



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

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December 24, 2022 – 5:00 pm

Christmas Eve



"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 2:7 (CEB)

CELEBRATING THE ANNOUNCEMENT

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*Merry Christmas! 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! Portions of today's liturgy are taken from Ruth Burgess, *Winter: Liturgical Resources for November, December and January* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Productions, 2016).*

PRELUDE: *Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming*

JAMES MANSFIELD/TUNE: ES IST EIN'ROS GEISTLICHE KIRCHENGESANG, KOHN, 1599

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***PROCESSIONAL CAROL #23:** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

FRENCH CAROL

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria, in excelsis Deo;
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song? **(Refrain)**

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. **(Refrain)**

***OPENING RESPONSE**

"THERE WAS NO ROOM," SIMON TAYLOR

Lord Jesus,
there was no room for you
in the inn on the night that you were born:
Help us to make room in our hearts for you.

Lord Jesus,
a star shone brightly
in the sky to announce your birth:
Lead us to your light that we too may worship.

Lord Jesus,
angels sang at your birth
filling the night sky with the celebration of divine love:
***Fill us with joy
as we sing the praises of the Christ child
who is God-with-us.***

***LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

"ADVENT WREATH CEREMONY," TERI CAROL PETERSON

In the beginning was the Word –
spoken and breathed,
a promise made and kept.
***Glorify the Lord with me –
God's promise is true!***
The Word was in the beginning,
and through him all things came into being.
***Eternal and near at hand,
already and not yet,
God's promise is the foundation of all life.***
Glory to God!
The Word is made flesh, giving voice to God's promise yet again.

All candles are lit

CAROL #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.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

"GOD WHO LOVES TO BE WITH US," MARGERY TOLLER

God who loves to be with us,
when you were born,
you were born into a community.

Gather us as your community tonight.

***A community of young and old,
a community of those with status and influence and those with none,
a community of different genders and races,
a community that includes people and animals and the whole of creation.***

Gather us as a community that meets in joy:
***a community that has heard the angel's song of peace and goodwill,
a community that has seen a star in the sky
and has followed it.***

God who loves to be with us,
gather us into your community tonight;
help us to welcome you,
and to welcome one another
in kindness and caring love. ***Amen.***

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!

A PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

As you came to your people on a night so long ago
to be with us, God-with-us,
and as you left us your Spirit to remain with us,
be with us this evening.
Help us to hear your story anew,
and find you in the depth of these ancient words. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Nancy Purcell

PSALM 96:10-13

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 740

CAROL #40: *Joy to the World*

ISAAC WATTS

Joy to the world, the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

SCRIPTURE
LUKE 2:1-7

Rick Purcell

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 1245

CAROL #44: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

PHILLIPS BROOKS

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

SCRIPTURE
LUKE 2:8-14

Kim Mitchell-Ayers

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 1245

CAROL #38: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
From heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

SCRIPTURE
LUKE 2:15-20

Glenn Patterson

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 1245

CAROL #22: *Angels From the Realms of Glory*

HENRY THOMAS SMART, 1867

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.

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light: **(Refrain)**

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star. **(Refrain)**

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. **(Refrain)**

A CHRISTMAS READING

"A NEW MELODY," HOWARD THURMAN

SPECIAL MUSIC: *O Holy Night*

PLACIDE CAPPEAU (1847)

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

A LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

"ALL THIS NIGHT," RODDY COWIE

All this night, God's world lies waiting,
sensing more than humans know:
high on lonely winter hillsides
sheep look up to stars aglow.

***Silence deepens, Heaven trembles,
music ripples on the wind:
light and glory split the sky,
and song floods ears and hearts and minds.***

Glory be to God the Father,
source and Lord of all that is:
peace to those God's mercy blesses,
joy to those God greets as theirs.

***Wonder courses through creation,
knowing what God's hand has done:
passing through the gate of flesh
to shine on earth as God the Son.***

Glory breaks on winter hillsides,
sweeping through the town below,
breaking chains of time and space
to set us singing as we go.

***Glory, sing the heights of Heaven,
Glory, sings the human heart:***

***God has bound Godself to us
in bonds no force or fire can part.***

You are invited to take your candle, receive the light and pass it on to your neighbor. Please dip your unlit candle into your neighbors lit candle, and then the neighbor alongside you will dip their candle into yours. We will conclude our Christmas Eve service by singing "Silent Night."

SENDING IN THE LIGHT: *Silent Night

JOSEPH MOHR

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and Child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!"

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

** Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

December 24th – Christmas Eve

We're coming together at 5pm on that Saturday evening for an evening filled with stories and carols. We will close with the traditional candlelight "Silent Night."

December 25th – Christmas Day

Christmas is on a Sunday morning this year! Merry Christmas to us! We will hold a shorter, casual service at 11 to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

January 1st – New Years Day/First Sunday of Christmas

The first Sunday of Christmas happens to be New Years Day this year. We'll have another more informal service with a carol sing.

January 8th – Baptism of the Lord/Epiphany Sunday

We will celebrate the new year with a service that will include the Sacrament of Communion and once again we'll chalk the doors, just like we did last year. We will also hold a brief Congregational Meeting to elect a Nominating Committee for this year's class of Elders.

January 29th - Brunch Church

It's our first Fifth Sunday of the year. We will celebrate with a Brunch Church service at 11. Invite your friends!

Scouts Looking for Storage Space

Pack and Troop 9 Scouts are looking for a Donor to provide a 1,000 Sq foot storage type building, or warehouse, to store the following Scout Equipment:

2 camping trailers , 1 sailboat (Sailing Merit Badge), 1 demo car (Automotive Merit Badge).

Space needed for security and protection from the weather.

Feel free to contact:

Jeff Benes - Committee Chair Cub Pack 9 & Troops 9

(336) 675-9086 cell

benes.nc@att.net

This Week's Calendar:

Today:

Saturday, December 24th

5:00 – Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25th – Christmas

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

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love learn serve



Session

Moderator: Rev. Jon Phillips

Clerk: Randy Cousins

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

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Class of 2022:

Bill Abplanalp

Helen Brown

Tina Patterson

Class of 2023:

Chip Allen

Randy Cousins

Shelby Smith

Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

Staff

Transitional Pastor: Rev. Jon Phillips – pastor@bethanypreschurch.org

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