



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

November 29, 2020 – 11:00 am

First Sunday of Advent



“The angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob’s house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.’”

Luke 1:30-33 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD’S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Welcome to our service of worship! Join in with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength . . . don’t hold back! Sing from your toes! Pray from your guts. Worship the Eternal Creator from your soul. It’s not about perfect music. It’s not about the perfect prayer. It’s about joining the holy roar of a community honestly wrestling with what it means to follow their Creator.

PRELUDE: *Song of the Watchman*

EDWARD GRIEG / ARR. G. BLAKE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AN OFFERING OF PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*(Please take a moment to **socially distantly** share the peace of Christ with your neighbor.)*

* LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE AND CALL TO WORSHIP

As the season of Advent begins we celebrate hope.

We know that through the birth of a tiny and helpless child, God is coming to save the world.

While we watch and wait for Jesus to arrive, we join in God’s mission by bringing grace and mercy to those who need it most.

We engage the poor and the poor in spirit, letting Christ’s light shine through us.

We speak words of comfort and love to a world in need of healing as we share our stories of God’s transforming Spirit.

Together, we are a sign of God’s hope for the world.

[The Candle of Hope is lit.]

Sung to the tune of "The First Nowell"

We gather 'round in hope and faith
Looking for the savior for whom we pray.

We pray that we will see him near
Bringing forth life and justice for all in fear.

The candles glow, showing us God's light / Calling us forward, united in Christ.

* **OPENING HYMN #9:** *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

AN OFFERING OF SCRIPTURE

2 SAMUEL 7:1-16

LUKE 1:26-38

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS

We have had enough feasts of anger and bitterness, so come, God-who-aches-to-be-with-us, to feed us with the simple Bread of heaven. Every day, we are handed steaming mugs of tears, so come, to hold the Cup of hope to our lips.

Every day seems to be the longest day in this year which goes on and on, so come, God-who-approaches, using the stars in the night sky to light the way to the grace we long to find in Bethlehem, where we will find a home with you when all the power and wealth of the world slams their doors in our faces, leaving us huddled with all our fears and worries.

We are deafened by all the arguments, the rhetoric, the foolish boasts, the outright lies, so come, God-who-is our peace, to fill our ears with the angelic songs, to pour love and wonder into the emptiness of our souls.

Come, God in Community, Holy in One, come to assure us that out of these uncertain times will come the Advent of new life, new hope.

We try to stay faithful but fail. We long to care for others but end up focusing on us. We think we are being safe but know how often we live dangerously. Yet, God knows our foolishness, and forgives our mistakes, so we can be made new people. Come, God-who-draws-near-to-us, for we live in fretful times, wondering if we will ever come out of them.

Come to us, with your grace.

Come, God-who-has-walked-these-roads, for we long to be faithful in these days, but find it all too easy to be seduced by worry.

Come to us, with your hope.

Come, God-who-carries-life-in-your-breath, for we try to stay apart for others and ourselves, but find it easy to listen to those who mock us for being so foolish.

Come to us, with your love.

Word of Flesh:

have mercy;

Friend of the poor:

have mercy;

Bridegroom of the faithful:

have mercy.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

In the midst of all our uncertainty, we are reminded of the old truths, that God loves us, God forgives us, God restores us to new life.

The Child has come, bringing grace, offering mercy, and wrapping us in arms of love! Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

* **RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE #23:** *Angels We Have Heard on High* (refrain only)

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

* **A DOXOLOGY:** *What Child Is This*

GREENSLEEVES

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own Him.

The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *O Come, Emmanuel*

EUGENE BUTLER / TUNE: VENI EMMANUEL

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: ***Give Thanks***

REV. JOHNSON

* **HYMN OF PREPARATION #5:** *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

PICARDY

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.*

*King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.*

*Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish as the shadows clear away.*

*At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high!"*

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

If in the depths of our spirits we are crying out, "*Come thou long expected Jesus;*" this table has been laid out for us.

For those who sing, "born to set your people free," and desire to be set free; the table of the Lord has a place for us.

