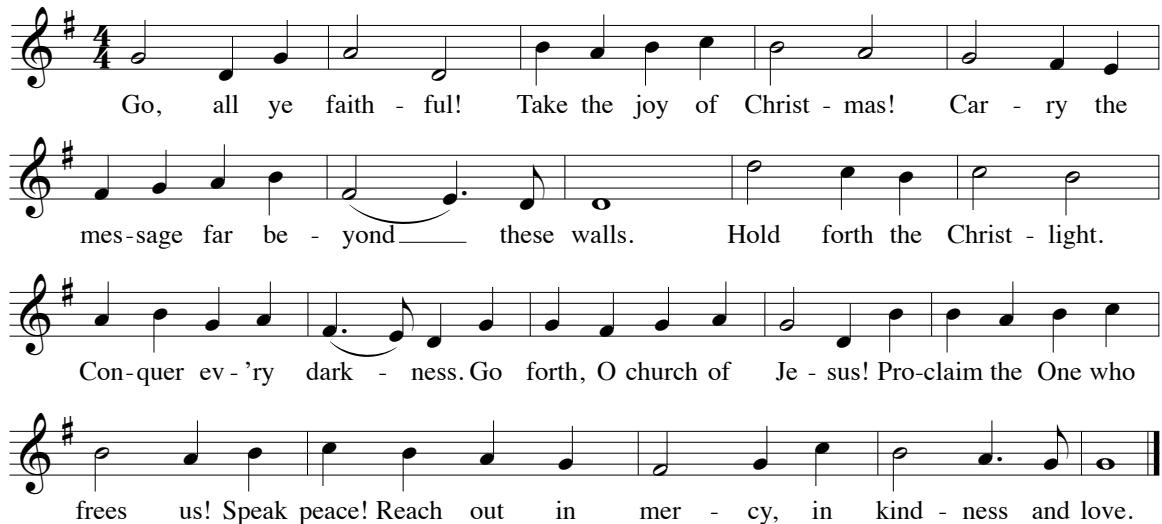
All: O Light come down to earth, be praised!

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

+Response in Song

Go, All Ye Faithful

R.G. Huff



Go, all ye faithful! Take the joy of Christ - mas! Car - ry the mes - sage far be - yond these walls. Hold forth 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.

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures — Isaiah 7:10-16

Isabella Campos

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Offertory

What Child Is This

arr. Brenda Austin

Carillon Ringers

+Gospel Reading — Matthew 5:14-16, 43-48

Chris Hines

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the

same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

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

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
No. 105

ES IST EIN ROS'/arr. Brummel

Message

“Light and Love”

Timothy Peoples

Anthem

Love Came Down at Christmas
Sanctuary Choir

Howard Helvey

Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas:
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead, love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.

Prayers of the People

Georgia McKee

Prayer Through Music

In the Bleak Midwinter — arr. Michael Tyree
String Quartet

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.

Prayer Through Music

+Congregational Song

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN/arr. Willcocks

No. 127

Sharing of Decisions

Timothy Peoples

Closing Voluntary

Brightest and Best
Sanctuary Choir

Shawn Kirchner

Hail the blessed morn, see the great Mediator
Down from the regions of glory descend!
Shepherds go worship the babe in the manger,
Lo, for his guard the bright angels attend.

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star in the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore him in slumber reclining.
Maker, and Monarch, and Savior of all.

Shall we not yield him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountains and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?

Instrumentalists

Violin: Mark Miller, Andres Bravo; Viola: Ute Miller

Cello: Gayane Fullford; Trumpet: James Sims, Brian Walker

Meet today's worship leaders

Isabella Campos grew up at Wilshire and is now in her third year studying politics and geography at University College in Dublin, Ireland. Her father is Rob Campos, and her siblings are Marco, Max, Jude, Ally and Mary. Other family at Wilshire includes aunt and uncle Sarah and Price Tinsley and cousins Anabelle and Gillian Tinsley.

Chris Hines came to Wilshire in August, when his wife, Amanda, started a two-year term here as a pastoral resident. Chris manages inside sales and recruiting for Ideal Impact, an organization working to put \$10 billion back into education and ministries in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. He and Amanda live on Resident Row with their 5-year-old corgi, Tater Tot.

Sarah and Dietrich Knabe have been attending Wilshire since 2021 and are members of Genesis Class. Their two sons are **Logan**, a senior at Richardson High School, and **Brennan**, a sophomore at Lake Highlands High School. Logan and Brennan are active in Wilshire Student Ministry, and Sarah serves on the Finance Committee.



