



Bethany Presbyterian Church

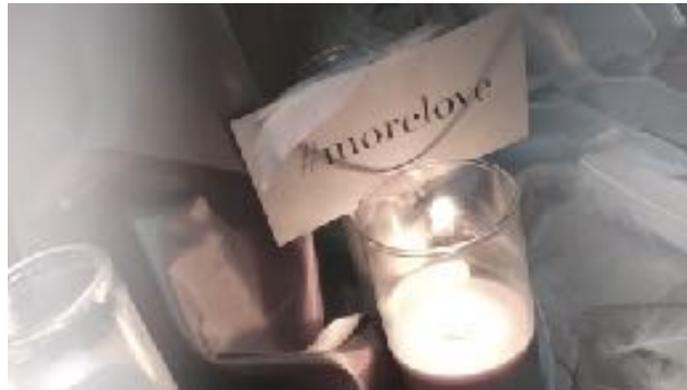
Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

December 24, 2017 – 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent



*“While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.”
Luke 2:6-7 (CEB)*

GATHERING AS GOD’S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

The sky was brighter than usual that night, making it easier to keep track of the sheep. And then it got really bright. You would have thought that all that “glory” shining would have been “the sign.” That’s what most of us look for – great big obvious clues about God’s presence. But instead, the angel says that a baby . . . a newborn helpless baby in a feeding trough was it – the sign. In a flash, the message was that #morelove is found where you least expect it and perhaps is already there residing in the ordinariness of your life.

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Poeme de Noel*

L. BEETHOVEN

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THRESHOLD MOMENT

Each Sunday in Advent our service will begin with a Threshold Moment. There will be some introductory words, the procession of the Advent Candle, and a choral introduction from the choir, followed by the sung congregational response “Do Not Be Afraid.” (see next page)

Do Not Be Afraid

worshipdesignstudio.com/angels

Marcus McFee and Chuck Bell

Arranged by Chuck Bell

Do not be a - fraid, Do not be a - fraid.

Do not be a - fraid, Do not be a - fraid.

* PRAYER, CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Holy living God, blessed Jesus, guiding Spirit,

Alight within us your flame of love this day.

[Advent Candle of Love is lit.]

Grant us openness to hear your message.

Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world, creating more love in the midst of fear.

And with the angel messengers above us, among us and within us, we sing . . .

[Sing "Do Not Be Afraid" refrain above.]

* OPENING HYMN #22: *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

REGENT SQUARE

AN OFFERING OF PEACE

May the Love of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

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

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

AN OFFERING OF CONFESSION

Compassionate, Forgiving God, we trespass on your mercy and take your favor for granted.

We think only of ourselves.

We forget the lessons of those who came before us, and ignore our responsibility to those who will follow us.

We grow proud and seek power.

We do not see the destruction of our actions and how it distances us from you.

We do not recognize our hunger for what it is, or where it leads us.

We grow faint.

Bring us home to you, Merciful Beloved.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

The Holy One forgives and bestows favor on each of us, even and especially when we are lowly in spirit.

We are blessed from generation to generation by the Mighty One, whose strength and mercy are forever. Amen.

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

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)

I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)

Fell like shouting, "Hallelujah!" Since I laid my burden down. (Repeat)

TRADITIONAL

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

OFFERTORY: *Sweet Little Jesus Boy*

ARR. T. OSMAN

SYLVESTER ALLEN, SOLOIST

* **A DOXOLOGY:** *(to the tune of O Come, O Come Emmanuel)*

VENI EMMANUEL

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God, all Spirit messengers below.

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

In this moment, we pray for all those who are in need of love.

[You are invited to name aloud the names of people and places that are in need of love this day.]

We hear the message of God,

Do not be afraid.

In this moment, we give thanks for all the ways we have experienced God's presence among us, in the words and actions that bring love in the midst of fear.

[You are invited to turn your attention to the screen where there will be images of love.]

For all who proclaim your reign on earth, we join their refrain,

Do not be afraid.

[Pastoral Prayer, followed by 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

* **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION #53:** *What Child Is This*

GREENSLEEVES

What Child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

THE SPOKEN WORD

Luke 2:1-20

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *While the World Slept*

JASON COX

Come and Worship

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;

Ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,

God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant Light:

Come and worship, come and worship, come adore Him, behold His majesty.

