

*The Music Ministry of Grace Baptist Church Presents*

CELEBRATING  
“THE LIGHT”  
IN A DARK WORLD

*Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, Senior Pastor*  
*Derrick L. James, Minister of Worship & Fine Arts*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025 | 4:00 P.M.

*“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.  
And the light shines in the darkness, and the  
darkness did not comprehend it.”*

*- John 1:4-5*

# A SPECIAL MESSAGE

*from Pastor Richardson  
& Minister James*



Grace Family and Friends,

It is with great joy that we welcome you to this sacred and celebratory evening of music at Grace Baptist Church in the City of Mount Vernon. Tonight's Christmas concert, "Celebrating the Light in a Dark World," is simply more than a performance—it is an offering of hope, faith, and praise centered on the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the true Light of the world and the very heart of the Christmas season.

At Christmas, we gather to honor and give thanks for the miraculous gift of Emmanuel—God with us. In a world often marked by uncertainty, division, and pain, we proclaim the enduring truth of the Gospel: "The Light" shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. This evening invites us to reflect on that holy mystery and to rejoice in the coming of Christ, whose love, mercy, and salvation illuminate every age.

We are deeply grateful for the extraordinary gifts shared tonight by the Grace Cathedral Chorale, under the inspired leadership of our Minister of Worship and Fine Arts, Derrick L. James; the magnificent soprano voice of Brandie Inez Sutton; and the Levites of Grace musicians, joined by a distinguished brass ensemble. Together, they lead us through a rich musical journey—featuring treasured excerpts from Handel's Messiah, selections from Everlasting Light, and beloved Christmas favorites that exalt the name of Christ and proclaim the good news of His birth.

This concert weaves together classical masterworks, gospel traditions, anthems, and spiritual rhythms—reflecting the fullness of the Christian faith and the cultural richness of our community. Each selection serves as a testimony, pointing us toward Christ, whose birth brings hope to the weary, joy to the searching, and light to a darkened world.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Shepherds of Grace—members and friends whose generous underwriting support has made this evening possible. Like the shepherds who first received the good news of Christ's birth, your faithful stewardship helps proclaim the message of Emmanuel and ensures that this ministry of music continues to shine as a beacon of faith, excellence, and generosity.

Whether you join us as a recent or longtime member of Grace or as a welcomed guest, we pray that this evening blesses your spirit and draws you closer to the Light we celebrate tonight—Jesus Christ, our hope, our joy, and our Savior. May the music offered here glorify God, strengthen faith, and remind us all that Christ's light continues to shine—brightly and boldly—now and forevermore.

Thank you for being part of this culturally enriching and Christ-centered community experience. We are grateful for your presence and honored to share this sacred celebration with you.

