



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

December 10, 2023 – 11:00 am

Second Sunday of Advent

Peace

**make a level highway
in the wilderness for our God!**



Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock;
he will gather lambs in his arms
and lift them onto his lap.
He will gently guide the nursing ewes.

Isaiah 40:11 (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 Ruth Burgess, *Winter: Liturgical Resources for November, December and January* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2016); and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>. The art being created in worship today is by April Troxler.*

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Be Comforted, My People*

LANI SMITH

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

JOHN MASON NEALE

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **(Refrain)**

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. **(Refrain)**

*OPENING SENTENCES

ROSS REDDICK

The voice of the Lord declares, "Comfort, O comfort my people."

A voice cries out, "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

The earth will be transformed, God's glory will be revealed.

We expect your arrival in fire and flame. Instead, we follow a star on a cold night.

You meet us in this place, as we remember your curious way.

As we wait, cleanse us. As we wait, mold us.

Our ears and eyes perceive no other god besides You, and so we worship this day.

We are your people and we will wait for You.

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 SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

ELSA PETERS

Today we continue our Advent search. We look for comfort in a broken world. We cry out for the peace we have not yet found. We find comfort as the prophet Isaiah did, when he remembered:

The grass dries up; the flower withers, but our God's word will exist forever.

O God, we light the second candle of Advent.
We light the candle of peace.

The second candle is lit

We light this candle to shine like the sun on the buds of peace, which we long for in places like Ukraine, Gaza and Israel.

Let us pray together:

Light of our World, we hope for change in our own lives and in our world. We wait for relationships to heal. We wait for peace to come. 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.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, our peace and strength,
by the power of your Spirit
prepare the way in our hearts
for the coming of your Word,
so that we may see the glorious signs
of your promise fulfilled;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

MARK 1:1-4

PEW BIBLE, 1214

ISAIAH 40:1-11

PEW BIBLE, 879

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY:** *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* (to the tune of O Come, O Come Emmanuel) 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 #36:** *In the Bleak Midwinter*

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But His mother only,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
Give my heart.

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"POEM FOR ADVENT," MARY HANRAHAN

Let us come together to tell the truth about ourselves.

We must prepare a way.

Try to straighten paths made crooked
by our selfishness and compulsions.

We have forgotten the grace-filled room,
the angel's message, "Do not fear."
We fear the very joy he promised.

We are afraid of the journey,
the hard road, the bitter cold
and the doors slammed in our faces.

We are terrified of giving birth.
Yet within us there is such a thirst for innocence.

We must enter our hearts' dark stable,
clear away the dirty straw of resentment and pride,
soil our hands and make some effort
to find a fresher, sweeter hay of welcome,
light a candle of peace,
as we humbly await the birth of Wonder.

Silence

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

Every valley is lifted up; every mountain, made low.
Now the glory of the Lord is revealed,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Roun' de Glory Manger*

ARR. BY WILLIS LAWRENCE JAMES

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"In God my Peace"*

REV. PHILLIPS

ADVENT PRAYER

"ADVENT 2," STEPHEN M. FEARING

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

SONG #814 (GTG): *In God Alone* (Choir 1st time; Congregation 2nd time) (sing 2times)

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.

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 #20:** *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*

JOHN BOWRING

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends.
Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own;
See, it bursts o'er all the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, let thy wanderings cease;
Hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler, lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo! the Son of God is come!

***SENDING**

May the God of peace make you holy
and the power of the Spirit sustain you
until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Alleluia!*

Prepare the way of the Lord! *Amen.*

***CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *While We Are Waiting, Come*

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

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

POSTLUDE: *Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall Come*

JAMES DENTON

** 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 10th 11:00am Advent 2: Peace - Sanctuary

We will have art in worship for the second Sunday in Advent. A brief Congregational Meeting will follow the service .

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

Our choir will bless us with a Christmas Cantata

Tuesday, December 19th 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 worship experience for the young and younger-at-heart 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 10th – Second Sunday of Advent - Peace

9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 - Evie C. Marshall classroom

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

Wednesday, December 13th

6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, December 17th – Third Sunday of Advent - Joy

9:45 – Adult Sunday School - Bible 101 - Evie C. Marshall classroom

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

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love learn serve



Session

Moderator: Rev. Jon Phillips

Clerk: Randy Cousins

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

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