



## Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina  
[www.bethanypreschurch.org](http://www.bethanypreschurch.org)  
[www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian)

August 27, 2023 – 11:00 am  
*Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*



"Backpack," Michelle Grewe

Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.  
Romans 6:2 (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 *The Office of Theology and Worship for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Book of Common Worship, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018); and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>.*

### TRINITY CHIMES

**PRELUDE:** *I Would Be True*

LANCE EVERSON/TUNE: PEEK

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*OPENING HYMN #324:** *Open My Eyes, That I May See*

CLARA H. SCOTT

Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free.

**Refrain:**

Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;  
Open my eyes (ears, heart), illumine me,  
Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear  
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,  
Everything false will disappear. **(Refrain)**

Open my mouth, and let me bear,  
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open my heart and let me prepare  
Love with Thy children thus to share. **(Refrain)**

**\*OPENING SENTENCES**

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

Let us worship our God.

**\*GATHERING PRAYER**

"INTO YOUR FUTURE," TERI PETERSON

Show us your ways, O Lord!  
Lead us in your truth, and teach us.  
***Open our eyes, minds, and hearts  
to know your will and to follow it.***  
Reveal your vision for us,  
and keep us focused and faithful to what you would have us do.  
***Bring us together to worship and work for your purpose,  
and move us forward into your future. Amen.***

## OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

**A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

"Open," Teri Peterson

Open your good news to us, O God...  
and open us to your good news,  
that we may find ourselves in your abundant life.  
Speak, Lord, and help us to listen. ***Amen.***

**ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE**

**PSALM 138:1-3**

PEW BIBLE, 772

**ROMANS 12:1-8**

PEW BIBLE, 1381-1382

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,  
Whate'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 391** *Take My Life*

FRANCES R. HAVERGAL

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days;  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee,  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee,  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose,  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thine own;  
It shall be Thy royal throne,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee,  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

## TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"CONDITIONAL FAITH," TERI PETERSON

Friends, let us come together to tell the truth about ourselves.

Show us a sign!  
Make us understand!  
If you can explain, we will believe!

***We confess, Holy One, that often our faith is conditional. We trust you when we can see where you are going, and we believe your word when it makes sense with what we already know. The rest of the time... our voices can often be heard in the midst of the crowd demanding that you meet our expectations. Forgive us. Help us to trust where we have not seen. Teach us your way, foolish step by foolish step, until we find ourselves living your wisdom.***

*Silent prayer*

***Amen.***

## AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

I proclaim to you in the name of our teaching God that:

You are enough.  
You are forgiven.  
You are loved.

***Alleluia! Thanks be to God!***

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE: *Spirit of the Living God*

DANIEL IVERSON

Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall afresh on me,  
Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.  
Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall afresh on me.

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### THE WORD IN MUSIC: *There is a Balm in Gilead*

ANONYMOUS

### THE WORD PROCLAIMED

**Sermon: *"Teaching and Learning"***

REV. PHILLIPS

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

### CONGREGATIONAL LITANY

O Holy God, the time is come when school begins. As these your children begin their studies, we ask a blessing on their backpacks in which they carry the books and notebooks, markers and pens and pencils and devices they will use to learn. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, all those learners of every age who approach this new year with combinations of excitement and dread, joy and anxiety, and every other thing we feel as we start afresh. Open their hearts and minds to learn

from their teachers and peers, and open the minds and hearts of their teachers and peers to learn from them as well. Give them the energy and creativity and love of learning that will help them grow into the people you are forming them to be. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, all who will teach our students in the coming days and weeks and months. Give them the wisdom to find inspiration for each learner. Give them the energy and creativity and love that will make their work a blessing to them. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, all education administrators that they may be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to their care. Make them fair and merciful, able to do their crucial work with a spirit of grace and compassion. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, all who together work to ensure the education of our students. Protect those who protect our students, bless and guide those who drive for our students, care for the needs of our students, who counsel our students, who cook for our students, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the education of our children and youth. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, each one gathered here that we will seek every opportunity to grow in our knowledge and love of you – in our church school classes for all ages. Grant that we may see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

And bless, O God, these our cherished children, those whom we have promised to love and nurture at their baptism. Keep them safe, keep them excited, keep them ever seeking to learn more and to develop their gifts. Grant that through their study, they may gain the tools to grow in love and faith and service, all their days. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer.***

Bless, O God, these backpacks and the learners who carry them. O Lord of Life and Love, ***hear our prayer. Amen.***

#### **DISTRIBUTING BACKPACK TAGS**

**\*CLOSING HYMN #414:** *As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought*

FRANK VON CHRISTIERSON/TUNE FOREST GREEN

As those of old their firstfruits brought  
Of vineyard, flock, and field  
To God, the giver of all good,  
The source of bounteous yield,  
So we today our firstfruits bring,  
The wealth of this good land:  
Of farm and market, shop and home,  
Of mind and heart and hand.

A world in need now summons us  
To labor, love, and give,  
To make our life an offering  
To God that all may live.  
The church of Christ is calling us  
To make the dream come true;  
A world redeemed by Christ-like love,  
All life in Christ made new.

With gratitude and humble trust  
We bring our best to You,  
Not just to serve Your cause,  
but share Your love with neighbors too.  
O God who gave Yourself to us  
In Jesus Christ Your Son,  
Help us to give ourselves each day  
Until life's work is done.

**\*SENDING**

"THE BLESSING OF THE GOD OF LIFE," RICHARD SHARPLES

The blessing of the quiet earth,  
upholding you, strengthening you.

The blessing of the wind that blows,  
inspiring you, exciting you.

The blessing of the fire that burns,  
warming you, refining you.

The blessing of the water that flows,  
delighting you, refreshing you.

The blessing of the God of life,  
whom we come to know in Christ,  
and who lives in us through the Spirit,  
be yours this day, and always. **Amen.**

**CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *Shalom to You*

ELISE S. ESLINGER

Shalom to you now, Shalom, my friends.  
May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.  
In all your living and through your loving,  
Christ be your Shalom, Christ be your Shalom.

**POSTLUDE:** *Firm in the Faith I Stand*

DAVID PAXTON

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*\* Please stand in body or spirit.*



# Our Faith Community @ Work

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### August 27<sup>th</sup> Backpack and Teacher Sunday

We are celebrating our teachers and learners on the 27<sup>th</sup> during worship with both a Blessing of the Backpacks and a Blessing of our Teachers. Please join us as we celebrate the upcoming school year and give thanks and bless all of our teachers and learners. **If you or a loved one is a teacher or student in the coming school year, please let Joy know by Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>** and we will include their names in the bulletin. Likewise, we want to make sure we have enough backpack tags for all students who want them, so **please also let us know if you would like a backpack tag and invite your students to come and participate in worship!**

**NOTE: If you would like a backpack tag to be blessed and distributed on Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, please let the office know before Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you do not let the office know there will not be a tag available for you.**

### September 5<sup>th</sup> 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

**This Week's Calendar:**

Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup> - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Backpack & Teacher Sunday

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

Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>

6:30 –Choir Practice

Sunday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Communion

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 2024:**

Karen Maxwell

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

**Class of 2025:**

Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

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