



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

September 27, 2020 – 11:00 am
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost



“Then his father said, ‘Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.’”
Luke 15:31-32 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD’S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

O God of this and every morning, as I begin this day, call my name; as I step into this day, guide my feet; as I live this day, care for those I love; as I learn this day, teach me your ways. In Jesus’ name. Amen. - From Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 2 (p. 150). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

PRELUDE: Come, Holy Spirit

WILLIAM AND GLORIA GAITHER / ARR. FRED BOCK

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AN OFFERING OF PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*(Please take a moment to **socially distantly** share the peace of Christ with your neighbor.)*

* GATHERING SONG: We Are Standing on Holy Ground

GERON DAVIS

*We are standing on holy ground,
and I know that there are angels all around;
let us praise Jesus now;
we are standing in his presence on holy ground.*

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come as you are, broken and burdened,
and find healing in God’s goodness.

Come as you are, gifted and beloved,
and find purpose in God’s calling.

Come as you are, weary and wary,

and find comfort in God's embrace.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and worship God with gladness.

* **OPENING HYMN #356:** *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

NETTLETON

*Come, thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unchanging love!*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.*

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

AN OFFERING OF SCRIPTURE

LUKE 15:11-32

Holy wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS

Holy God, Word Shaper: you are not angry at us, but you forgive us; you are not our enemy, but the One who runs towards us with wide open arms, throwing steaks on the grill to celebrate our newness!

Jesus Christ, Shaper of our story: you travel to that distant country called our sin to bring us home once again; you share your inheritance with us so we might be blessed; you know the famine of our spirits and fill it with your hope.

Holy Spirit, Life Shaper: surrounded by your grace, we offer glad cries of salvation; encircled by your constant love, we shout for joy; enclosed in your comforting arms, nothing can overwhelm us.

God in Community, Holy in One, from now on we will remember our life in you.

We know our faults -- the way we have treated others, our alienation from God, our unwillingness to be faithful people. We will not hide our sin or remain silent, but confess them to the One who surrounds us with steadfast love.

On this very day, Waiting God, we admit all the lengths to which we go so we might avoid you. You offer us that kingdom of joy and wonder, yet we would hide in places where temptation waits. You invite us to feast on your grace and peace, but we stubbornly refuse, because you also welcome those we call 'outsiders.' We are quick to see all the mistakes that those around us make, but hope you will ignore our foolish choices.

Celebrating God, before we come to our senses, we find you running towards us, sweeping us up in your arms, tears of grace mingling with our cries of confession, a mighty river washing away our sinful ways to restore us to new life. In Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we find no limitations on your grace, no reservations about your love, but a feast that overflows with wonder, a place we can finally call home.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

God rolls away everything that stands in our way - our past, our sin, our pain, our hesitation, and reshapes us into new people living in the new creation. What wonderful grace. We are forgiven!

Broken, we are made whole; lost, we are brought home; empty, we are filled with songs of gladness. We rejoice and give thanks to God who has graced us with mercy. Amen.

* **RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE:** *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah*

TRADITIONAL

*Glory, glory, hallelujah! since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)
I feel better, so much better since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)
Feel like shouting, "Hallelujah!" since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)*

* **SAYING WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE**

EXCERPTED FROM *THE CONFESSION OF 1967*

As the people of God gathered in this place, who are we?

We are a community of believers, called by God to WORSHIP, SERVE, TEACH, and SUPPORT.

With the whole church, let us say what we believe.

To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as God's reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation and shares God's labor of healing the enmities which separate people from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call.

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

OFFERTORY:

* **A DOXOLOGY:** *We Lift Our Voices*

DWIGHT LILES

*We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.
Lord, use our voices; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our lives: they are yours: we are an offering.
All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.*

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

* **HYMN OF THE DAY #272:** *God of the Sparrow*

REEDER

*God of the sparrow God of the whale God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe How does the creature say Praise
God of the earthquake God of the storm God of the trumpet blast
How does the creature cry Woe How does the creature cry Save
God of the rainbow God of the cross God of the empty grave
How does the creature say Grace How does the creature say Thanks
God of the hungry God of the sick God of the prodigal
How does the creature say Care How does the creature say Life
God of the neighbor God of the foe God of the pruning hook
How does the creature say Love How does the creature say Peace
God of the ages God near at hand God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy How do your children say Home*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 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.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Some Day*

CHARLES A. TINDLEY

SYLVESTER ALLEN, SOLOIST

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: ***The Digital Church: Remote Intimacy***

REV. JOHNSON

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

* CLOSING HYMN #142: *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!*

CORONATION

*All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all!
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all!
Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, ye ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all!
Hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all!
Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball
to him all majesty ascribe, and crown him Lord of all!
To him all majesty ascribe, and crown him Lord of all!
O that with yonder sacred throng we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all!
We'll join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all!*

* SENDING

God sends us forth,

to be reconcilers of the broken and oppressed.

Jesus, our Brother, sends us to welcome everyone.

We will embrace the prodigals with joy, we will make a feast for all of God's people.

The Spirit sends us with arms full of healing.

We will go to bring hope to all we meet.

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION



Our Faith Community @ Work

WORSHIP Ministry: (Lead Elders: Nancy Purcell and A. J. Campbell)

WELCOME to this service of worship at Bethany Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). Whether you are a member or a visitor we are so glad that you are worshipping with us this morning and pray that this time of worship will be both renewing and rewarding for you. If you have any questions about Bethany, please speak to the pastor or call the church at 336.227.4041.