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.

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)
- Katie Murray, Minister of Pastoral Care and to Senior Adults (3129)

Finance

- Shaffon Alexander, Director of Finance (3131)

Food Services

- Haley Garcia, Food Service Director (3117)
- Luke Munion, Prep Cook
- Wilfredo Velasquez-Cruz, Steward

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)
- Amanda Hines, Pastoral Resident (3154)
- George Mason, Senior Pastor Emeritus and Pathways to Ministry Alumni Director (3133)
- Georgia McKee, Pastoral Resident (3152)
- Jordann McMahan, Pastoral Resident (3155)
- Maggie Morey, Pastoral Resident (3153)

Senior Pastor

- Chelsea Hopkins, Executive Assistant (3132)
- Timothy Peoples, Senior Pastor (3132)

Spiritual Formation

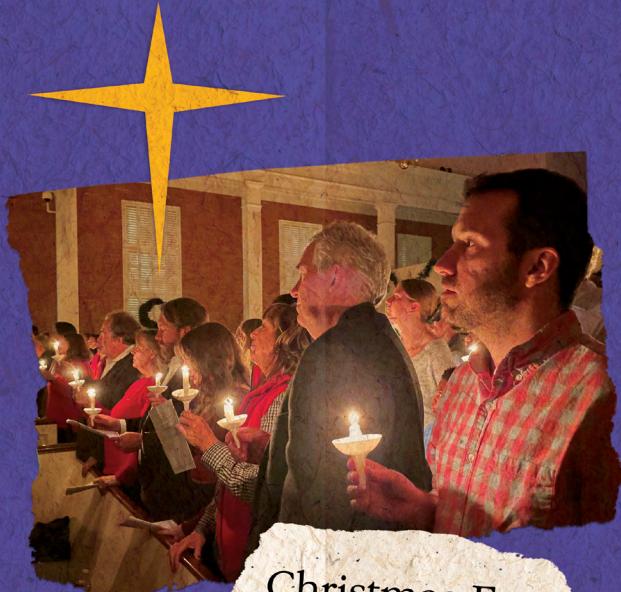
- Kelly Akins, Minister to Preschoolers (3139)
- Darren DeMent, Associate Pastor (3102)
- Julie Girards, Minister to Children (3104)
- Carole McClung, Spiritual Formation Ministry Assistant (3130)
- Katie Murray, Minister of Pastoral Care and to Senior Adults (3129)
- Barbara Peterson, Librarian (3114)

Tapestry



Wilshire
BAPTIST CHURCH

News & Announcements
December 21, 2025



Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve at Wilshire

Wednesday, Dec. 24

- **4 p.m.** | Family-friendly service suitable for all ages.
- **11 p.m.** | Liturgical service with Lord's Supper.
- Both services will include candle lighting and a message from Senior Pastor Timothy Peoples, and both will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel. No childcare.

Youth Choir alums wanted for 11 p.m. Christmas Eve

Wilshire Youth Choir alumni of all ages are invited to sing with the current group for the 11 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. Come to Choral Hall at 10 for cider and treats followed by a rehearsal from 10:15 to 10:45. The group will sing one anthem and exit the loft early in the service.



Sundays: Chapel Worship, 9 a.m. Sanctuary Worship, 11 a.m. Sunday School for all ages, 9:45 a.m. Our 11 a.m. service livestreams at youtube.com/wilshirebaptist. Keep up with Wilshire by subscribing to our YouTube channel and following us on Facebook and Instagram.

New members

Natalie and Barry Preston
Curtis Stewart

Dec. 28: 11 a.m. worship only

There will be no Sunday School or 9 a.m. worship on Sunday, Dec. 28. Our only gathering will be for 11 a.m. worship in the Sanctuary.

Holiday closures

- The building will be closed and staff on vacation from Thursday, Dec. 25, through Thursday, Jan. 1. On Friday, Jan. 2, staff 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 Christmas Eve, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 28, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m., returning to regular hours, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., on Friday, Jan. 2.

Year-end giving

- While the church office will be closed starting Dec. 25, 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 2025 giving.
- Mailed checks must be postmarked by Dec. 31.
- Online gifts can be made before midnight on Dec. 31.
- Stock gifts must arrive in Wilshire's Fidelity account by Dec. 30. Email Shaffon Alexander at salexander@wilshirebc.org for account information and to let her know about the gift.

