



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

March 20, 2022 – 11:00 am

Third Sunday in Lent



Duccio, "Maesta," 1308-1311

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."
John 13:34-35 (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. Some of our liturgy this morning is taken from Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill, Eggs and Ashes: Practical and Liturgical Resources for Lent and Holy Week, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2004).

PRELUDE: *March to the Cross*

P.L.TCHAIKOVSKY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SENTENCES

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit

God's love is poured into our hearts

Rom. 5:5

*OPENING HYMN #376: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

CHARLES WESLEY

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,

Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest;
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

CONFESSIONAL LITANY

Our time of telling the truth about ourselves in Lent will be spoken with a sung congregational response:

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

Bless the Lord, my soul,
and bless God's ho-ly name.
Bless the Lord, my soul,
who leads me in-to life.

God of justice, mercy and truth
we gather in your presence,
aware of it in all creation –
where the warmth of the sun,
the strength of the earth
the energy of the waves
the stability of the earth
all remind us of your constant love
and your power to change and challenge our lives

"Plumb Line Prayer" – Jan Sutch Pickard

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

God of justice, mercy and truth,
we gather in your presence
aware that in our world
there is one law for the rich
and one for the poor,
that the scales are weighed against many
of our sisters and brothers,
and against new nations struggling to become,
and to find a balance

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

God of justice, mercy and truth,
we gather in your presence,
aware of our own lives –
individually and in community –
where they measure up,
where they fall short,
where they are out of kilter –
as your plumb line shows us what is true.

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

Help us to be true to ourselves,
true to our history,
true to our own story,
true to you.

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

silence

Eternal God,
your kingdom has broken into our troubled world
through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son.
Help us to hear your word and obey it,
that we may become instruments of your saving love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

HYMN 544 *"Bless the Lord" (Glory to God)*

Amen.

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

Our Prayer for Illumination and Scripture Readings during Lent will be spoken with a sung congregational response:

HYMN 842 *"The Lord Is My Light" (Glory to God):*

The Lord is my light,
my light and salvation:
in God I trust;
in God I trust.
(sung 2x)

Gracious God, our way in the wilderness, guide us, by your Word, through these forty days, and minister to us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may be reformed, restored, and renewed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN 842 *"The Lord Is My Light" (Glory to God):*

PSALM 17:1-7

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 674

HYMN 842 *"The Lord Is My Light" (Glory to God):*

JOHN 13:21-38

PEW BIBLE, PAGES 1311

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN 842 *"The Lord Is My Light" (Glory to God):*

***HYMN OF THE DAY #316:** *Where Charity and Love Prevail*

OMER WESTENDORF

Where charity and love prevail,
there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love,
by love are we thus bound.

Let us recall that in our midst
dwells Christ, God's holy Son.
As members of each body joined,
in him we are made one.

Let strife among us be unknown;
let all contentions cease.
Be God's glory that we seek;
be His our only peace.

Let us forgive each other's faults
as we our own confess,
that we may love each other
well in Christian gentleness.

Love can exclude no race or creed
if honored be God's name;
our common life embraces
all whose Maker is the same.

TIME OF PRAYER

Our Time of Prayer during Lent begin and end a sung congregational response:

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.

Time of silent prayer and meditation

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

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.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD IN MUSIC:

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: "Love and Denial"

REV. PHILLIPS

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN #384: *O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go*

GEORGE MATHESON

O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

*CLOSING RESPONSES

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR SUNDAYS IN LENT" – RUTH B

Teach us truth. Gladden our hearts.

Circle us with love.

Trust us with justice. Sweeten our days.

Circle us with love.

Keep us holy. Give light to our eyes.

Circle us with love.

Amen.

POSTLUDE: *Thine is the Glory*

BRIAN GLYNCANNON

* Please stand in body or spirit.

Hymn Story

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go

George Matheson suffered poor eyesight from birth, and at age 15 learned that he was going blind. Not one to be easily discouraged, he enrolled in the University of Glasgow and graduated at age 19. He then began theological studies, and it was while pursuing those that he began totally blind.

Matheson's three sisters rose to the occasion and tutored him through his studies—even going so far as to learn Hebrew, Greek, and Latin to be able to help their brother. With their help he was able to complete his studies.

After graduation, he answered a call to serve as pastor of a church in Innellan, Argyllshire, Scotland. He had a successful ministry there, and was later called to serve as pastor of the much larger (2000 member) St. Bernard's Church in Edinburgh.

On the day that one of his sisters was married, Matheson wrote this hymn. He recorded this account of that experience in his journal:

"My hymn was composed in the manse of Innellan on the evening of June 6, 1882. I was at that time alone. It was the day of my sister's marriage, and the rest of my family were staying overnight in Glasgow. Something had happened to me which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high. I have never been able to gain once more the same fervor in verse."