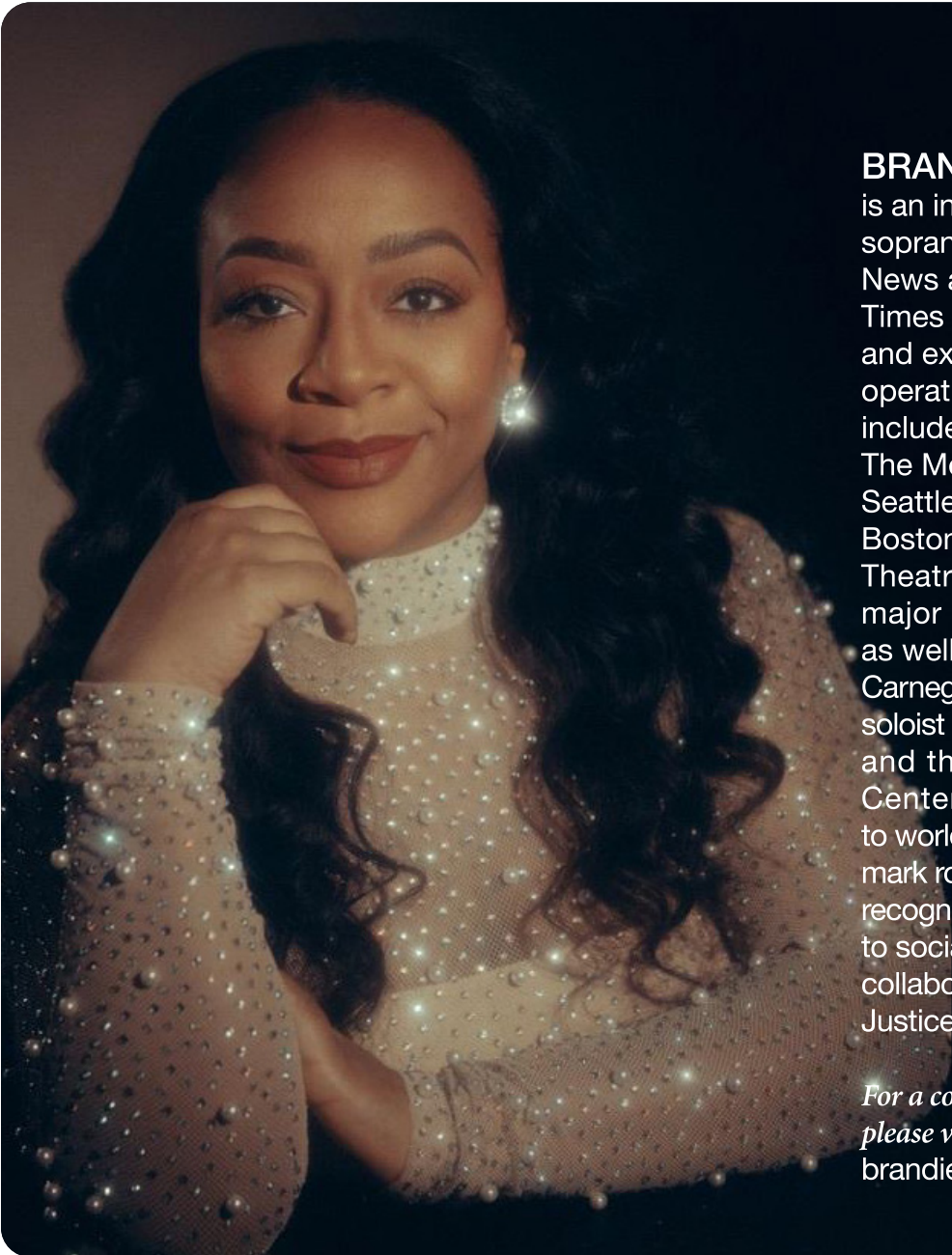
With gratitude and joy,

Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson  
Senior Pastor

Derrick L. James  
Minister of Worship & Fine Arts



## MEET OUR FEATURED ARTIST



### **BRANDIE INEZ SUTTON**

is an internationally acclaimed soprano praised by Opera News and The New York Times for her vocal richness and expressive power. Her operatic and concert career includes appearances with The Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Detroit Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and major orchestras worldwide, as well as performances at Carnegie Hall and as a featured soloist with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. In addition to world premieres and landmark role debuts, Ms. Sutton is recognized for her commitment to social justice through artistic collaborations with the Equal Justice Initiative.

*For a comprehensive biography,  
please visit Brandie's website:  
[brandiesuttonsoprano.com](http://brandiesuttonsoprano.com)*

# THE PROGRAM

## INVOCATION

Pastor Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson

## THE OCCASION

Kimberly Davis

## PROCESSIONAL

*Agnus Dei*

## EXERTS FROM “MESSIAH”

George Fredric Handel

*And the Glory of the Lord*

*For Unto Us a Child is Born*

*Hallelujah Chorus*

*Joy to the World*

by Michael McElroy, Joseph Joubert

## EXERTS FROM “EVERLASTING LIGHT”

*People Need the Lord*

Valerie Lavar, Mezzo

*Light of a Million Mornings*

Shondra Floyed McClary, Soprano

Jeff Lavar, Tenor

## FINALE

*Everlasting Light*

## INTERMISSION

*What Love is This*

by Kari Jobe

Brielle Little and Dana Tomlin  
(Children’s Choir of Grace)

*Three Wise Men Medley*

arr. By Steven Ford

Three Mo’ Tenors,

Darian Clonts, Duone Campbell, Antoine Dolberry

*O Holy Night*

Brandie Sutton, Soprano

*Glory Hallelujah to the New Born King*

by Mark Butler

*Mary Had A Baby*

by Robert Shaw

Patricia Williams, Soprano

*Children Go Where I Send Thee*

by Kevin Phillip Johnson

Sophia Booker, Soprano

Allison Scholar, Rapper

*Light*

by Glen Burleigh

*Jesus, th Light of the World*

arr. by Isaac Cates

Jarena Brown

and Lewis and Kirk Music

## CLOSING REMARKS

*Pastor W. Franklyn Richardson*

# A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SHEPHERDS OF GRACE

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Juana Johnson  
Kunle & Barbara Sanders  
Leon & Sharon Jackson  
Lisa DeGraffe-Williams  
Narada Smith  
Nicole R. Blackman  
Nicolette D. Brown  
Ronald & Maria Morris  
Sheila Stephens  
Steve & Lydia Williams  
The Ffolkes Family  
The Tru Beauty Influence by  
Jennifer Truesdale  
Valerie LeVar  
Wesley & Michelle Reynoso

## BENEFACTORS

Andrew Benjamin  
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Ava Marshall  
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Carman Nelson  
Chemaine M. Maxwell  
Cheryl Sullivan-Goodlet  
Cynthia Williams  
Danielle Pulliam  
Danny Pridgen  
Deacon Charmaine Wilson  
Diane Canty-Velez  
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Dr. Grace Hackett  
Dr. Pardella Scott  
Eleanor Hackett  
Esmeralda Stewart  
Florentine Scholar