Wednesdays on break

- **Wednesday Night Live** dinner and faith formation programming will resume Jan. 7 after a break for the holidays.
- The first **Lunch & Learn** of 2026 will be held Jan. 7. All are invited to Community Hall the first and third Wednesdays every month at 11:30 a.m. for a buffet lunch (\$10) followed by Bible study.



Vespers covered all emotions

Wilshire's Songwriter Vespers: Holiday Edition drew about 70 people to Choral Hall last Sunday. The unique program explored the full range of holiday emotions — from joy and peace to resignation and regret — through the work of so-called “secular” songwriters, along with Scripture readings and reflections.

Advent art show ends Jan. 4



Light is the common theme of the 16 works by artist Sandra Bowden on display through Jan. 4 in the South Lobby. Each piece in *Illuminations* is embellished with gold leafing, an adornment characteristic of many medieval texts. Visit whenever the building is open.

Giving Tree by the numbers

Thanks to your participation in our Giving Tree, Wilshire collected 135 gifts, 104 of which went to children of families helped by our own Rental and Utility Assistance Program. Gateway of Grace clients will receive 18 gifts, and 13 gift cards were given toward Wilshire's benevolence ministry.

Columbarium prices to rise Jan. 1

Since its 2010 dedication, Wilshire's Columbarium has become the resting place for many Wilshire members and their loved ones. Over the years, we have kept prices steady, but with rising maintenance costs and the need to hire a new engraver, we are raising the price of niches and remembrance markers. Prices will change as follows: a single niche, now \$1,500, will cost \$1,750; a double niche, now \$3,000, will cost \$3,500; a remembrance marker, now \$500, will cost \$750. New prices will take effect Jan. 1. To purchase a niche or marker at the current price, please contact Chelsea Hopkins (chopkins@wilshirebc.org) by Dec. 24.

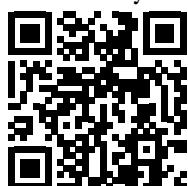
Save the date for Family Day of Service with Rise Against Hunger

Join us Monday, Jan. 19, the MLK Day holiday, as we partner with Rise Against Hunger to pack healthy meals for those in need from 10 a.m. to noon in Community Hall. All ages are welcome. There are opportunities to serve while seated and opportunities for preschoolers and elementary age children to serve. A few volunteers are needed to help set up before and clean up after the event. All volunteers will need to register and complete a waiver at events.riseagainsthunger.org/wilshirebaptist2026.

Rental Assistance Program

Wilshire's Rental and Utility Assistance Program will open for 2026 in late January. If you are interested in serving as an intake volunteer — whether you are new or returning — please

let us know by scanning the QR code and completing our online form. Plan to join us for orientation on Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 6 p.m. in Room 1205-L.



Meredith Miller

Author, speaker, expert on faith formation in children



Meredith Miller

is a pastor and parent who helps grownups, and the kids they love, engage with faith in ways that are life-giving, fun and a fit for their real lives.

Sunday, Jan. 11

9:45 a.m.: Adult Sunday School, McIver Chapel

Noon: Lunch Talk with Q&A, Community Hall

REGISTER FOR LUNCH
wilshirebc.org/events/meredith-miller



Someone to talk with.

If you are 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 individuals in need of Christian companionship during times of life crisis. Wilshire has trained Stephen Ministers available.

To learn more about receiving confidential care from a Stephen Minister, please reach out using our dedicated email address, stephenministry@wilshirebc.org, or call 214-452-3176.

stephen
MINISTRY

Jan. 10 Advocacy event

Immigration, religious freedom and reproductive justice are some of the topics to be covered at Advocacy for Action: Responding to the Texas Legislature, a workshop presented by Texas Impact on Saturday, Jan. 10. The event at Northaven United Methodist Church will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn more and register by Jan. 2 at northaven.org/events.

Wilshire Welcome meets Jan. 11

Wilshire Welcome, a one-hour session designed to help guests and new members learn what Wilshire is all about, will meet Sunday, Jan. 11, at 9:45 a.m. in the Prayer Room (Room 1100B) near McIver Chapel. Contact: Carolyn Murray (cmurray@wilshirebc.org)

Annual Church Conference

Make plans to attend our annual church conference in Community Hall after 11 a.m. worship on Sunday, Jan. 18. We'll adopt a budget, elect deacons and committees and hear updates about the church. Lunch will be provided.