All ye faithful, join with the angels; Come and worship Christ, the newborn King.

Oh, the mystery of the manger and the humble lowly birth.

See the Son of Heaven's highest lay aside His pow'r and worth.

Come and worship, come and worship, come adore Him, behold His majesty.

All ye faithful, join with the angels; come and worship Christ, the newborn King.

Come and worship. Jesus, Lord of our salvation.

Come and worship. He is worthy of our praises. Worship Christ the newborn King.

While the World Slept

The world in solemn stillness lay and somber was the night,

When suddenly the sky would burst with angels shining bright.

*Proclaiming news of joy on earth and peace to men, goodwill,
Awakening the shepherds keeping watch out on the hills.
While the world slept all of heaven welcomed the newborn King.
While the world slept like a whisper Salvation came so quietly,
And the Father's promise was kept, while the world slept.
It came upon a midnight clear and few of us would see,
How there in lowly Bethlehem was laid the Prince of Peace.
Though we would slumber unaware that hope had finely dawned,
The angels bending near the earth would gladly raise the song.
From a manger one holy night as the silent stars went by,
God was shouting I love you in a baby's gentle cry.*

I Have Seen the Lord

*Like the shepherd men, who left their world behind,
I came to Bethlehem to see with my own eyes.
Was the promise true? Could it really be that God would send His Son for even me?
Today, I have seen the Savior, and I understand like never before.
Everything that ever was is suddenly made new because today I have seen the Lord.
Bring your broken dreams. Bring your weary heart.
Bring what no one sees. Come in from the dark.
There's a light that shines to lead you on your way.
This could be the moment that you say: Today, I have seen the Savior,
And I understand like never before. Everything that ever was is suddenly made new
Because today, I have seen the Lord.
Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.*

A King Has Come

*No royal robes adorn the infant, no crown upon His sacred head,
Yet shepherds bow down, and wise men worship beside His lowly manger bed.
A King has come to dwell among us, a King has come to set us free.
He left His throne and laid aside His glory to be love's greatest story. How can it be?
God's only Son, a King has come.
Emmanuel has come to save us. The Promised One will rule and reign.
A host of heaven announced His entrance, now with the angels we proclaim:
He shall reign forevermore.*

Joy

*We had wandered long in darkness with a promise unfulfilled,
Sorrow wrapped our heaven hearts with the weight of sin until
The light of all lights rose like the sun to chase all the shadows away,
As midnight skies above Bethlehem burst into glorious praise.
Joy, joy, joy to the world, born is the King, heaven and nature sing:
Joy, joy, joy to the world, let all creation rejoice.
Tell the lost and broken hearted there is hope for Christ has come.
Shout the news that God is here, come and see what love has done.
The gift of all gifts given to us, His mercy and pardon come down,
As choirs of angels lift up the song gladly repeating the sound.
For the wonders of His love, sing hallelujah. To God's only Son.
Sing hallelujah! For the wonders of His love.*

LEAVING TO SERVE IN GOD'S NAME

*** CLOSING WORDS**

*** CLOSING HYMN #56:** *The First Nowell*

* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

* **POSTLUDE:** *The Angel's Trumpet*

D. ELIOT

* *Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

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

WELCOME to this service of worship at Bethany Presbyterian Church. 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](https://twitter.com/bpresbyterian).

Operating our audio and video systems this morning is **Rick Purcell**. Anyone wishing to join this team of volunteers please contact the church office at any time.

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.

Resources used in this morning's worship:

- *Worship Design Studio* (www.worshipdesignstudio.com)
- *Ministry Matters* website (www.ministrymatters.com)

If you have not submitted your **Pledge Card** for 2018, please do so at your earliest convenience. They can be brought by the church office at any time, or mailed to the church to the attention of Pam Hurt. Thank you for your continued support of the mission and ministry of Bethany Presbyterian!

Our **Advent worship series "Angels Among Us"** continues this morning, incorporating resources for the series along with our choir's Christmas presentation ***While the World Slept***, by Jason Cox. Notice our themes for this morning and this evening, as well as next Sunday.

