



Bethany Presbyterian Church

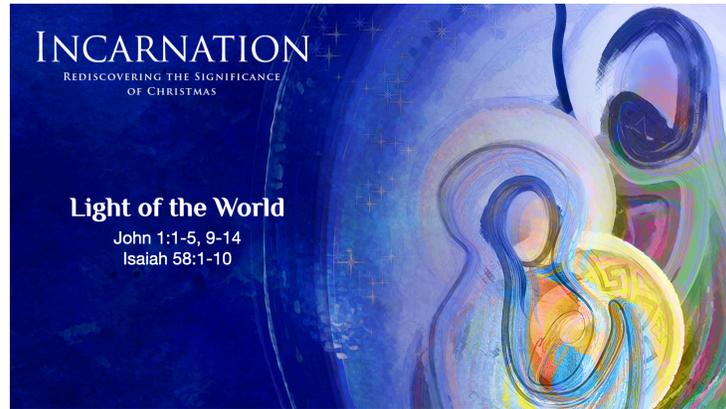
Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

December 20, 2020 – 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent



“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being.”

John 1:1-3 (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.

PRELUDE: *Love Came Down at Christmas*

LANI SMITH

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

[The Candle of Hope is lit.]

We light again the Candle of Hope!

We light again the Candle of Peace!

[The Candle of Peace is lit.]

We light again the Candle of Joy.

[The Candle of Joy is lit.]

But why are we lighting a fourth candle?

We light a fourth candle for love!

Love came down to earth at Bethlehem. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

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.

We gather 'round so weary for peace
Hearing anger and distrust that will not cease –
Not cease 'til the day we reach out with grace
And see each as God's child for us to embrace.

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

We gather 'round celebrating our joy
Thanking God for the mercies You daily employ.
We may sin and fall away – from the path we may roam,
but you tenderly guide us and welcome us home.

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

We gather 'round with love in our hearts
Seeking blessings for all though we're so far apart
Apart, but in God's great mystery

We are joined in a love that is flowing and free.
The candles glow, showing us God's light / Calling us forward, united in Christ.

* **OPENING HYMN:** *Love Has Come*

BRING A TORCH

Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay.

See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying?

Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.

Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

AN OFFERING OF SCRIPTURE

JOHN 1:1-5, 9-14

ISAIAH 58:1-10

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS

Wherever we have been, you were with us; wherever we are, you are constantly at our side; wherever we are going, you are there waiting for us.

Above the din of violence and war, you whisper to us of reconciliation. Into lives which are barren and filled with the ashes of disappointment, you come singing of newness. Where the oppressed are captive to our greed and the poor have nothing to eat, you come to set all of us free and to feed everyone at your Table.

When we are afraid of tomorrow, push us into God's Advent; when we believe no one loves us, sing Bethlehem's lullaby to our souls; when we doubt our ability to be the children of God, infuse us with your gifts.

God in Community, Holy in One, remind us that there is nothing you cannot do.

Advent is the time to prepare; Advent is the time to watch and wait; Advent is the time to open our hearts to God.

We watch for packages to arrive and Christmas cards to be delivered, but we do not keep our eyes open for your coming. We expect our Christmas 'wish list' to be filled, and for the pile under the tree to grow and grow, but we hope you do not expect to transform our lives.

We notice where to find the best bargains, and what decorations our neighbors have put on their houses, but we do not notice the little, the least, the lost, the last walking down our streets.

Forgive us, Saving God, for our misplaced priorities. May we watch for your coming, may we reach out to those in need, may we wait for hope to come, even as Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, arrives to live in our hearts.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

The good news is made known to all people: Christ Jesus was born to save us from our sins.

Glory and praise to the only wise God, who fills us with healing and hope. Amen.

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

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

GLORIA

* **SAYING WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE**

ADAPTED FROM CONFESSION OF 1967

As the people of God gathered in these places, who are we?

We are a community of believers, called by God to WORSHIP, SERVE, TEACH, and SUPPORT.

With the whole church, let us say what we believe.

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world. Amen.

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**

HYMN OF THE DAY #25: *Away in a Manger*

MUELLER

*Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

AN OFFERING OF PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *My Grown Up Christmas List*

PAIGE BUTTS, SOLOIST

DAVID FOSTER / AMY GRANT

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *The Light of the World*

REV. JOHNSON

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

* **CLOSING HYMN #23:** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

GLORIA

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?*

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

* **SENDING**

Go now, with God's love,

the only tool we need to bring hope to the world.

Go now, with the grace of Jesus,

the only tool we need to offer love to others.

Go now, with the peace of the Spirit,

the only tool we need to mend the brokenness around us.

* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

* **POSTLUDE:** *Fling Wide the Door*

HENRY BALCOMBE



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.

Resources used in today’s worship:

- *Glory to God* Presbyterian Hymnal
- *The Text This Week* website (www.textweek.com)
- *Ministry Matters* website (www.ministrymatters.com)

Please note that even though our Stewardship Season culminated with our wonderful Consecration Sunday worship recently, **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 Fourth 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 is guiding 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***

Please make your plans to join us virtually for our annual **Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service**. The service will be held this **Thursday evening, December 24th at 5:00 pm**. The service will be available via **Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube Live**. Links will be available in this week’s email, and on our website. Obviously, this year’s Christmas Eve celebration will be different. But let’s make it as festive as we can. If you are joining via Zoom, set up your computer so that we can all see your Christmas decorations. Get your candles ready for our candle lighting, and make sure you have communion elements ready. The bulletin for the service will be available to download on our website early in the week. You will want to have it handy to follow along with the service, especially if you are joining via one of our live streams and not on Zoom. And let us remember that even though we are gathering in different ways during the season and on this Christmas Eve, one truth remains: **OUR LORD WILL BE BORN!!**

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
Shannon Russell
Katherine Turner
Jeremy Harden
Anne McDaniels
Alex Thomas
Stewart Dillard
Shelvia Russell
Carol Brooks
Ritchie Fishburne
Janie Holt Clapp

Diane Miller
Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Ida Whitney
Jean Berry
Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton
Norma Proctor
Christopher Bagley
Randy Thompson
Frederica Beatty

John & Ann Sutton
Ruby Martin
Teresa Wilborn
Tiffany Tauchren
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Mike Sutton
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Grace Johnson
Frank Wrenn
Sylvia Donley
Karen Maxwell

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 December are **Chip Allen** and **Tina Patterson**.

This Week's Calendar:

Today:

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

Thursday, the 24th:

- 5:00 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service (online only)

Friday, the 25th:

- CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Sunday, the 27th:

- 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

bethany presbyterian

love learn serve



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Staff

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson – pastor@bethanypreschurch.org
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Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby – office@bethanypreschurch.org
Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt – finance@bethanypreschurch.org
Elder Emeritus: Bobby Peele
Elder Emeritus: Don Boggs

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Bethany Presbyterian is a Stephen Ministry Congregation

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