



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

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March 19, 2023 – 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Lent



"The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins,"
William Blake, 1822.

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten young bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Now five of them were wise, and the other five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps but didn't bring oil for them. But the wise ones took their lamps and also brought containers of oil."

Matthew 25:1-4 (CEB)

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! Parts of today's liturgy are from Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill, *Eggs and Ashes: Practical and Liturgical Resources for Lent and Holy Week* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2004); and Sally Foster-Fulton, *Dancing in the Desert: Prayers and reflections for Lent* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2016).*

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *'Tis Midnight, and on Olive's Brow*

WILLIAM BRADBURY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***OPENING HYMN #78:** *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*

ISAAC WATTS

Alas! And did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sovereign die!
Would He devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I!

Was it for crimes that I had done
He suffered on the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When Christ, the great Redeemer, died
For human creatures' sin.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give my self away;
'Tis all that I can do.

***OPENING SENTENCES**

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR LENT," RUTH BURGESS

Young and old, friend and strangers, ***God welcomes us.***
Lost and bewildered, found and rejoicing, ***God welcomes us.***
Proud of our success, afraid of our poverty, ***God welcomes us.***
This morning, this day,
This night, forever, ***God welcomes us with a hug of love.***

Let us worship our God.

***GATHERING PRAYER**

"HUNGRY FOR THE FAST," SALLY FOSTER-FULTON

We're hungry, Lord – for time that isn't rushed or triple-booked, for family and friends, for a chance simply to be.
And we're starved sometimes – for affection and understanding, for love and peace, for a moment to share.
We're hungry, Lord.

We're hungry, Lord – for justice and freedom, for equality and other folk's safety, for a fair chance in this world.
The haves and have-nots never meet, so how can they share? Help us to bridge the gap
and satisfy the ones who need help to heal. ***We're hungry, Lord.***

We're hungry, Lord – for a new path, a different direction, a vision that you endorse.
Keep us searching for the bread of heaven, which has the power to sustain us all.
Keep us hopeful as we fast, Lord, because we know that you can fill us with the food that keeps us satisfied.
Amen.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Merciful God, your word is our way of truth and life. Create in us hearts that are clean and put your Holy Spirit within us, so that we may receive your grace and declare your praise forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

PSALM 43:3-4

PEW BIBLE, 697

MATTHEW 25:1-13

PEW BIBLE, 1206MATYM

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

***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. Amen.

***BLESSING OUR GIFTS**

***HYMN OF THE DAY #92:** *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

ELIZABETH CECIA & DOUGLAS CLEPHANE

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.

Upon that cross of Jesus
Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears
Two wonders I confess:
The wonders of redeeming love
And my unworthiness.

CONFESSIONAL LITANY AND PRAYER

Throughout Lent we will be praying through the Lord's Prayer. In your bulletin you received a prayer cloth. We will begin this time of prayer by the choir singing the Lord's Prayer, reciting a brief litany, and then praying and meditating on the specific phrase from the Lord's Prayer of the day. When we are done, you will be invited to bring the prayer cloth and lay it before the three crosses and pick up a rock from the table while we chant The Lord's Prayer.

Let us come together to tell the truth about ourselves,
singing together the prayer our Lord taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (CHOIR)

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.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

We will now enter into a time of silent prayer. You are invited to pray and meditate on the phrase "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" while holding your prayer cloth.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE: The Lord's Prayer

As our time of silent prayer is concluded, you are invited to come forward and leave your cloth at the foot of the cross, symbolizing bringing your Lenten prayer before Christ while we sing together. Once you place your cloth, please pick up a rock with the name of a member of the church on it. We will pray for one another after the sermon.

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 sins, as we forgive them that sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Show Me The Way, O Lord*

JAY ALTHOUSE

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"Another Wedding Story"*

REV. PHILLIPS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

You are once again invited to enter into a time of silent prayer. This time we will be praying for the person whose name is on the rock you picked up from the table.

LITANY FOR LENT

"LEAD US ON OUR JOURNEY," RUTH HARVEY

God, our God,
you have called us to be a people
on the move;
travelling light,
dying to live,
ready to lose ourselves for the sake of the world.

***You have called us to be a people
with a purpose;
travelling without a map,
travelling to where we are lead,
sustained by your Spirit,
committed to the gospel for the hope of the world.***

You have called us, your people,
to be the church.
But we are a church with problems:
too strong for the weak,
too staid for the young,
too respectable for the poor,
too divided for mission,
too obsessed with our own lives to think of the lives of others,
too unsure of our message to speak to the world.

***Move us on our journey
from where we are to where you want us to go.
Open our eyes on the way
to the people of different cultures, continents and countries,
who can bring difference to our lives.***

Take us on our journey
from where we are to what you want us to be;
so that we become a community
where all are welcomed and no one is excluded,
all are valued and no one is made to feel inadequate,
all are forgiven and no one is ashamed to belong,
all are encouraged and no one is too hurt to come among us.

***Lead us on our journey
from who we are to who you want us to be;
so that patience is built into us,
kindness is assumed in us,
gentleness is part of us,
compassion flows from us,
truth is second nature to us,
and the commitment of love is part of us.***

Let us go gladly on the journey towards Easter –
the journey towards death and resurrection.
Let us journey in the peace and power of the Spirit.

CLOSING HYMN #15: *Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers

LAURETIUS LAURENTI

Rejoice! Rejoice, believers,
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising
And soon He will draw nigh;
Up, watch with expectation,
At the midnight comes the cry.

See that your lamps are burning,
Replenish them with oil;
Look now for your salvation,
The end of sin and toil.
The marriage feast is waiting,
The gates wide open stand;
Arise, O heirs of glory,
The Bridegroom is at hand!

Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for,
Above this shadowed sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption,
And ever be with Thee!

***SENDING**

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR LENT," RUTH BURGESS

Our message is this:

God welcomes sinners and eats with them.

Our hope is this:

God welcomes sinners and eats with them.

Our home is this:

God welcomes sinners and eats with them.

CHORAL BLESSING: *My Peace*

POSTLUDE: *More About Jesus*

JOHN R. SWENEY/ARRANGED BY JACK W. JONES

** Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Feb. 26th - March 26th Lenten Worship – 11am in the Sanctuary

The Season of Lent. Our Lenten Sunday worship will include periods of silent prayer and mediation on the Lord's Prayer as well as opportunities to pray for one another.

March 21st 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.

April 1st Community Easter Egg Hunt – 10:00-11:30am in the Recreation Area

We're bringing back an old favorite of ours – our Easter Egg hunt! Kids of all ages are welcome to participate in this fun family

April 2nd Psalm Sunday Service – 11am in the Sanctuary

Our Palm Sunday service will include a Cantata sung by our choir and Communion.

April 3rd – April 9th Stations of the Cross – All day – here in the Recreation Area

We are excited to offer our Recreation Area as a space for the community for prayerful reflection during Holy Week. Our 15 stations (including a final station for the Resurrection) will utilize ecumenical meditations and prayers from the Iona Community.

April 6th Maundy Thursday Dinner Church – 6:30pm in the 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. RSVP to the office at 336-227-4041.

Come as you are – all are welcome!

April 7th Good Friday Seven Last Words – 6:30 in the Sanctuary

We will hold 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.

April 9th Easter Sunday – 11am in the Sanctuary

Our Easter celebration. Celebrate Jesus' resurrection with us!

This Week's Calendar:

Today Sunday, March 19th - 4th Sunday in Lent

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

Wednesday, March 22nd

6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, March 26th - 5th Sunday in Lent

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 2023:

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Class of 2025:

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