- **Advent 4/Christmas Eve – December 24th: Luke 2:1-20 – This Will Be a Sign: #morelove**
- **Sunday after Christmas – December 31st: Matthew 2:1-23 – Get Up and Go: #morelife**

Make your plans also to gather with family and friends for our **Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service, at 5:00 pm on this evening**. This is always a meaningful culmination of our Advent journey as we celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Next Sunday, December 31st not only marks the end of 2017, but also an observance of **Fifth Sundays @ Bethany**. Our worship will be a bit less formal, as we continue our celebration of the season. As a special way of gathering as a family join us for a **Biscuit Bar Breakfast at 9:00**. There will be biscuits with many options for enhancement, coffee, juice, and much good fellowship.

Join us for a big Sunday two weeks from today, **Sunday January 7th**, as we observe the **Baptism of the Lord Sunday**. Our worship includes the **Ordination and Installation of Elders, the Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Vows, and the Dedication of our New Baptismal Font**.

John will be taking a few days off this week to spend time with family. He will be back in the pulpit next Sunday morning.

Do you have a smartphone? Are you on Facebook? If so, take a moment to **"check in" on Facebook**, letting your friends know that you are here at Bethany Presbyterian Church! It may seem like a small thing, but in reality, it is a wonderful message of evangelism and witness, as you let the cyber-world know what is important to you.

To the parents of young children: Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel that you must suppress those wiggles in God's house. **Please note that a professionally staffed nursery is available during the worship hour.** Here are some hints to make worship with your children more rewarding:

- Consider sitting towards the front where it is easier for little ones to engage. On the second pew nearest the choir loft, there are activities for children of all ages to keep busy with during the service.
- Quietly explain the parts of the service and actions of the pastor, musicians, and leaders.
- Sing the hymns, pray and voice the responses. Children learn behavior by mimicking you.
- If you have to leave the sanctuary with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me!"
- Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to church, to God, and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.
- **To adult worshippers:** The presence of children is a gift to the church and they are a reminder that our church is growing! Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to their parents.

SERVE Ministry: (Lead Elder: Jean Payne)

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

Bill Faucette	Diane Miller	John & Ann Sutton
Faye Campbell	Jack Cook	Peter Slater
Frances Nolan	Polly & Dick Wilson	Joey Leake
Layla Benoklen	Teresa Wilborn	Shannon Russell
Ida Whitney	Tiffany Tauchren	Mary Moore
Rachel Poteat	Jean Berry	Barbara Cousins
Jeremy Harden	Christy Lutterloh	Pat Kennedy
Anne McDaniels	Eleanor Thompson	Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Mike Sutton	Nancy Sutton	Pete Campbell
Steward Dillard	Norma Proctor	Carolyn Thompson
Ben Johnson	Sandy Cook and niece Rachel	Shelvia Russell
Celeste Bayliff Agner	Erick Russell	Ruby Martin
	Levi Byrd	

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

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.

Young at Heart Class (Young at Heart Classroom – across from pastor's office)

Using the *Uniform Series*, this class engages in lively discussions pertaining to the biblically based curriculum. The class is taught by a very capable team of teachers.

Seeker's Class (Church Office)

The Seeker's Class is currently using the *Wired Word* curriculum, looking at current events as they relate to our faith.

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.

SUPPORT Ministry: (Lead Elders: Ron Osborne, Ron Kimrey, and Glenn Patterson)

Elders of the Month for December are **Karen Maxwell** and **Brandon Troxler**

The Bethany family extends warmest appreciation and gratitude to **Ron Kimrey**, who is rotating off of the Session as his term ends.

This Week's Calendar:

Today:

- **Fourth Sunday of Advent: #DoNotBeAfraid #morelove**
- 9:45 – Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 – Worship / Lighting of the Advent Candles / Special choir Christmas presentation
- **5:00 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service**

Monday, the 25th: CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, the 25th – Saturday, the 30th – John on vacation

Sunday, the 31st:

- **9:00 – Biscuit Bar Breakfast**
- 9:45 – Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 – Worship

Session

Moderator: Rev. John W. Johnson

Clerk: Rick Purcell

Treasurer: Ron Osborne

Class of 2017:

Ron Kimrey

Karen Maxwell

Class of 2018:

Glenn Patterson

Nancy Purcell

Brandon Troxler

Class of 2019:

A. J. Campbell

Ron Osborne

Jean Payne



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Staff

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson – pastor@bethanypreschurch.org
Director of Music: Christopher Bagley – music@bethanypreschurch.org
Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – office@bethanypreschurch.org
Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org

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Bethany Presbyterian is a Stephen Ministry Congregation

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