You can find us online through our website at www.bethanypreschurch.org; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian; or on Twitter by following @bpresbyterian.

“I will show love to those who were called unloved and, to those who were called ‘not-my-people’, I will say ‘you are my people’ and they will answer, ‘you are our God.’” (Hosea 2:23) Bethany Presbyterian Church is a place where the mind is nourished as well as the spirit, and where we affirm the dignity and worth of every person. As we are all created in the image of God, we believe discrimination is incompatible with Christ’s Gospel of unconditional love. While we celebrate our Presbyterian identity, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. We invite conversations that move us to seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit. **Be who you are and be welcome here.**

Audio Recordings of each Sunday’s sermons are available through a link on our website, on our Facebook page, or at www.buzzsprout.com/9198. A **Video Recording** of our Facebook Live stream will be available on our Facebook page and on our website.

Next Sunday, **October 4th is World Communion Sunday**. We will join with our sisters and brothers from around the world in celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

We also rejoice that next **Sunday, October 4th will be our first Sunday worshipping in person** in our beautiful sanctuary since March! Please see the letter that was mailed this past week, as well as the newsletter article as to our guidelines and policies for our return. We will continue to offer Zoom worship and Facebook Live as other options for those uneasy about returning in person.

Resources used in today’s worship:

- *Glory to God* Presbyterian Hymnal
- *Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion (Year C, Volume 2)
- *The Text This Week* website (www.textweek.com)
- *Call to Worship* worship resource

Post-Sabbatical Sermon Series: This morning we continue a six-week sermon series, sharing insights that John has gleaned through his sabbatical focus of study - The Digital Church. There is also a study component of this series, as those who are interested are invited to gather each Sunday morning during the Sunday school hour for a lively discussion of the book on which this series is based: *“Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World.”* The book is available on Amazon. Here are the themes for each Sunday during the series:

- Sunday, September 13th: *The Digital Church: Virtual People*
- Sunday, September 20th: *The Digital Church: From Connection to Communion*
- **Sunday, September 27th: *The Digital Church: Remote Intimacy***
- Sunday, October 4th: *The Digital Church: Empty Minds and Disposable Bodies*
- Sunday, October 11th: *the Digital Church: Googling Prayer*
- Sunday, October 18th: *The Digital Church: Tech Sabbath*

SERVE Ministry: (Lead Elders: Randy Cousins and Tina Patterson)

Our ongoing prayer list is below. Please let the church office know if there are any changes.

Bill Faucette
Jack Cook
Joan Richardson
Teresa Wilborn

Diane Miller
Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Shannon Russell

John & Ann Sutton
Ruby Martin
Shirley Lane
Ida Whitney

Tiffany Tauchren
Jean Berry
Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton
Norma Proctor
Christopher Bagley
Randy Thompson
Frederica Beatty

Mary Moore
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Mike Sutton
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Grace Johnson
Frank Wrenn
Sylvia Donley
Norm Whitney

Katherine Turner
Jeremy Harden
Anne McDaniels
Alex Thomas
Stewart Dillard
Shelvia Russell
Carol Brooks
Ritchie Fishburne
Janie Holt Clapp

TEACH Ministry: (Lead Elders: Karen Maxwell and Tracey Troxler)

All are invited to take advantage of the several educational opportunities for all ages on Sunday mornings. Sunday school classes begin at 9:45 a.m.

Fellowship Class (Fellowship Classroom – by ramp door)

This class is using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum and lives up to the class name in all aspects of their life here at Bethany.

Children (Upstairs – the really, really green room!)

This class for younger children is using our denomination's *We Believe* curriculum in introducing our children to the faith.

Youth (Upstairs, across from the choir room)

Using a variety of creative curricula, this class explores topics that relate to faith and adolescence.

Join us **each Thursday evening** for a new fall **Bethany Book Club**, as we engage in a discussion of the prominent issue of racism, and our response as followers of Christ. We will be reading and discussing the book ***Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race***, by Debby Irving. The book is available on Amazon. This study will be offered both in-person here at the church and virtually via Zoom. Watch your email for the Zoom link.

SUPPORT Ministry: (Lead Elders: Chip Allen, Ben Russell, and Bill Abplanalp)

Elders of the Month for September are **Karen Maxwell** and **Tracey Troxler**.

Scan the QR code below to access and download our new Interactive Digital Bulletin.



This Week's Calendar:

Today:

- 9:45 - *The Digital Church* study and discussion
- 11:00 - Worship - Sermon Series III - The Digital Church: Remote Intimacy

Wednesday, the 30th :

- 7:00 - Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)

Thursday, the 1st:

- 7:00 - *Waking Up White* book study

Sunday, the 4th:

- **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**
- 9:45 - *The Digital Church* study and discussion
- 11:00 - Worship - Sermon Series IV - The Digital Church: Empty Minds and Disposable Bodies / Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Session

Moderator: Rev. John W. Johnson

Clerk: Karen Maxwell

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

Class of 2020:

Chip Allen
Randy Cousins
Karen Maxwell

Class of 2021:

Nancy Purcell
Ben Russell
Tracey Troxler

Class of 2022:

Bill Abplanalp
Helen Brown
Tina Patterson

bethany presbyterian

love learn serve



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Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org
Elder Emeritus: Bobby Peele
Elder Emeritus: Don Boggs

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