If your heart aches to be released from fear and sin, receive the bread of Heaven and the cup of Salvation.

Those who find their rest in Jesus Christ, are welcome here.

The feast of communion is prepared for us. Come, taste and see that the Lord is good.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND LORD'S PRAYER

In this Advent of disquiet, remember God comes to us.

God approaches to be with you, as well.

Let us offer our empty hearts to our God as we begin this journey to Bethlehem.

God approaches to fill them with grace and hope.

With weary souls, and trembling voices, let us sing praises to our God.

God approaches to teach us new songs of love.

In our weariness, God-of-that-first-moment, tell us the story of how you could no longer wait . . . With those who try to be cautious in these days, and those who don't seem to care, we sing your praises this day:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God who comes to us. Creation always pours out its praise to you. Glory to you in the highest! Blessed is the One who is coming to us even now. Glory to you in the highest!

In your weariness of all our foolishness, God-who-never-forgets-promises . . . With those who try to stay alert, and with those who toss and turn trying to sleep, we proclaim that mystery which is our faith:

Christ died, giving his life for all; Christ was raised, the light of resurrection showing the way; Christ will come, gathering us in love and hope.

You know how apprehensive we are in these days which go on and on . . . And when human time has come to an end, and you gather us around your table with our sisters and brothers, we will sing our joyful praises to you, and pray as Christ taught us:

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BY THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, you truly are Immanuel "God with us". In this season of hope, may the meal we've shared together nourish us to be your body in the world, your kingdom come, your will done on earth as it is in heaven. With the angels in heaven we join in singing your praises, Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

* **CLOSING HYMN #15:** *Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers*

*Rejoice! Rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising and soon he will draw nigh.
Up, watch with expectation; at midnight comes the cry.
See that your lamps are burning; replenish them with oil;
look now for your salvation, the end of sin and toil.
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand;
arise, O heirs of glory; the Bridegroom is at hand!
Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, thou Sun so longed for, above this shadowed sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption, and ever be with thee!*

* **SENDING**

On this pilgrimage of uncertainty,

may we remember God has walked this road many times before.

As we live through these endless moments,

may we remember Jesus shares hope with us every day, every day.

In this season filled with isolation from others,

may we remember that the Spirit knows our loneliness and cradles us in love.

* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

* **POSTLUDE:** *Lift Up Your Heads*

DAVID PAXTON / TUNE: TRURO



Our Faith Community @ Work

WORSHIP Ministry: (Lead Elders: Nancy Purcell and Helen Brown)

WELCOME to this service of worship at Bethany Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). Whether you are a member or a visitor we are so glad that you are worshipping with us this morning and pray that this time of worship will be both renewing and rewarding for you. If you have any questions about Bethany, please speak to the pastor or call the church at 336.227.4041.

You can find us online through our website at www.bethanypreschurch.org; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian; or on Twitter by following [@bpresbyterian](https://twitter.com/bpresbyterian).

“I will show love to those who were called unloved and, to those who were called ‘not-my-people’, I will say ‘you are my people’ and they will answer, ‘you are our God.’” (Hosea 2:23) Bethany Presbyterian Church is a place where the mind is nourished as well as the spirit, and where we affirm the dignity and worth of every person. As we are all created in the image of God, we believe discrimination is incompatible with Christ’s Gospel of unconditional love. While we celebrate our Presbyterian identity, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. We invite conversations that move us to seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit. **Be who you are and be welcome here.**

Audio Recordings of each Sunday’s sermons are available through a link on our website, on our Facebook page, or at www.buzzsprout.com/9198. A **Video Recording** of our Zoom Worship and our Facebook Live stream will be available on our Facebook page and on our website. Our **Tech Crew** serving this morning are: **Rick Purcell**, sanctuary audio and video; **Glenn Patterson**, YouTube Live; **Tina Patterson**, Zoom host and moderator; and **Debbie Johnson**, Zoom host, moderator and Facebook Live.

