



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina
www.bethanypreschurch.org
www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

August 25, 2024 – 11:00 am
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost



"Daniel's vision of the four beasts," Hans Holbein the younger, c. 16th century

As I continued to watch this night vision of mine, I suddenly saw one like a human being coming with the heavenly clouds. He came to the ancient one and was presented before him. Rule, glory, and kingship were given to him; all peoples, nations, and languages will serve him. His rule is an everlasting one—it will never pass away!—his kingship is indestructible.

Daniel 7:13-14 (COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE)

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 LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>; and Nathan Nettleton, LaughingBird.net. The Blessing of Backpacks, Teachers, and the Coming School Year is from Allie Lee, Arianne Lehn Braithwaite, and Amanda Meisenheimer, "Blessing of the Backpacks and Back-to-School Worship Liturgy," Illustrated Ministry, 2022

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Simple Blessings*

CHARITY BOYLES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***OPENING HYMN #482:** *Praise the Lord, God's Glories Show*

JOACHIM NEANDER

Praise the Lord, God's glories show, Alleluia!
Saints within God's courts below, Alleluia!
Angels round the throne above, Alleluia!
All that see and share God's love. Alleluia!

Earth to heaven and heaven to earth, Alleluia!
Tell the wonders, sing God's worth, Alleluia!
Age to age and shore to shore, Alleluia!
Praise God, praise forevermore! Alleluia!

Praise the Lord, great mercies trace, Alleluia!
Praise this providence and grace, Alleluia!
All that God for us has done, Alleluia!
All God sends us through the Son. Alleluia!

***OPENING SENTENCES**

JOHN 6:68-69

Jesus has the words of eternal life;
he is the Holy One of God.

GATHERING PRAYER

*Almighty God, you have taught us
that all our deeds without love are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts
the most excellent gift of love,
the very bond of peace and of all goodness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.*

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of abundant life,
your grace is our daily bread.
Nourish us by your Word
and fill us with your Spirit
so that we may grow in faith and love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

JOHN 18:33-37

PEW BIBLE, 1318

DANIEL 7:1-18

PEW BIBLE, 1081

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES
OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY #428: *We Give Thee But Thine Own*

WILLIAM WALSHAM HOW

We give Thee but Thine own,
What e'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

*HYMN OF THE DAY #377: *Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore*

CESAREO GABARAIN

Lord, you have come to the lakeshore
looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones;
you only asked me to follow humbly.

Refrain

O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

You know so well my possessions.
My boat carries no gold and no weapons.
You will find there, my nets and labor. **(Refrain)**

You need my hands full of caring,
through my labors to give others rest,
and constant-love that keeps on loving. **(Refrain)**

You, who have fished other oceans,
ever longed for by souls who are waiting,
my loving-friend, as thus you call me. **(Refrain)**

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"OTHER KINGS," STEPHEN FEARING

Come, people of God, let us tell the truth about ourselves.
Let us confess how we have fallen short of God's plan for us.
Come, to the font to be redeemed.
Let us come to the waters of our baptism to be cleansed.

You, God, are our one and only King.
We beg your forgiveness for the other "kings" we kneel before:
money...
power...
gossip...
self-righteousness...
racial privilege...
We beg your forgiveness, we who are broken and torn apart
by our own doings and un-doings.

Silence

Guide us to be your servants.
*Lead us to trust in you as the only king we need.
Direct our faith in your sovereign power
as we strive to follow your Son,
through the power of your Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.*

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

We have done wrong to God our king
but the good news of the gospel is this:
God has chosen mercy over vengeance.
Together, through the waters of our baptism,
we have been cleansed of our sin
and are redeemed as beloved servants of a merciful King.
Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE #356: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

ROBERT ROBINSON

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *O, My God, Bestow Thy Tender Mercy*

HAL H. HOPSON

from Psalm 51:
*(O, my God, bestow Thy tender mercy. Blot out my transgressions; cleanse my sin.
Bestow Thy tender love. Here me, restore me, forgive me, uphold me. From all my sins, O hide Thy face.
I cry to Thee. Hear Thou my prayer. Cast me not away. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Open Thou my lips, my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.)*

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"The Beasts and the Human One"*

REV. PHILLIPS

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS, TEACHERS, AND THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR

ILLUSTRATED MINISTRY

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

PRAYER FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

God of fresh starts and new beginnings,
we bring ourselves, our big feelings, and our backpacks to you.