Matheson obviously didn't intend to tell us what caused his "most severe mental suffering," but people who know

his background strongly suspect that it had to do with a heartbreaking experience several years earlier. His fiancée had broken her engagement to him, telling him that she couldn't see herself going through life married to a blind man. Matheson never married, and it seems likely that his sister's wedding brought to memory the woman that he had loved and the wedding that he had never enjoyed.

At any rate, Matheson's "severe mental suffering" inspired him to write this hymn, "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go." The hymn celebrates the constancy of God's love—"love that wilt not let me go"—"light that follow'st all my way"—"joy that seekest me through pain." It concludes by celebrating "Life that shall endless be."

Albert Peace, organist and editor of a journal called *The Scottish Hymnal*, wrote the tune, "St. Margaret," that is associated with the hymn. His experience was amazingly like that of Matheson, in that the music came to him quickly and he was able to write the tune in only five minutes.

When I read the various accounts of Matheson's writing this hymn, one sentence struck me as especially important. It was this—Matheson said, "The hymn was the fruit of that suffering." There is an important lesson in that. All of us suffer some sort of heartbreak or disappointment or disability at some point in our lives. What makes all the difference is our response—whether we let the hardship stop us or inspire us to greater effort.

Matheson suffered two severe blows that could have stopped him—the loss of his eyesight and the loss of his beloved. In both cases, he made the best of a bad situation—and we are all the richer for it. As this hymn reveals, it was his faith in God that kept him going through the adversities that he suffered. He believed that God's love would not let him go—and that God's light would follow him all his way—and that God's joy would seek him through his pain—and that faith made all the difference.

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Our Faith Community @ Work

WORSHIP Ministry: (Lead Elders: Nancy Purcell and Helen Brown)

WELCOME to this service of worship at Bethany Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). 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).

“I will show love to those who were called unloved and, to those who were called ‘not-my-people’, I will say ‘you are my people’ and they will answer, ‘you are our God.’” (Hosea 2:23) Bethany Presbyterian Church is a place where the mind is nourished as well as the spirit, and where we affirm the dignity and worth of every person. As we are all created in the image of God, we believe discrimination is incompatible with Christ’s Gospel of unconditional love. While we celebrate our Presbyterian identity, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. We invite conversations that move us to seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit. **Be who you are and be welcome here.**

A Note About the Offering: As we have returned to worship as the pandemic has been becoming less and less a threat, we have continued the practice of not passing the offering plates at the time of the offering during our service, thus decreasing the threat of spreading germs. Instead, you are invited to make your contribution in one of four ways: drop it in the offering plate that is located at the narthex door (before worship) and in the narthex (following worship); mail it in to the church; drop it off at the church in person; or, use our quick and secure online giving platform. This can be accessed through our website, or by scanning the QR code on the last page of this bulletin. Thanks for your generosity and cooperation.

SERVE Ministry: (Lead Elders: Tina Patterson and Kim Snyder)

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

Bethany Members

Linda Abplanalp
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Shelvia Russell

Christopher Bagley
Sylvia Donley
Ruby Martin
Mike Sutton
Ida Whitney

Katherine Bayliff
Henry Flythe
Joyce & Norman Mize
Nancy Sutton

Friends of Bethany

Carol Brooks
Bill Faucette
Christy Lutterloh
Diane Miller
Peter Slater
Tiffany Tauchren
Teresa Wilborn
Frank Wrenn

Janie Holt Clapp
Ben Johnson
Gaynell McCollum
Norma Proctor

Alex Thomas
Deborah & Larry

Jack Cook
Grace Johnson
Anne McDaniels
Shannon Russell
Ann Sutton
Randy Thompson
Cindy Uzzo
Don Burenhiede

TEACH Ministry: (Lead Elders: Tracey Troxler and Shelby Smith)

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) - NOT CURRENTLY MEETING DUE TO COVID

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.

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: Chip Allen, Randy Cousins, and Bill Abplanalp)

Elders of the Month for March are **Kim Snyder** and **Tracey Troxler**.

Anniversaries & Birthdays

- Russell & Lisa Donley March 11
- *****
- Russell Donley March 2
- Glenn Thompson March 3
- Meritt Russell March 4
- Bill Brown March 8
- Macie Smith March 12
- Danny Smith March 16
- Helen Byrd March 18
- Grace Dampier March 18

Liturgist

- March 6th
- March 13th Tina Patterson
- March 20th Helen Brown
- March 27th Chip Allen

This Week's Calendar:

Today

Third Sunday in Lent

- 9:45 – Sunday School for all ages (will return soon)
- 11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Wednesday, March 16th

- 6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, March 27th :- Fourth Sunday in Lent

- 9:45 – Sunday School for all ages (will return soon)
- 11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

bethany presbyterian

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

Chaplain: Rick Purcell – chaplain@bethanypreschurch.org

Director of Music: Christopher Bagley – music@bethanypreschurch.org

Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – admin@bethanypreschurch.org

Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org

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