Resources used in today’s worship:

- *Glory to God* Presbyterian Hymnal
- *The Text This Week* website (www.textweek.com)
- *Homiletics Online* (www.homileticsonline.com)

Please note that even though our Stewardship Season culminated with our wonderful Consecration Sunday worship last Sunday, **Pledge Cards** are still being received in the church office. If you have not had an opportunity to submit your card, please do so as soon as possible so that plans for the coming year can proceed. You may mail your card in to the office (care of Pam Hurt), bring it by in person, or submit a secure pledge card online through our website. Thanks to all for your continued support for the ministry and mission of Bethany Presbyterian.

Today marks the First Sunday of Advent: As we make our way through the season on our way to the manger, let us pause to “rediscover the significance of Christmas.”

Using the themes outlined in Adam Hamilton’s outstanding study, John will guide us through the season with a Sermon Series based on these themes, as well as a time of conversation and study during the Sunday school our prior to worship. Here are the themes and schedule:

- **November 29th: Luke 1:26-38 - *Presidents and Kings***
- December 6th: Matthew 1:18-21, Luke 2:8-14, Genesis 3:1-13, Romans 7:18-25 - *The Savior and Our Need for Saving*
- December 13th: Matthew 1:22-25, Hebrews 1:1-4; 4:14-16 - *Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic*
- December 20th: John 1:1-5, 9-14, Isaiah 58:1-10 - *Light of the World, Word of God, and Lord*

SERVE Ministry: (Lead Elders: Randy Cousins and Tina Patterson)

Our ongoing prayer list is below. Please let the church office know if there are any changes.

Bill Faucette
Jack Cook
Joan Richardson
Teresa Wilborn
Tiffany Tauchren
Jean Berry

Diane Miller
Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Shannon Russell
Family of Mary Moore
Barbara Cousins

John & Ann Sutton
Ruby Martin
Family of Shirley Lane
Ida Whitney
Katherine Turner
Jeremy Harden

Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton
Norma Proctor
Christopher Bagley
Randy Thompson
Frederica Beatty
Bill Abplanalp

Pat Kennedy
Mike Sutton
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Grace Johnson
Frank Wrenn
Sylvia Donley
Karen Maxwell

Anne McDaniels
Alex Thomas
Stewart Dillard
Shelvia Russell
Carol Brooks
Ritchie Fishburne
Janie Holt Clapp
Family of Norman Whitney

TEACH Ministry: (Lead Elders: Karen Maxwell and Tracey Troxler)

All are invited to take advantage of the several educational opportunities for all ages on Sunday mornings. Sunday school classes begin at 9:45 a.m.

Fellowship Class (Fellowship Classroom – by ramp door)

This class is using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum and lives up to the class name in all aspects of their life here at Bethany.

Children (Upstairs – the really, really green room!)

This class for younger children is using our denomination's *We Believe* curriculum in introducing our children to the faith.

Youth (Upstairs, across from the choir room)

Using a variety of creative curricula, this class explores topics that relate to faith and adolescence.

SUPPORT Ministry: (Lead Elders: Chip Allen, Ben Russell, and Bill Abplanalp)

Elders of the Month for November are **Tracey Troxler** and **Helen Brown**.

This Week's Calendar:

Today:

- **First Sunday of Advent**
- 9:45 - *Incarnation* Study Series (online only)
- 11:00 - Worship / Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (online only)

Wednesday, the 25th :

- 7:00 - Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)

Sunday, the 29th:

- **Second Sunday of Advent**
- 9:45 - *Incarnation* Study Series (online only)
- 11:00 - Worship (online only)

Session

Moderator: Rev. John W. Johnson

Clerk: Karen Maxwell

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

Class of 2020:

Chip Allen
Randy Cousins
Karen Maxwell

Class of 2021:

Nancy Purcell
Ben Russell
Tracey Troxler

Class of 2022:

Bill Abplanalp
Helen Brown
Tina Patterson

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love learn serve



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Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org

Elder Emeritus: Bobby Peele

Elder Emeritus: Don Boggs

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