



# Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina  
[www.bethanypreschurch.org](http://www.bethanypreschurch.org)  
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May 5, 2024 – 11:00 am  
*Sixth Sunday of Easter*  
*Communion*



"Love is patient," Brett Jordan

Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (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, Fire and Bread: Resources for Easter Day to Trinity Sunday, (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2006), and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>.*

### TRINITY CHIMES

**PRELUDE:** *Prelude on "Bread of Life"*

GORDON YOUNG (BASED ON THE TUNE BY WILLIAM F. SHERWIN)

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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.

\*OPENING SENTENCES

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR EASTERTIDE," RUTH BURGESS

God is a God of grace and salvation  
There is no way we can buy God's favor  
***God has no favorites, God is love***

Jesus shared his life with all kinds of people  
Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan  
***Jesus has no favorites, Jesus is love***

The Holy Spirit dances in the mystery of creation  
The Holy Spirit delights in wisdom and in justice  
***The Holy Spirit has no favorites, the Holy Spirit is love***

Let us worship our God.

## GATHERING PRAYER

"CONCERTO OF CREATION," THOM SHUMAN

You raise your hand  
and gently begin  
the concerto of creation:  
birds carry the melody  
while stars keep the beat;  
mountains dance in merriment  
and little children clap  
their hands with joy.  
Love's Composer,  
our new songs are lifted to you.

The old, old song  
is made new in our hearts:  
Christ is Risen!  
Sing Alleluia!  
You invite us to sing to a world  
deafened by despair  
and haunted by the tunes of fear.  
Lord of the Dance,  
our new songs are lifted to you.

Believing we cannot  
carry a tune,  
we hesitate to join in  
the chorus of praise  
sung by all creation.  
So, you softly and gently  
hum the melody in our hearts  
until they burst with you,  
raising a rousing chorus  
of Amazing Grace.  
Music-making Spirit,  
our new songs are lifted to you.

Every song, old and new,  
is offered to you,  
God in Community,  
Holy in One,  
**Amen.**

## OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

### A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

"LIVING AND SHOWING LOVE," ANDY JAMES

Living God,  
speak to us anew of your love in Jesus Christ,  
that we too might live in love every day  
and show that love to all the world. **Amen.**

### ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

**MARK 12:28-31**

PEW BIBLE, 1234

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13**

PEW BIBLE, 1399

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.

**\*BLESSING OUR GIFTS**

More love to Thee, O Christ,  
More love to Thee!  
Hear Thou the prayer I make  
On bended knee.  
This is my earnest plea:  
More love, O Christ, to Thee;  
More love to Thee,  
More love to Thee!

Once earthly joy I craved,  
Sought peace and rest;  
Now Thee alone I seek,  
Give what is best.  
This all my prayer shall be:  
More love, O Christ to Thee;  
More love to Thee,  
More love to Thee!

Then shall my latest breath  
Whisper Thy praise;  
This be the parting cry  
My heart shall raise;  
This still its prayer shall be:  
More love, O Christ to Thee;  
More love to Thee,  
More love to Thee!

## TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"LOVE," TERI PETERSON

Whether we have the gift of beautiful speech, or the gift of understanding and knowledge, or the gift of faith or of generosity or of any other good thing – if we do not love, even our most precious talents are as nothing. And if we believe Love to be only a feeling or thought, still we miss the Truth. Before God, with the people of God, let us confess the ways we have fallen short of God's love. Let us pray.

Love is patient and kind

***and we are in a bit of a hurry...***

Love does not insist on its own way

***but really, God, my way is clearly best.***

Love is not envious or resentful

***and yet we hoard it as if there might not be enough.***

Love is all these verbs – rejoices, bears, believes, hopes, endures –

***but we are so tempted to confine it where we can understand and control, domesticating love into romance or intellect.***

God is Love, and those who abide in Love abide in God.

