Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina
www.bethanypreschurch.org
www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

December 7, 2025 – 11:00 am
Second Sunday of Advent
Peace
Communion

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Welcome to our service of worship. Although we are worshipping in a variety of locations, we still affirm that God is present in our worship, whether in-person or virtually. Our prayer is that all who worship with us this day will truly feel the presence of God in this time. Know that you are loved and we are so glad you are here!

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE:

WELCOME

***OPENING HYMN #8:** *Lift Up Your Head, Ye Mighty Gates* — GEORG WEISSEL

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,
Behold, the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
My heart to Thee: here, Lord, abide.
Let me Thy inner presence feel;
Thy grace and love in me reveal.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SENTENCES (BASED ON ISAIAH 11:1-10)

A shoot shall come forth from Jesse's stump,
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.
He will judge the poor with righteousness, and the meek with equity;
He will be clothed with righteousness and faithfulness.
The wolf and the lamb will live peacefully together,
The leopard and the kid will lie down side by side.
The cow and the bear will graze together; the lion will eat straw like the ox,
And a little child will lead them all.
They will neither hurt nor destroy on God's holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters fill the sea.

OPENING RESPONSE: *While We Are Waiting, Come (Choir 1st time; Congregation 2nd time)*

While we are waiting, come.
While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel
While we are waiting, come.

GATHERING PRAYER (ISAIAH 11, ROMANS 15, MATTHEW 3)

God of Hope and peace, as we worship you this day, may we catch a glimpse of your peace; may we open ourselves to receive your grace; may we welcome one another, as you have welcomed us;
may we prepare hearts and our lives, for Christ to be bon in us once again. And when our worship is done, may we be renewed in body and spirit, prepared to bring your righteousness and justice to the world.
In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE ELSA PETERS

Today we continue our Advent search. We look for comfort in a broken world. We cry out for the peace we have not yet found. We find comfort as the prophet Isaiah did, when he remembered:

The grass dries up; the flower withers, but our God's word will exist forever.

O God, we light the second candle of Advent.
We light the candle of peace.

The second candle is lit

We light this candle to shine like the sun on the buds of peace, which we long for in places like Ukraine, Gaza and Israel.

Let us pray together:

Light of our World, we hope for change in our own lives and in our world. We wait for relationships to heal. We wait for peace to come. We wait for your people to live with more love. In the warmth of your Light, we wait for hope to be revealed more fully. We wait together by the light of this candle.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (ADAPTED FROM THE CONFESSION OF 1967)

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of human life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes our natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. God wills that God's purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ, and all evil be banished from God's creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

***HYMN OF THE DAY #36:** *In the Bleak Midwinter* CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

In the bleak midwinter, Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim Thronged the air;
But His mother only, In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved With a kiss.

What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart.

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

God of Grace, we confess that we are not ready for you to come into our world — not quite yet. We cling to the known and familiar, afraid of the transformation your grace will bring. Yet you are always a step ahead of us, a voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting us into to bold new ways of being disciples. Humble us, O God, and teach us to do the work of repentance so that, fully reliant on your grace, we may know the richness of restored relationship with you and one another. Amen

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (GLORY TO GOD #88)

"O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily:
To us the path of knowledge show; …
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19 PEW BIBLE, 719-720

MATTHEW 3:1-12 PEW BIBLE, 1171

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Lo, How A Rose E're Blooming* Josh Williford - Soloist

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: ***"Peace"*** RICK PURCELL, CRE

THE LORD'S SUPPER

We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper today by inviting everyone who wants to participate up front to receive the bread and cup (we use gluten free bread and grape juice). If you are more comfortable remaining seated but would like to participate, raise your hand and we will come to your seat to serve you. We believe that Jesus invites everyone forward to his table to "taste and see," and so we proclaim that all are welcome to participate.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BY THE PEOPLE

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

AN OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY #592:** *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* THOMAS KEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

***BLESSING OUR GIFTS**

***ADVENT PRAYER**

***CLOSING HYMN #20:** *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* JOHN BOWRING

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends.
Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own;
See, it bursts o'er all the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, let thy wanderings cease;
Hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler, lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo! the Son of God is come!

***SENDING**

Go now in hope to bear Christ's light into those places shrouded with darkness.
Go now in peace to extend hands of friendship to those who feel lost and estranged.
Go now in joy to proclaim release to the captives and good news to the poor.
Go now in love to welcome the birth of God's own Love into the world.
And as you go, may Christ's grace uphold you, God's love empower you,
and the Spirit's light guide your way, now and forevermore. Amen.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

"Peace" *Composed by Christopher A. Bagley*

POSTLUDE:

_____

** Please stand in body or spirit.*

Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sundays, 9:45am Bible Study – Evie C. Marshall Room

Wednesdays, 10:00am Bethany Exercise Class - Evie C. Marshall Room
On Wednesdays at 10:00am in the Evie C. Marshall classroom we will have our exercise classes. Come join us for fun and fellowship.

Sunday, December 7th 11:00am Advent 2: Peace - Sanctuary

Sunday, December 14th 11:00am Advent 3: Joy - Sanctuary
Our choir will bless us with a Christmas Cantata

Tuesday, December 16th 11:00am The Women of Bethany Church Gathering
The Women of Bethany Church will come together on Tuesday, December 2nd at 11:00am. Lunch will be served.

Sunday, December 21st 11:00am Advent 4: Love – Sanctuary

Tuesday, January 6th 2026 Alamance Co. Mobile Library
The Alamance County Public Libraries mobile library with be at Bethany on the first Tuesday of each month. The mobile library will be in the church parking lot 10:30 – 11:30.
Please stop by and "check-out" this wonderful service the library has to share.

S.A.F.E. (Southern Alamance Family Empowerment)
How can we help S.A.F.E. for during the **Fall months**? They are asking for **Canned Chicken, Canned Tuna, 1 lb. bags of Rice and Spaghetti. Breakfast items (Cereals, Granola Bars, Oatmeal, Breakfast Bars), Children and Adult diapers and Feminine products.**
S.A.F.E. will be closed the 1st and 5th Saturday of the Month.
Consider donating your paper bags.

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, December 7th - 2nd Sunday of Advent – Communion & Pennies for Hunger

9:45 – Bible Study - Evie C. Marshall classroom

11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream). Stewardship Lunch after service

Tuesday, December 9th 7:00pm Session Meeting

Wednesday, December 10th

10:00 – Exercise class

6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, December 14th - 3rd Sunday of Advent – Christmas Cantata

9:45 – Bible Study - Evie C. Marshall classroom

11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream).

Session
Moderator: Rick Purcell, CRE
Clerk: Randy Cousins
Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

Class of 2025:
Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Tina Patterson
Nancy Purcell

Class of 2026:
Chip Allen
Jean Payne
Ben Russell

Class of 2027:
Karen Maxwell
Kim Snyder
Brandon Troxler

bethany presbyterian

worship serve teach support

1500 S. Main Street
Graham, NC 27253
www.bethanypreschurch.org
336.227.4041

Staff
Pastor/CRE: Rick Purcell – *pastor4bethany@gmail.com*
Director of Music: Christopher Bagley – *bethanypresmusic@gmail.com*
Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – *office@bethanypreschurch.org*
Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – *finance@bethanypreschurch.org*

Scan this QR code for fast, safe, and reliable online giving:

Bethany Presbyterian is a Stephen Ministry Congregation

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS BULLETIN IN THE BASKETS PROVIDED AT THE DOORS.