



## Bethany Presbyterian Church

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

September 10, 2023 – 11:00 am  
*Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*



"Ain Ghazal statue"  
(circa 7000-6000 BCE, Ain Ghazal, Jordan), ALFGRN

On the day the LORD God made earth and sky— before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the LORD God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being to farm the fertile land, though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land— the LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.  
Genesis 2:4b-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 The Office of Theology and Worship for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Common Worship, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018); Wild Goose Resource Group, A Wee Worship Book (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc, 2015); and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>.*

### TRINITY CHIMES

**PRELUDE:** *Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray*

MERCY BARTLET

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**\*OPENING HYMN #285:** *God, You Spin the Whirling Planets*

JANE PARKER HUBER

God You spin the whirling planets  
Fill the seas and spread the plain  
Mold the mountains fashion blossoms  
Call forth sunshine wind and rain  
We created in your image  
Would a true reflection be  
Of Your justice grace and mercy  
And the truth that makes us free

You have called us to be faithful  
In our life and ministry  
We respond in grateful worship  
Joined in one community  
When we blur Your gracious image  
Focus us and make us whole  
Healed and strengthened as Your people  
We move onward toward Your goal

God Your will is still creating  
Calling us to life made new  
Now reveal to us fresh vistas  
Where there's work to dare and do  
Keep us clear of all distortion  
Fashion us with loving care  
Thus new creatures in Your image  
We'll proclaim Christ everywhere

**\*OPENING SENTENCES**

"IN THE BEGINNING," TERI PETERSON

In the beginning, when God created, God looked at the world and called it good.  
***Not only way back when, but even now, God is creating, calling us to join the work of making the world good.***

Earth and water and air, plants and animals and people, made from dirt and word and love.  
***God gifts us all this and more, so that we can glorify and enjoy God forever.***  
Come, let us worship God together.

**\*GATHERING PRAYER**

God of creation, we give thanks for the goodness of the earth  
that you made and sustain. Our voices join in praise with all creation:  
with the sea that roars, the trees that clap their hands,  
and the birds that sing in joy. Unite us by your Spirit,  
that we may be signs of your abundant mercy  
and live in thanksgiving for your grace,  
as we wait for the completion of your creation  
in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. ***Amen.***

**\*RESPONDING TO OUR PRAYERS:** *Hear our Prayers, O Lord* (Choir Only)

# OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

## A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

"Creating Word," Teri Peterson

God, by a word you created all things.  
May your word, living and active, create us anew this day,  
making us again in your image. *Amen.*

## ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

**MARK 1:16-20**

PEW BIBLE, 1215

**GENESIS 2:4B-25**

PEW BIBLE, 2-3

The Word of the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God.*

## AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

### OFFERTORY

**\*DOXOLOGY #592:** *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

THOMAS KEN

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

### \*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY #272:** *God of the Sparrow*

JAROSLAV J. VAJDA

God of the sparrow  
God of the whale  
God of the swirling stars  
How does the creature say Awe  
How does the creature say Praise

God of the earthquake  
God of the storm  
God of the trumpet blast  
How does the creature cry Woe  
How does the creature cry Save

God of the rainbow  
God of the cross  
God of the empty grave  
How does the creature say Grace  
How does the creature say Thanks

God of the hungry  
God of the sick  
God of the prodigal  
How does the creature say Care  
How does the creature say Life

God of the neighbour  
God of the foe  
God of the pruning hook  
How does the creature say Love  
How does the creature say Peace

God of the ages  
God near at hand  
God of the loving heart  
How do your children say Joy  
How do your children say Home

## TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"CREATION SCORNED," TERI PETERSON

Friends, we are made in the image of God, but that does not make us God. Though we often prefer to pretend that we are perfect, when we ignore our sin we deceive ourselves and there is no room for God's truth to dwell in us. When we confess our sin, we experience the grace and mercy of God in the here and now. Before God, with the people of God, let us tell the truth about ourselves. Let us pray.

***Creator God, with a word you formed us from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into us. You call us to live as stewards, reflecting your glorious image into the world. When we have scorned your gift of creation, placing ourselves over and above rather than within and among, forgive us. When we have ignored your gift of creativity, believing it inferior to the gifts of the intellect, forgive us. When we have sought you in heaven and ignored you on earth, forgive us.***

*Silence*

Gracious God,  
***fill us again with your creative spirit, that your image may shine forth in our lives. We pray in the name of your creating Word made flesh, Jesus the Christ. Amen.***

## AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

I proclaim to you in the name of our Creator that:

You are enough.