In our backpacks, we carry blank pages, sharpened pencils, and pointy crayons,
and in our hearts, we carry big feelings, unanswered questions, and hopeful expectations.
That are endless possibilities of what this new year might bring –
of what we might learn, who we might meet, and who we might become.

God, our friend who is always with us, be with us through it all.

Be with us as we ride the bus.

Be with us as we walk.

Be with us as we buckle seat belts, zip-up jackets, and tie shoes.

However we get there, and whatever we wear,

bless this journey into something new.

For the grown-ups going back to school,

With-Us God, be with them too.

Thank you for our teachers, helpers, caregivers, and leaders,

and for all they do to help us learn and grow.

God, our friend who's full of wonder, fill their hearts and bless their hands. ***Amen.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

With you, every transition and new start is a reminder of your goodness, for you are always creating fresh, amazing things in us and through us. Though we are sad about the summer ending, we are grateful for this school year. We appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, knowing it is one of the biggest privileges we have. With thanks and love, we now offer everything we are to you, asking for your blessing.

We pray as and for students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for our hearts and all they hold – excitement and nervousness, disappointment and hope. We give you all our loves and fears. We pray for steady self-esteem and deeping resilience.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our minds, that they will expand in wonder and celebration, learning not just from the books studied but the people beside us. Open our minds with a willingness to be changed in unexpected ways, and settle our thought loops in peaceful places.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our hands, that they will reach out to help, welcome, and care. Bless our hands with patience and dedication as they grip pencils and type on keyboards, swish paint brushes and clap in song, grip monkey bars and lunch box handles, spin wheelchair tires and basketballs.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our feet, that they will move toward those different from us and help others in safe ways. Plant our feet next to those who feel alone, and bless our steps down hallways and sidewalks. We know you are with us wherever our feet go or stay.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our eyes, that they may see ourselves and others with compassion. Point our eyes toward those who are forgotten or struggling. Grow us in flexibility to see from all kinds of angles. Bless what and how we see, whether we're looking at a screen, a whiteboard, or the beauty of a person's face. And help us see with the most important eyes – the eyes of the Spirit within us.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our ears, that they will genuinely listen to all voices, especially those that haven't been listened to much. When things get noisy, help us listen extra carefully for your voice. Help us hear with the most important ears – the ears of the Spirit within us.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We say a special prayer for parents, grandparents, and our kid's adults, as the start of a new school year is always another leap of faith. Wrap them with your reassuring love as they entrust their children and trust in you. When questions remain unanswered, and the realm of control is finite, bless them with peace and the promise you are right there with their child, whether heading to preschool or driving to college.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We also pray now for teachers, staff and administrators. Bless these faithful servants with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classroom with a steady hand on their shoulder. Give them peace, patience, and balance in the pressures they face, and bravery to build structures and systems which justly serve all your children. Give them delight in the young ones before them, and recognition of the sweet ways children are also teachers.

Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for health and wholeness, fun and growth, surprise and amazement, for this school year ahead, knowing you will hold us all the way through.

We thank you, God, and love you. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #441: *I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

TIMOTHY DWIGHT

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The church our blessed Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God;
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can yield
And brighter bliss of Heaven.

***SENDING**

"COMMISSION & BLESSING," NATHAN NETTLETON

Go now with your faith in the Lord Jesus
and your love open to all God's people.
Bless those who curse you,
love those who hate you,
and treat others as you would wish them to treat you.

And may God give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation;
May Christ Jesus count you among his saints for eternity;
And may the Holy Spirit mark you out
for fullness of redemption.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
in the name of Christ. Amen.

POSTLUDE: *More Than Conquerors*

GERALD PETERSON

** Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Tuesday, September 10th 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

S.A.F.E. (Southern Alamance Family Empowerment)

How we can help S.A.F.E. for the next two months... they are asking for items for their backpack program. Things like low sugar granola bars, shelf stable fruit cups and applesauce, etc. Then, before school starts back, they are going to need peanut butter again, for Back to School.

Save the Date

- **Saturday, October 26th Fall Festival**

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, August 25th Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Blessing of the Backpacks
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Wednesday, August 28th
6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, September 1st Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Communion
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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