George Aine  
George Windley  
Gina Tarascio  
Hayley Lynch  
Ieisha Jackson  
Ina Bowens  
Isnime Sylvain  
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Rachel Pilgrim  
Rev. Minnie Greene  
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Robyn McLoad  
Sandra Trimmings  
Shannel White  
Sonia Smalls  
Stacey Childress  
Steve McQueen  
Tanya Riggs  
Timothy Jackson  
Toki Hall  
Victor Scholar  
Yohance Whyte  
Yvonne Hackett

## FRIENDS

Adessa Birthwright  
Alia Batson  
Andrea Birthwright  
Angela Worrell

Audrey Woods  
Belinda Belfield  
Beverley Howill  
Brenton Clarke  
Brielle Conyers  
Burnett Birthwright  
Carline Smith  
Carol Hills  
Crystal Ganges  
David Shaunny  
Deborah Daniels  
Devon Bennett  
Dina Madden  
Dorothy Scott  
Elizabeth Simon  
Elkin Woods  
Elyse Campbell  
Emma Session  
Felicia Forster  
Gail Murphy  
Ida Rampersad  
James Driver  
Jeanette & Graylin Fuller  
Jeanette Jimenez  
Jessica Soto  
Joan Marie Apoldo  
Joan Martin  
John McDermott  
Joyce Dixon  
Joyce Rudolph  
Juhui Song  
Karen & Charles Dockery  
Karen Wichson  
Kayan Bartley  
Krystal Driver  
Krystina Clarke  
Lashanna Rhett  
Latoya & Rakeen Robinson  
Lennette Carson  
Leslie Allicks  
Lisa Peace  
Lisa Roman  
Loretta Thompson  
Martha Hunter  
Mary McKoy  
McLean StClair

Melanie Malone  
 Michelle Campos  
 Michelle Henry  
 Millicent McRae  
 Mondello & Allyson Browner  
 Naimah Deborah Jennings  
 Norma Salters  
 Phil McConnell  
 S. B. Seward  
 Sabrina McDougal  
 Sandy Williams  
 Serena Hewitt  
 Shanaya Edwards  
 Sheila & Jermaine Roseboro  
 Shirley Payero  
 Stan & Louise Birthwright  
 Stella Roman  
 Tichon Thomas  
 Tiffany Mitchell  
 Tracy Jacobs  
 Tyrone Carver  
 Valerie A. Payne  
 Victor Quinones  
 Vonerica Lindsey  
 Warren McRae  
 Willie Fillyow  
 Willie Hills  
 Woma Gray  
 Yulonda Swint

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**GRACE CATHEDRAL  
 CHORALE**

**Soprano**

Adia Williams  
 Andrea Tomlinos Lewis  
 Esther Asibuo  
 Isinime Sylvain  
 Jonie Broderick  
 Kala Williams  
 Keisha Sasso  
 Lillian Reynolds  
 Manna Jones  
 Marsha Thompson  
 Nicole Blackman

Patricia Williams  
 Shondra Floyed McClary  
 Sophia Booker

**Alto**

Alethea Lewis  
 Allison John  
 Allison Scholar  
 Andrea Birthwright  
 Angela Woods  
 Darlene Lynch  
 Erika Kargbo  
 Felicia Hackett  
 Jennie Stephenson  
 Juana Johnson  
 Latoya Hall  
 Linda Young  
 Lydia Williams  
 Marcarme Augustin  
 Nicolette Brown  
 Rosa Jackson  
 Sharon Buchanan  
 Teresa Whyte  
 Valerie LaVar  
 Deborah Jennings

**Tenor**

Antoine Dolberry  
 Audrey Lindsey  
 Darion Clonts  
 Darlene William-Smith  
 Dominique Burke  
 Duone Campbell  
 Normearleasa Thomas  
 Ravon Middlebrooke  
 Robert Mack  
 Sheila Stephens  
 Taiwan Norris

**Bass**

Angelo Johnson  
 Anthony Williams  
 Charles Carter  
 Clem Hedley  
 Edward Ogundipe  
 Gregory Isaac  
 Phillip Bullock

**Levites of Grace**

Michael Booker, keyboards,  
 Band Director  
 Beverly Hunter, Organ  
 David Cox, Hammon Organ,  
 keyboard  
 David Rosenthol, Lead guitar  
 David Gindyard, Bass  
 Shawn Dustin, Drums  
 Bryant Jackson, Sax  
 Danny Valdez, Percussion  
 Anthony Harris, Djembe  
 Michael Moran, Djembe  
 Paul Harris, Shekere

*“Ye are the  
 light of the  
 world.”*

*- Matthew 5:14 (KJV)*







MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Jesus is the Light of the World!*