*Silence*

When we have not lived in your love, when we have insisted and hurt and believed ourselves to know fully even as we know only in part,

***Forgive us, O God.***

When we have thought, spoken, and acted in childish ways  
even as you call us to grow in your grace,  
***Forgive us, O God.***

Draw us again into your embrace, that we may abide in faith, hope, and love.  
***Amen.***

## **AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE**

Friends, hear this good news: Though now we see dimly, as though a tinted window,  
Love is clearing the way for us to know God just as fully as God knows us.  
***We will live the good news: in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! 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:** *The Next Time He Comes (with Hallelujah, What a Savior!)*

PHIL BARFOOT & REBECCA J. PECK/ARR. BY DAVE WILLIAMSON

**THE WORD PROCLAIMED**

**Sermon:** *"Love is"*

REV. PHILLIPS

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH – PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

*We affirm our faith in worship as a response to the hearing of the Word of God proclaimed. Our affirmations of faith often come from the historic creeds and confessions of our denomination's Book of Confessions. If you'd like to learn more about our creeds and confessions, we have a video series "Know Your Confessions" by Pastor Jon that you can find on our YouTube page ( direct shortened link here - <http://tiny.cc/z62qxz> )*

***In life and in death we belong to God.  
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,  
whom alone we worship and serve.***

***We trust in God,  
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.  
In sovereign love God created the world good  
and makes everyone equally in God's image,  
male and female, of every race and people,  
to live as one community.  
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.  
Ignoring God's commandments,  
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,  
accepting lies as truth,  
exploiting neighbor and nature,  
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.  
We deserve God's condemnation.***

*Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.  
In everlasting love,  
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people  
to bless all families of the earth.  
Hearing their cry,  
God delivered the children of Israel  
from the house of bondage.  
Loving us still,  
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.  
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,  
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,  
God is faithful still.*

*With believers in every time and place,  
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death  
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

*We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper today by inviting everyone who wants to participate up front to receive the bread and cup (we use gluten free bread and grape juice). If you are more comfortable remaining seated but would like to participate, raise your hand and we will come to your seat to serve you. We believe that Jesus invites everyone forward to his table to "taste and see," and so we proclaim that all are welcome to participate.*

### **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

...Christ our risen Lord is sacrificed for us;  
***Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!***

### **GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.  
***And also with you.***

Lift up your hearts.  
***We lift them to the Lord.***

Let us give thanks to the Lord your God.  
***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

In every time and every age, O God...  
...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

Blessed are you, O God, creator of all things...  
...we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.*

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**COMMUNION BY THE PEOPLE**

The gifts of God for the people of God.  
*Thanks be to God.*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*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 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 #533: *O Perfect Love***

DOROTHY F. GURNEY

O perfect love, all human thought transcending,  
Lowly we kneel in prayer before Thy throne,  
That theirs may be the love which knows no ending,  
Whom Thou forevermore dost join in one.

O perfect life, be Thou their full assurance  
Of tender charity and steadfast faith,  
Of patient hope and quiet, brave endurance,  
With childlike trust that fears nor pain nor death.

Grant them the joy which brightens earthly sorrow;  
Grant them the peace which calms all earthly strife,  
And to life's day the glorious unknown morrow  
That dawns upon eternal love and life.

**\*SENDING**

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR EASTERTIDE," RUTH BURGESS

Into our streets and homes we go  
*Living our lives in God's love*

Into our joys and sorrows we go  
*Living our lives in God's love*

Into the fight for justice we go  
*Living our lives in God's love*

Blessed with the friendship of God we go  
*Living our lives in God's love*

**POSTLUDE: *Carry His Love With You***

ADAM MASON

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*\* Please stand in body or spirit.*

## This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter, Communion & Pennies for Hunger  
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> Seventh Sunday of Easter  
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)



### Session

**Moderator:** Rev. Jon Phillips

**Clerk:** Randy Cousins

**Treasurer:** Glenn Patterson

### Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

### Class of 2025:

Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

### Class of 2026:

Chip Allen

Jean Payne

Ben Russell

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### Staff

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