



Bethany Presbyterian Church

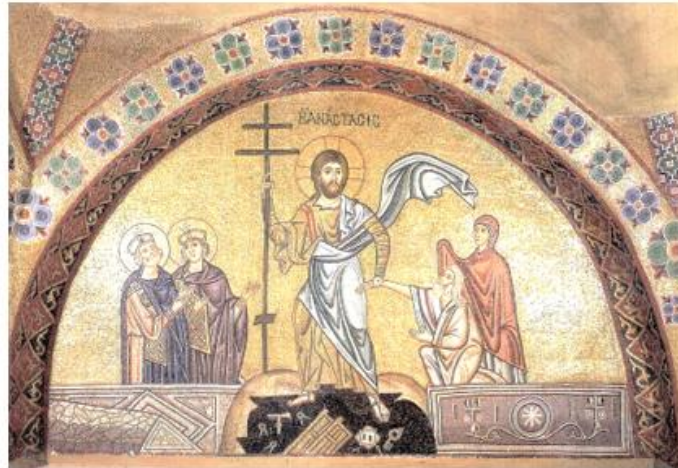
Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

April 7, 2024 – 11:00 am

Second Sunday of Easter



"Harrowing of Hell," Narthex mosaic, Hosios Loukas monastery, Greece,
ca. 1050 CE

As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?" Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:6-8 (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 Kimberly Bracken Long, ed, Feasting on the Word: Liturgies for Year B, Vol. 2, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015); and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>.

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*

G.F. HANDLE/ARR. & ABRIDGED BY LANI SMITH

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN:** *He Lives*

ALFRED H. ACKLEY

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever foes may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He's always near.

Refrain

He lives, he lives Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!

In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And tho' my heart grows weary I never will despair;
I know that He is leading thro' all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last. **(Refrain)**

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind. **(Refrain)**

*OPENING SENTENCES

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR EASTERTIDE," RUTH BURGESS

What do Christians do?
They share their possessions

What do Christians do?
They care for each other

What do Christians do?
They speak about Jesus

What do Christians do?
They live a new life

Let us worship our God.

GATHERING PRAYER

"LITURGY FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY," THOM SHUMAN

Imaginative God,
you smiled and the sun burst
through the shadows of chaos;
you laughed,
and all that is good and beautiful
was given shape by you;
you chuckled,
and the platypus splashed
in creation's fountain.

Laughing Jesus,
snickering at the feeble attempts
of the Evil One,
you showed us
how to resist temptation;
giggling at sin's desperate desire
to hold on to us,

you released us by your love;
howling with laughter
at death's foolish belief
that a tomb could hold you,
you burst forth into the kingdom
as the stars pealed with joy.

Spirit of Easter,
as you fill us with new life,
may we delight in sharing it with others;
as you tell us the good news
which can never be taken from us,
may we rejoice in offering it
to the broken, the sad, the lonely;
as you tickle us with grace,
with laughter on our lips
and joy in our hearts.

*God in Community, Holy and One,
our hearts overflow with wonder
as we say together: Amen.*

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

"THAT WE MAY CLING TO YOUR HEART," SCOTT CERVAS

Draw us from our tombs...
from the dark, self-imposed prisons of knowing-it-all...
into the light of your unflinching good news.
Use our encounters with the stories of scripture
to unbind us from our fascination with the status quo...
so that we may cling to your heart,
and see the world through your eyes. **Amen.**

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

MARK 6:7-13

PEW BIBLE, 1222

ACTS 1:1-11

PEW BIBLE, 1323

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY #593:** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

THOMAS KEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

***HYMN OF THE DAY:** *Because He Lives*

BILL GAITHER

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

Chorus

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because He Lives! **(Chorus)**

And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives! **(Chorus)**

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"LITURGY FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY," THOM SHUMAN

None of us likes to look foolish. But what is sillier: chasing after the world and all its gaudy trinkets which flatter our souls, or being a "fool of Christ," imitating him in service to others, offering ourselves in love and joy to the world? Let us admit to God the foolish choices we may every day in silent prayer.

Silence

Amused God,
you know better than we do what important people we believe we are.
Believing we have to be serious all the time,
we miss out on the joy of your creation.
Choosing to feast on the pain of the world,
we skip the picnic offered in paradise.
Clinging to the despair which is our best friend,
we ignore Jesus who can bring us home to your heart.

***Forgive us, heart of joy,
and make us open to the startling,
and upside down,
ways in which you work.
Fill us with Easter's laughter;
fill us with the love poured into us
through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.***

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

The gospels tell us over and over again
of the joy which comes to us through Christ.
When Jesus was around, lives were changed:
the sick were healed, the sorrowful began to laugh.
The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

***Through the Holy Spirit,
we are gifted with joy.
We are sent forth to bring good news to the oppressed,
to begin healing to the broken,
to anoint everyone with the oil of gladness.
Thanks be to God. We are forgiven. Amen.***

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE: *He is Lord*

He is Lord. He is Lord.
He is risen from the dead and He is Lord
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Ten Thousand Angels*

RAY OVERHOLT/ARR. BY TOM FETKE

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"Witnessing Joy"*

REV. PHILLIPS

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY," ELANA KEPPEL LEVY

*We believe in God who was before all things, maker of all things, source of all life.
We were made in God's image for vital work in this world – to do justice, to speak truth, to live in love.
But we recognize that God's image also blossoms in our lighter side when we are curious, playful, laughing.
God has given us the gift of humor to laugh at ourselves, to unmask the weaknesses of sin,
and to turn back to the arms of love.
In Christ Jesus, God came and walked among us, teaching us to embrace the weightier matters with a light touch.
Though we sinned and rejected him, he still chose to die for us.
The forces of evil grasped to contain him, but he arose, laughing, breaking all the bounds of sin and death.
As we follow him, we laugh with him, following the true light that cannot be conquered.
We believe in the Holy Spirit who teaches us to smile, to bear with difficulty,
and to endure from now until the joyful resolution of all creation.
We look forward to the coming kingdom of heaven when laughter and love resound
in every home and in every heart. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

"PRAYER OF THE DAY: EASTER 2B," THOM SHUMAN

THE 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.*

*CLOSING HYMN #118: *The Day of Resurrection!*

ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS

The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness,
The Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From this world unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over
With hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil,
That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal
Of resurrection light;
And listening to His accents,
May hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,
May raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful,
Let earth the song begin,
Let the round world keep triumph,
And all that is therein;
Let all things seen and unseen
Their notes of gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen,
Our joy that hath no end.

***SENDING**

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR EASTERTIDE," RUTH BURGESS

In us, among us
the peace of Jesus

In us, among us
the presence of Jesus

In us, among us
the power of Jesus

In us, among us
God's life and God's love

POSTLUDE: *Jesus Has Risen as He Said*

GERALD PETERSON

* *Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Tuesday, April 16th 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

Yard Sale Coming – Details to be announced

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, April 7th Second Sunday of Easter – Pennies for Hunger
9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 – New Testament Evie C. Marshall classroom
(Last class for Bible 101. Exam will be next Sunday. For Details ask Jon.)

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

Wednesday, April 10th
6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, April 14th Third Sunday of Easter

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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Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

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Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

Class of 2026:

Chip Allen

Jean Payne

Ben Russell

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