**WILSHIRE ►
ADVENTURERS**

Adventurers movie on Jan. 20

The Wilshire Adventurers will enjoy an afternoon movie on Tuesday, Jan. 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. in Community Hall. This free event includes popcorn, cookies, drinks and a screening of *The River of No Return*, starring Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum. Adventurers is a fellowship group for anyone 60 and up.

Men's Book Club

The Men's Book Club will meet Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. in the Parlor to discuss *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez. Contact: Scott Spreier (swspreier@gmail.com) or Mike Meripolski (meripolski@att.net)

Monthly service opportunities

- A Wilshire group serves the fourth Friday morning each month at the **Vickery Meadow Youth Development Foundation Mobile Food Pantry**. Contact: Charlie Estee (ceseedallas@gmail.com)
- Wilshire volunteers serve as food pantry assistants at the **Wilkinson Center** the third Tuesday afternoon each month. Contact: Cindy Estee (cesteedallas@aol.com)
- Wilshire volunteers serve lunch at the **Stewpot** the second Thursday every month. Contact: David Cossum (dc@cossum.com)



WOMEN OF WILSHIRE

Women of Wilshire

- **Brown Bag Book Club** | Thursday, Jan. 8 | Noon | 1205-L | *We All Live Here* by Jojo Moyes. Contact: Carolyn Murray (cmurray@wilshirebc.org)

- **Tuesday Evening Book Club** | Jan. 13 | 6:30 p.m. | Parlor | *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. Contact: Debby Burton (debbyb0929@gmail.com)

- **WOW's 2026 retreat** will be held Feb. 20–22 at the Prothro Retreat Center at Lake Texoma. Register at wilshirebc.org/events/wow-retreat-2026.



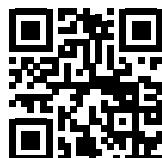
Save the dates

Saturday, June 13, 2026

4:45–7:30 p.m. | The church will be open for you to come, see and gather.
6 p.m. | Reflections and remembrances in the Sanctuary.

Sunday, June 14, 2026

11 a.m. | 75-Minute Worship Celebration.



To get involved: Scan code or visit wilshirebc.org/75.

This Week

Sunday, Dec. 21

- Art Exhibit: *Illuminations*, South Lobby, through Jan. 4
- Worship, McIver Chapel, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- Advent Sunday School Series, McIver Chapel, 9:45 a.m.
- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.
- WSM White Elephant Christmas Party, Youth Center, noon

Wednesday, Dec. 24

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

Thursday, Dec. 25–Thursday, Jan. 1

- Staff Holiday, Building Closed

Sunday, Dec. 28

- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 4

- Worship, McIver Chapel, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- Worship, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.
- Retirement Reception for Debby Burton, James Gallery, noon

Monday, Jan. 5

- Wilshire Winds, Choral Hall, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

- New Song, Choral Hall, 9:30 a.m.
- Lunch & Learn, Community Hall, 11:30 a.m.
- Koinonia Café, Community Hall, 5 p.m.
- Bible Study, Community Hall, 6 p.m.
- KidConnect, 6 p.m.
- Preschool Music & Missions, 6 p.m.
- WSM Watershed, Youth Center, 6:30 p.m.
- Sanctuary Choir, Choral Hall, 7 p.m.

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/realm.

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 Shaffon Alexander's attention at Wilshire.

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

DONATE STOCKS. Contact Shaffon 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.

Rob Roden

Tell us about your family.

My wife, Michelle, is a retired CPA. Our son, Henry, 27, graduated from Auburn and works as a cybersecurity consultant at PwC. Our daughter, Emma, 24, graduated from Baylor and is a CPA working in tax for PwC. Both kids attend Wilshire and live down the street in our Old East Dallas neighborhood.

How about your work life?

I lead executive recruiting for PwC. In this role I get to speak one on one with very interesting people. I've spoken with FBI and CIA directors, Postmaster Generals and numerous partners and executives. I enjoy listening to people talk about their life's journey. You can often tell how legitimate someone is by how humbly they describe their accomplishments.

Any favorite hobbies?

Traveling to attend concerts. This summer we saw Oasis at Wembley Stadium in London. We've seen shows in several cities inside and outside the U.S. It's been a lot of fun!

What brought you to Wilshire and when.

We joined Wilshire in 1998. When we first got married, we attended the church I grew up in. After a few years we wanted a change. We learned about Wilshire on WRR. After visiting, we decided to make this our church home. Our children were both dedicated and raised at Wilshire. I believe this is where we are meant to be.

