



Bethany Presbyterian Church

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

December 3, 2023 – 11:00 am
First Sunday of Advent
Hope
Hanging of the Green



"Hope," Lee Hutchinson

The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill my gracious promise with the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time, I will raise up a righteous branch from David's line, who will do what is just and right in the land.
Jeremiah 33:14-15(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! The Hanging of the Green narrative was developed by Jessica Dixon. Other parts of the liturgy are from Brian Wren, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany: Liturgies and Prayers for Public Worship (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), and LiturgyLink.

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *He Shall Feed His Flock*

G.F. HANDEL-ARR. FROM "MESSIAH" BY ROSS ANDERSON

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTION TO THE HANGING OF THE GREEN

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE GREENERY

JESSICA DIXON

***OPENING HYMN #8:** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

GEORG WEISSEL

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,
Behold, the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
My heart to Thee: here, Lord, abide.
Let me Thy inner presence feel;
Thy grace and love in me reveal.

***OPENING SENTENCES**

JESSICA DIXON

Sing to God a new song, ***for God has done marvelous things!***
Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth, ***for God is still doing marvelous things!***
Break into joyful song! ***Sing praises with lyre and melody and trumpets!***
Let the seas roar and the floods clap their hands! ***For God is coming to judge the world with righteousness.***
God is coming to judge the world with equity. ***Sing to God a new song!***

Let us worship our God.

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE WREATH

JESSICA DIXON

OPENING RESPONSE: O COME, LET US ADORE HIM

O Come, let us adore him
O Come, let us adore him
O Come, let us adore him
Christ the Lord.

For He alone is worthy
For He alone is worthy
For He alone is worthy
Christ the Lord.

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

ELSA PETERS

Today we begin the Advent journey in search for hope. We search for hope in the trees and the branches of our own lives. We look for that moment where we might proclaim as the prophet Jeremiah did:

***the sounds of joy and laughter and the voices of the bride and groom will again be heard.
So will the voices of those who say, as thank offerings are brought to the LORD's temple,
"Give thanks to the LORD of heavenly forces, for the LORD is good and his kindness lasts forever."***

O God, we light the first candle of Advent.
We light the candle of hope.

The first candle is lit

We light this candle to illuminate those moments we've already heard the sounds of joy and laughter, as we have in those places in our lives where we see hope.

Let us pray together:

Light of our World, we hope for change in our own lives and in your world. We wait for war to end. We wait for violence to cease. We wait for your people to live with more love. In the warmth of your Light, we wait for hope to be revealed more fully. We wait together by the light of this candle. Amen.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

"EITHER WAY," SCOTT CERVAS

God of newness,
we want to be ready...
we want to make room for you...
we want our lives to be changed by your advent.
So speak to us in our busy-ness and our quietness...
our uneven-ness and our level-ness...
our roughness and our smoothness...
so that, either way, your glory might be revealed to us. ***Amen.***

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

MARK 8:27-29

PEW BIBLE, 1227

JEREMIAH 33:10-11, 14-18

PEW BIBLE, 964, 965

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE POINSETTIAS

JESSICA DIXON

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY:** *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.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

***HYMN OF THE DAY #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 darkness clears 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!

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"TODAY'S CAPTIVITIES," BRIAN WREN

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

Christ our Savior, save us from today's captivities:

From the need to have more; and from having our identity and self-worth defined by what we possess – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From the need to be satisfied without waiting; and from anxiety when material longings are deferred – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From paralysis and confusion, in the face of so many needs, so much information – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From hyperactivism that denies our limitations, and from apathy that denies our God-given powers – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From trying to replace you as Savior, by taking the world on our shoulders – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From ignorance or denial of what drives us; and from captivity to personal drives and needs – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From embarrassment in speaking about your love; from not knowing what to say; and from the shame of being misunderstood, scorned, or ignored – ***Savior Christ, set us free.***

From captivity to anger, bitterness, and disappointment; and from captivities we cannot speak about, or name – ***Savior Christ, set us free. Amen.***

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

I proclaim to you in the name of our Savior who brings hope:

You are enough.

You are forgiven.

You are loved.

Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE CHRISMONS

JESSICA DIXON

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *O Come, Lord Jesus, Come*

J. PAUL WILLIAMS/DAVID ANGERMAN

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE NATIVITY

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Homily: *"Profound Hope"*

REV. PHILLIPS

HANGING OF THE GREEN: THE MANGER

ADVENT PRAYER

"GIVER OF HOPE," BRIAN WREN

Our Session asks that we all complete the Congregational Survey we first introduced last summer. This information is needed to help complete our Mission Study and will be important for our upcoming Pastor Nominating Committee to do their work. You are invited to use this prayer time to fill out the survey you were given when you came in this morning. If you completed one last summer, please consider doing so again. Pencils are available at the ends of the pews if you need one. Thank you!

We will open and close our time of prayer in song.

SONG #814 (GTG): In God Alone (sing 2x)

TAIZÉ COMMUNITY

In God alone my soul can find rest and peace,
in God my peace and joy.
On-ly in God my soul can find its rest,
find its rest and peace.

*CLOSING HYMN #1: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

CHARLES WESLEY

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

***SENDING**

May you leave this place, waiting with Hope
for the coming of our Savior,
and may the God of all Hope
be with you until we gather again.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *While We Are Waiting, Come* (Choir 1st time; Congregation 2nd time)

While we are waiting, come.
While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel
While we are waiting, come.

POSTLUDE: *Lift Up Your Heads*

DAVID PAXTON/ TUNE: TRURO

* *Please stand in body or spirit.*



Our Faith Community @ Work

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Throughout Advent - Holiday Respite - Sanctuary

We are opening our Sanctuary to anyone who needs a moment of respite, meditation, and prayer during the Holiday Season. Pastor Jon or an Elder will be available to pray:

Saturday, December 2nd – 9-11am
Saturday, December 16th – 9-11am

Saturday, December 9th – 5-7pm
Wednesday, December 20th – 11-1pm

Sunday, December 3rd 11:00am Advent 1: Hope - Sanctuary

Our Advent season begins with a Hanging of the Green in worship.

Sunday, December 10th 11:00am Advent 2: Peace - Sanctuary

We will have art in worship for the second Sunday in Advent.

Sunday, December 17th 11:00am Advent 3: Joy - Sanctuary

Our choir will bless us with a Christmas Cantata

Tuesday, November 28th 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

Sunday, December 24th 11:00am Advent 4: Love – Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall

Our service of Carols and Cookies. A kid-centric worship experience to help us welcome Christmas! Invite your families!

Sunday, December 24th 9:00pm Christmas Eve - Sanctuary

A Christmas Eve Watchnight Vigil. Following the traditions of our mother Kirk, the Church of Scotland, this candlelight service will include Communion and conclude with our singing of Silent Night.

Sunday, December 31st 11:00am Christmas Brunch Church – Fellowship Hall

The first Sunday of Christmas. Join us for Brunch Church as we continue to celebrate Christmas and welcome in the coming year.

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, December 3rd – First Sunday of Advent – Hanging of the Greens
9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 - Evie C. Marshall classroom
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Wednesday, December 6th
6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, December 10th – Second Sunday of Advent - Peace
9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 - Evie C. Marshall classroom
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

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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

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