



# Bethany Presbyterian Church

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

December 22, 2024 – 11:00 am  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
Love



2024 Nativity Exhibit National Cathedral.jpg

Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord!" Luke 1:46

## 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!*

### TRINITY CHIMES

**PRELUDE:** *The Shepherd's Song*

DAVID PAXTON

### WELCOME

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #12:** *People, Look East*

ELEANOR FARJEON

People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim  
One more light the bowl shall brim,  
Shining beyond the frosty weather,  
Bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
Christ who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming  
With the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### OPENING SENTENCES

LUKE 1:46

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

***With Mary, our spirits rejoice, and we sing God's praise.***

Let us honor God with our worship this fourth Sunday of Advent.

### OPENING RESPONSE: *While We Are Waiting, Come*

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

## LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

ELSA PETERS

Today we stoke the fires of God's love. We rejoice that love is within us. It is revealed when we bind up the brokenhearted and comfort those who mourn. We hope that love will blossom in the justice we seek, as the priest Zechariah imagined:

***He has granted that we would be rescued from the power of our enemies so that we could serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness in God's eyes, for as long as we live.***

O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.  
We light the candle of love.

*The fourth candle is lit*

We light this candle to spring up with love. In the light and warmth of this candle, we hope that love continues to grow in all of our hearts as we celebrate the coming of Christmas.

Let us pray together:

***Loving God, pour into our hearts this day the light of your love, warming us to one another, enlightening our understanding of others, and blooming abundantly as only our love can, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.***

# OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY #48:** *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

THEODORE BAKER

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung.  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
By faithful prophets sung.  
It came a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind,  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
She bore for us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

## TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

The prophet Micah tells us that the “one of peace” will come from Bethlehem. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us confess our sins and set ourselves on Christ’s path.

*Soon we will celebrate the Prince of Peace, but we are not a people at peace.  
We glorify violence and dismiss the pacifist as weak.  
We dominate and demean turning dialogue into debate.  
We wage war with enemies and invest in self-defense before giving non-violent strategies a chance. Lord, forgive us. Help us work towards your peaceable kingdom, where swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.  
Amen.*

## AN OFFERING OF GOD’S GRACE

MICAH 5:4-5

“And he will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord ...  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.” In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

## RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

### A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Open us, Holy One, to your Word and your Way. As we make our final preparations before Christmas, clear our minds of holiday distractions and long list of to-dos. Help us approach your Word with awe and wonder, so we may hear the message you intend for us today. **Amen.**

### ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

**LUKE 1:39-55**

PEW BIBLE, 1243

The Word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *Immanuel*

BENJAMIN KNOEDLER

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"Love"*

RICK PURCELL, CRE

ADVENT PRAYER

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.*

AN OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

\*DOXOLOGY (Tune: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*)

THOMAS KEN

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

\*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

\*CLOSING HYMN #9: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

J.M. NEALE/H.S. COFFIN

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)**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**\*SENDING**

Magnify God the Creator; Magnify God the Redeemer;  
Magnify God the Sustainer in your life and the lives of others.  
May God bless you, keep you, and encourage you this Sunday and forevermore. Amen.

**POSTLUDE:** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

JAMES DENTON/MENDELSSOHN

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*\* Please stand in body or spirit.*



# Our Faith Community @ Work

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

**Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:00am Advent 4: Love – Sanctuary**

**Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm Christmas Eve Service**

**Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> The Women of Bethany Church Gathering**

The Women of Bethany Church will come together on Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am in the Fellowship hall.

**Saturday, January 11, 2025 4:00pm Organ Concert – Sanctuary**

**Tuesday, January 14<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

**S.A.F.E. (Southern Alamance Family Empowerment)**

How we can help S.A.F.E. for the month of **December**? They are asking for **shelf stable sides for Christmas meals.**

S.A.F.E. will be closed the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the Month.  
Consider donating your plastic and paper bags.

## **This Week's Calendar:**

Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Advent – Joy – Congregational Meeting

9:45 – Bible Study – The Chosen - Evie C. Marshall classroom

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

Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

6:00 – Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Day - Church Office closed

Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday of Christmas

9:45 – Bible Study – The Chosen - Evie C. Marshall classroom

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

# bethany presbyterian

love learn serve



## Session

**Moderator:** Rick Purcell, CRE

**Clerk:** Randy Cousins

**Treasurer:** Glenn Patterson

## Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

## Class of 2025:

Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

## Class of 2026:

Chip Allen

Jean Payne

Ben Russell

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## Staff

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**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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