



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

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March 17, 2024 – 11:00am

Fifth Sunday in Lent



"Agape Feast" (Catacombe di Priscilla)

"Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that he's near, at the door. Mark 13:28-29 (CEB)

BRUNCH CHURCH

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Welcome to Brunch Church! Brunch church is a new take on a very old way of doing worship, based on the Agape Meals of the earliest church. The inspiration for this service is taken from the service developed by Grace Commons, a former Missional Faith Community of Chicago Presbytery, written by Rev. Nanette Sawyer and Rob Clearfield, which in turn is based on the Dinner Church practice developed by St. Lydia's in Brooklyn.

PREPARING THE MEAL AND THE TABLE

When you are ready, please get your food and have a seat.

*GATHERING AROUND THE LIGHT

Welcome – we gather together to share a sacred meal just as the first followers of Jesus did. We will stand at our tables and face the candle and sing three times:

SONG #586 (GTG) *Live in Charity* Ubi caritas (sung 3 times)

Live in char-i-ty and stead-fast love.
Live in char-i-ty; God will dwell with you.

BLESSING THE MEAL

We bless our meal singing:

HYMN #513: *Let Us Break Bread Together (verse 1, sung once)*

Let us praise God together on our knees; (on our knees;)
Let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees.)
When I fall on my knees,
With my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me.)

BRUNCH AND COMMUNITY

Now, we eat together. We'll spend the first part of our meal in conversation, then move into the scripture reading and a time of Holy Conversation where we will move around and have a special series of discussions.

RESPONSIVE READING

MARK 12:28-44

The temple's fate

13 As Jesus left the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, look! What awesome stones and buildings!"

² Jesus responded, "Do you see these enormous buildings? Not even one stone will be left upon another. All will be demolished."

³ Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ***⁴ "Tell us, when will these things happen? What sign will show that all these things are about to come to an end?"***

Keep watch!

⁵ Jesus said, "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many people will come in my name, saying, 'I'm the one!' They will deceive many people. ⁷ When you hear of wars and reports of wars, don't be alarmed. These things must happen, but this isn't the end yet. ***⁸ Nations and kingdoms will fight against each other, and there will be earthquakes and famines in all sorts of places. These things are just the beginning of the sufferings associated with the end.***

²⁴ "In those days, after the suffering of that time, the sun will become dark, and the moon won't give its light. ²⁵ The stars will fall from the sky, and the planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken. ***²⁶ Then they will see the Human One coming in the clouds with great power and splendor. ²⁷ Then he will send the angels and gather together his chosen people from the four corners of the earth, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven.***

A lesson from the fig tree

²⁸ "Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that he's near, at the door. ³⁰ I assure you that this generation won't pass away until all these things happen. ***³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away.***

³² "But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the angels in heaven and not the Son. Only the Father knows. ³³ Watch out! Stay alert! You don't know when the time is coming. ³⁴ It is as if someone took a trip, left the household behind, and put the servants in charge, giving each one a job to do, and told the doorkeeper to stay alert. ***³⁵ Therefore, stay alert! You don't know when the head of the household will come, whether in the evening or at midnight, or when the rooster crows in the early morning or at daybreak. ³⁶ Don't let him show up when you weren't expecting and find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to all: Stay alert!"***

HOLY CONVERSATION

This morning we will discuss the stories with the people at our tables. The following questions are meant to help guide your discussion:

- What do you notice in this story?
- Where do you find hope in this story?
- Many Christians have presumed that they lived in the end times, but Jesus is clear that we shouldn't be alarmed when things in the world get bad. Instead, how can we best "stay alert" (verse 37) in our time?

CENTERING MUSIC

Chris will gather us back together with music after our conversation. Please return to your seats.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Throughout Lent, we will hold a period of silent prayer and reflection during our Prayers of the People. This time will be opened and closed in song. During the closing song, you are invited to come forward to light a tealight to represent your prayer. Each week you will be invited to pray on a different theme. This week, you are invited to pray for our neighbors.

HYMN 471 *"O Lord, Hear My Prayer" (Glory to God):*

O Lord, hear my prayer.
O Lord, hear my prayer.
When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer.
O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.

*...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.*

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When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer.
O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.

BLESSING THE PEOPLE

HYMN #513: *Let Us Break Bread Together (verse 3, sung once)*

Let us praise God together on our knees; (on our knees;)
Let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees.)
When I fall on my knees,
With my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me.)

As we go from this place, may we do so in peace to love and serve the Lord and our neighbor. **Amen.**

CLEANING UP AND DEPARTING IN PEACE



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sundays, 9:45am Bible 101 Part 2: The New Testament – Evie C. Marshall Room

We're back this Sunday! With a brand New Testament! Join Jon and friends as we continue our Bible 101 survey of the Biblical text, focusing on how it is interpreted, its context, and its content.

All Day Throughout Lent – Stations of the Cross – Recreation Area

The Stations of the Cross have been a part of the Lenten journey of Christians to express their faith in a multisensory way for centuries. You are invited to participate in this ancient tradition of remembering Christ's death by walking an ecumenical version in our Recreation Area this Lenten season.

Thursdays Throughout Lent 11am-1pm – Drive Thru Prayer – Parking Lot

Do you need prayer? You are invited to stop on by our parking lot on Thursdays from 11-1 for prayer with Jon or an elder throughout the Lenten season.

Sundays February 18 – March 17th 11am – Lenten Worship - Sanctuary

The season of Lent. Our Lenten Sunday worship will include extended periods of silent prayer.

Sunday, March 17th 11am – Brunch Church – Fellowship Hall

For worship on the 5th Sunday of Lent we will hold a Brunch Church service. Our Scouts will provide the meal and serve us as we come together around the table to worship and eat together.

Saturday, March 23rd 10:00am -11:30am – Easter Egg Hunt Fellowship Hall

Join us inside the Fellowship Hall for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! We have aged based egg hunting for the kids, games and art for all ages, and a cake walk too!

Sunday, March 24th 11am - Palm Sunday Service - Sanctuary

Tuesday, March 26th Alamance Co. Mobile Library

The Alamance County Public Libraries 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

Thursday, March 28th 6pm – Maundy Thursday Dinner Church – Fellowship Hall

Come and join us for Dinner Church, a meal and liturgy around the table as we commemorate the Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples. Our Scouts will provide the meal and serve us. Come as you are and invite a friend – all are welcome!

Friday, March 29th 7:00pm - Good Friday Seven Last Words - Sanctuary

A service of prayer and reflection on the Seven Last Words. Please note that there will be extended periods of silence and a darkened sanctuary during this service.

Sunday, March 31st 11am Easter Sunday - Sanctuary

Our Easter celebration. Celebrate Jesus' resurrection with us!

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, March 17th – 5th Sunday in Lent – Brunch Church
9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 – New Testament Evie C. Marshall classroom
11:00 – Worship (In-Person) – Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 20th
6:30 – Choir Practice

All Day Throughout Lent
Stations of the Cross – Recreation Area

Thursdays Throughout Lent
11-1– Drive Thru Prayer – Church Parking Lot

Saturday, March 23rd – Easter Egg Hunt – 10:00am-11:30am Fellowship Hall

Sunday, March 24th – Palm Sunday
9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 – New Testament Evie C. Marshall classroom
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

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Session

Moderator: Rev. Jon Phillips

Clerk: Randy Cousins

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

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Class of 2024:

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Class of 2026:

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Staff

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