You are forgiven.

You are loved.

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

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE #837 (GLORY TO GOD): *What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine*

ELISHA A. HOFFMAN

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms;  
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning,  
safe and secure from all alarms;  
leaning, leaning,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

# RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *We Can Share His Love*

NANCY PRICE & DON BESIG

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"When God Began to Create... Part II"*

REV. PHILLIPS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (see insert)

"The Creation," James Weldon Johnson

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 #473: *For the Beauty of the Earth*

FOLLIOTT SANDFORD PIERPONT

For the beauty of the earth,  
For the glory of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies.

**Refrain:**

Lord of all, to Thee we raise,  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour  
Of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
Sun and moon, and stars of light. **(Refrain)**

For the joy of ear and eye,  
For the heart and mind's delight,  
For the mystic harmony  
Linking sense to sound and sight. **(Refrain)**

For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth and friends above,  
For all gentle thoughts and mild. **(Refrain)**

For Thy Church, that evermore  
Lifteth holy hands above,  
Offering up on every shore  
Her pure sacrifice of love. **(Refrain)**

**\*SENDING**

A WEE WORSHIP BOOK

Now may God, who brought us  
into the joyous light of this new day,  
bring us to the guiding light of eternity.

***God above us, God beneath us,  
God behind us, God before us,  
God in quietness, God in danger,  
God in the heart of friend and stranger.***

**CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *Lord, Make Us More Holy*

Lord, make us more holy,  
Lord, make us more holy,  
Lord, make us more holy,  
Until we meet again.  
Holy, holy, holy,  
Until we meet again.

**POSTLUDE:** *Hear My Cry, O God*

DONALD F. CALLENDER

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*\* Please stand in body or spirit.*



# Our Faith Community @ Work

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### **Sunday, Sept 10<sup>th</sup> Fall Kick Off!**

#### **9:45 Adult Sunday School – Evie C. Marshall Classroom**

Bible 101 - a Sunday School survey of our Biblical text. We will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:45 for a time of lecture and discussion on the Bible, starting with the Hebrew Bible, then the New Testament, and then going into specific themes found in Scripture. We will focus on how the Bible is interpreted, its context, and its content. The later part of the class will be crafted around your interest!

#### **11:00 Worship - Sanctuary**

Join us as we together worship our God.

#### **After Church Ice Cream [bar] Social – Evie C. Marshall Classroom**

Celebrate our fall kick off with ice cream bars and cookies following the service.

### **Tuesday, September 19<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

### **Saturday, Sept 30<sup>th</sup> Blessing of the Animals – Recreation Area**

Save the date! More information to come. We will bless our beloved animals in a service near the commemoration of St. Francis of Assisi.

### **Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> 11:00 World Communion Sunday Brunch Church – Fellowship Hall**

Join us for our brunch church service – bring your appetites and a desire for worship and fellowship done in a creative way that remembers how the first church came together.

### **Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup> Fall Festival – Recreation Area**

Save the date! Our Fall Festival is back! More information to come.

### **Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup> 11:00 A Service for All the Saints**

Our annual commemoration of all in our congregation in and in our hearts who have died in the past year.

## This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, September 10th - Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Ice Cream Social

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

Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>

6:30 –Choir Practice

Sunday, September 17th - Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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



### Session

**Moderator:** Rev. Jon Phillips

**Clerk:** Randy Cousins

**Treasurer:** Glenn Patterson

### Class of 2023:

Chip Allen

Randy Cousins

Shelby Smith

### Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

### Class of 2025:

Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

1500 S. Main Street  
Graham, NC 27215  
[www.bethanypreschurch.org](http://www.bethanypreschurch.org)  
336.227.4041

### Staff

Transitional Pastor: Rev. Jon Phillips – [pastor@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:pastor@bethanypreschurch.org)

Chaplain: Rick Purcell – [chaplain@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:chaplain@bethanypreschurch.org)

Director of Music: Christopher Bagley – [music@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:music@bethanypreschurch.org)

Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – [admin@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:admin@bethanypreschurch.org)

Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – [finance@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:finance@bethanypreschurch.org)

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