**Tell us about your faith journey.**

I was blessed to grow up in a strong family of faith. My grandmothers were pure Christian love to everyone they met. My parents are retired educators who instilled in me respect for my kindred human beings. I was raised in First Baptist Church of Garland. There, many wonderful people poured a lot of love into me and shaped my understanding of God. I can't remember a time growing up when I was not at church multiple times a week. I attended every camp, retreat and Bible study. I was even the president of the youth choir. My life has not always been a straight line, but the faith that was instilled in me by countless people has never subsided.

What do you think God is up to in your life right now?

I am a deacon, Lord's Supper captain and member of the Personnel Committee. I try to listen to the opportunities God puts in front of me. As we say in the Journey Sunday School class, "Don't stop believing!"

What is something interesting most people would not know about you?

One Saturday a month I work at Dead Wax Records on the beautiful square in Garland. Come by and say hi.

End of year need: **\$610,227**

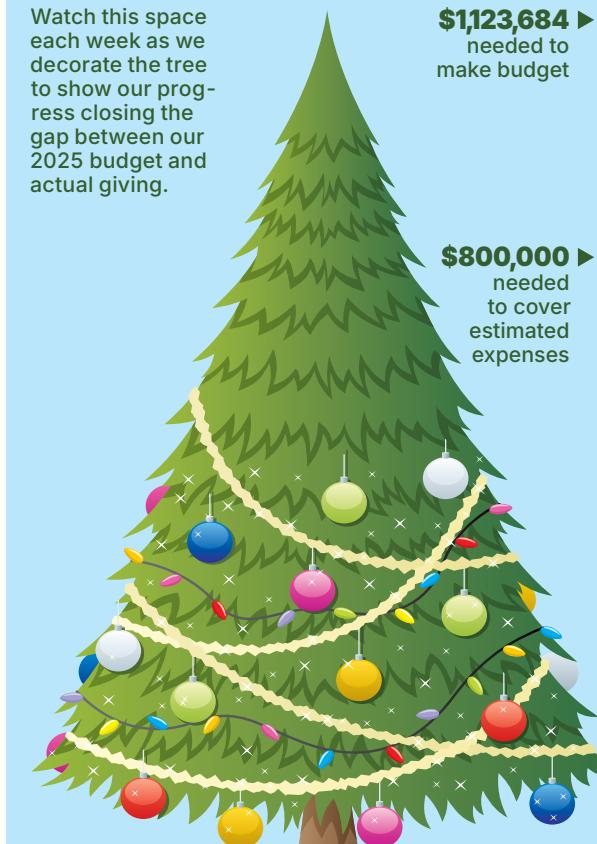
OUR WEBSITE STATES: "Wilshire encourages followers of Christ to listen for the call to vocational ministry. We want children, youth and young adults to view a calling to ministry as equally significant as a calling to medicine, law or business. Pathways to Ministry is our initiative to nurture the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those discerning a call to vocational ministry."

Pathways to Ministry has been a flourishing and foundational part of our congregation. Since its inception in 2002, it has been an intentional expression of who we are as a church. There are many residency and internship programs across the country, but when I travel each year to recruit and speak with students and seminaries, I always share what makes Wilshire's program distinctive: our people.

Not many churches are willing to take on the risk and responsibility of being a true teaching congregation. At Wilshire, that does not mean simply evaluating or critiquing residents. It means learning from them, loving them and honoring them fully as they are. I am deeply grateful for the entire Pathways team — Charlie, Debby and George — who work tirelessly to ensure this program is exceptional.

Even as I write this, emails are arriving from applicants eager to pursue the Wilshire residency. And Pathways to Ministry extends beyond residency to include interns and choral schol-

ars. We have intentionally created space for young adults to explore, discern and listen for God's call in their lives. As a church, you have chosen to participate intimately in the calling of others.



What a beautiful testimony it is to see how many lives have been shaped by this program — loved by Wilshire and always connected to this community. There truly is no other place with people so loving and life-giving. I know I'm biased, but I believe it with my whole heart. We get to do this work together. We fund this work together. We participate in this work together.

Each year, as we approach our giving season, I'll be honest — I

feel the weight of the number before us. I pray daily that we will meet our budget, knowing that it takes all of us. This ministry is not sustained by one or two individuals, but by more than 500 giving units in the month of December alone. Valerie and I are praying about what we can give over and above our tithe to help us reach our goal. Would you prayerfully consider doing the same?

Please know this: your financial giving can never replace your presence. We need every form of generosity — your time, your service, your actions and your financial support — to continue the work of bringing God's kingdom here on earth.—Tim