



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypresbyterian.org

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

December 24, 2017 – 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve



“While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.”
- Luke 2:6-7 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD’S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

All the busyness of the season, the preparations, the shopping, the decorating, the cooking, the frenzy, has come now to this night. And so we gather as God’s people to pause, and to remember, and to rejoice!

PRELUDE: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

L. WARRINER

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THRESHOLD MOMENT

Each Sunday during Advent our service has begun with a Threshold Moment. There will be some introductory words, the procession of the Christ Candle, and a choral introduction from the choir, followed by the sung congregational response “Do Not Be Afraid.” (see next page)

Do Not Be Afraid

worshipdesignstudio.com/angels

Marcus McFee and Chuck Bell

Arranged by Chuck Bell

Do not be a - fraid. Do not be a - fraid.

Do not be a - fraid. Do not be a - fraid.

* LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CALL TO WORSHIP

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.

The Advent liturgy helps us recollect the miracle of God's becoming human for our sake. The candles spiral upward, causing us to remember the eternity of God's love for us and for all humanity. Its greenery causes us to remember the newness of life we have in Christ Jesus.

The first candle reminds us of the prophet's hope for God's salvation to come. [Pause while candle is lit.] ***The second candle reminds us of the angel's song of peace for all the earth.*** [Pause while candle is lit.] ***The third candle reminds us of the joy of the shepherds as they heard the good news of Jesus' arrival.*** [Pause while candle is lit.] ***The fourth candle reminds us of the love poured out for the world on that night so long ago.***

We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Come, let us go and see this that has happened!

* HYMN OF PRAISE #41: O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

AN OFFERING OF PEACE

May the Love of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

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

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Like pilgrim shepherds we have gathered tonight. Like children of royalty we have come together to celebrate the birth of true royalty.

Our Savior comes to us as a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes. He lays aside his crown to dwell among us and share the joy and sorrow of our pilgrimage. He passes through the curtain around God's love and, holding it aside, invites us in.

Oh, the humanity of God, the divinity of God's children.

What child is this? What love is this that seeks to share our burdens and lead us on in kindness towards a glory that is gentle and peaceful like a meadow in spring?

O God, roll away the stone in our hearts and let our spirits soar into that realm where angels laugh, martyrs weep for joy, and God's infinite love dances among the singing throngs of those who have gone before us.

That we may know what has been accomplished in this child, that we may see the world as you see it, Lord, sanctified, cleansed, and sojourning towards a healing so great we are almost afraid to hope in it.

On the night before his death, Jesus said to his disciples, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." Now the risen Christ, in perfect joy, graciously invites us to join him at the table, to break and share the bread of life and lift with him the cup of salvation.

O Lord, as we join you at your table on this sacred eve, accept us as we are, even in all our imperfections.

Jesus says: "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest upon your souls."

What shall we render to the Lord for all God's bounty to us? We shall lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

This Christmastide let our spirits so entwine that we form a wreath of joy, a circle of light from which God's precious and fragile love will shine out into the darkness of this world and into our own hearts. It is in the strong name of Jesus, who came to us as a child that we ask this. Amen.

AN OFFERING OF CONFESSION

We begin with such great hopes, such great dreams. We are going to be better, to treat others more fairly, to love more deeply. But we come to the manger once again, knowing our failings, and aware of our brokenness. Let us confess to the One who comes, that our lives might be made new.

God who comes to us: forgive us . . . when our shadowed lives dim your Light; when the tinsel of Christmas means more to us than your truth; when our hearts of stone resist the pain and brokenness around us; when we care more about what is under the tree, than the damage we do to your creation and to your children. Have mercy on us, Healing God, so we might tear down the walls we have built to keep your love away; so we could seek your justice for our sisters and brothers; so our hearts would become cradles for your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

AN OFFERING OF SILENCE

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

Go, go through the city, preparing for the people; repair, repair all the roads, filling in the holes, raising a banner for all to see. God has spoken to all people, saying to sons and daughters: "See, your Savior comes; to make good on my promises, to bring redemption to all people."

And we will be called God's Beloved, the Redeemed of the Lord; God will seek us out to live in the New Jerusalem, where no one is left behind. Amen.

*** RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE #29: *Go, Tell It On the Mountain***

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,

And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

(Repeat chorus)

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

OFFERTORY: *Gesu Bambino*

*** A DOXOLOGY #46: *On This Day Earth Shall Ring***

PERSONENT HODIE

On this day earth shall ring with the song children sing

To the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to save us; Him the Father gave us.

Id-e-o - o - o, Id-e-o - o - o, Id-e-o, Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD IN MUSIC: *O Holy Night*

ARR. D. CLYDESDALE

HYMN FOR ILLUMINATION: *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.

THE SPOKEN WORD

The Christmas story with Narrators and three Messengers

[As you are instructed, please stand and participate as indicated.]

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host. Yes! YOU are the multitude of messengers who have gathered this night to proclaim the Good News! And the angels of God praised God and said:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace and goodwill among all people!”

HYMN FOR THE ANGELS #23: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

GLORIA

THE PROCLAIMED WORD: MARY’S BABY: #MORELOVE

REV. JOHNSON

*** HYMN OF PREPARATION #25:** *Away in a Manger*

MUELLER

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

THE INVITATION TO THE TABLE

God’s Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken.

A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, “and the wolf will lie down with the lamb”.

Here at this table we get a foretaste of God’s banquet. This is indeed God’s table, not the church’s, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.

Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

On this silent night, God is with you.

God is also with you.

On this holy night, God’s Grace comes to us.

Our hearts rejoice in his becoming one of us, that we might become one with God.

On this Night of nights, the shadows of the world melt away before God’s Light.

We join the choirs of angels in singing to the universe the good news of the birth of Jesus.

This is the night your heart bursts open with Joy, . . . So on this night when heaven reaches down to caress creation with healing, we join the angel choirs who sang your glory, and with your people in every time and place, caroling the good news which is ours:

Gloria! Gloria! In excelsis deo! Creation joins in the angelic chorus of joy. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One born this night for us. Hosanna in the highest!

Holiness is who you are, God of Christmas, . . . So, as we gather on this holiest of nights, we proclaim that mystery we call faith:

Born in the shadows of night, Christ is our light; dying on a rough cross, Christ is our life; rising from a cold tomb, Christ is our hope; returning to us once more, Christ is your promise.

Pour out your Spirit upon us, Wonderful Counselor, . . . And as we taste the promise of the feast you prepare for us in your kingdom, may we live for you and serve your children, as we have been served by the Child of Christmas, Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, who taught us when we pray to say:

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.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BY THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Why do we now light the Christ Candle?

The Christ Candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, come into our darkness to enlighten us and give us the light of God which we share with others, as he says in John's gospel: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

SPREADING OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Please light your candle as instructed by the ushers. Please keep them lit throughout the remainder of the service, carrying the light of Christ out into the world!

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL: JOHN 1:1-5, 9-14

* **HYMN #60:** *Silent Night, Holy Night*

STILLE NACHT

LEAVING TO SERVE IN GOD'S NAME

* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

* **CLOSING HYMN #40:** *Joy to the World!*

ANTIOCH

* **POSTLUDE:** *The Joyful Morn*

G. BLAKE

* *Those who are able may stand in body or spirit.*



Welcome to Bethany Presbyterian

WELCOME to Bethany Presbyterian Church. Whether you are a member or a visitor we are so glad that you are worshipping with us this evening and pray that this time of worship will be both renewing and rewarding for you. If you have an interest in joining Bethany, please speak to the pastor or call the church at 336.227.4041. Please visit our website at www.bethanypresbyterian.org or Facebook at www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian.

Worship Notes:

- All worshipers should have received a small candle upon entering the sanctuary. If you didn't receive one, please see an usher. Please use caution in lighting your candle at the end of the service. You may place the candle in the basket by the door, or keep it as a memento.
- Communion this evening will be served by way of intinction. At the appropriate time in the service, elders will be stationed in front of each section. Proceed by the middle aisle to the station nearest you, tear off a small piece of bread, dip it in the cup, partake, and return to your seat by the outside aisle.

Session

Moderator: Rev. John W. Johnson

Clerk: Rick Purcell

Treasurer: Ron Osborne

Class of 2017:

Ron Kimrey

Karen Maxwell

Class of 2018:

Glenn Patterson

Nancy Purcell

Brandon Troxler

Class of 2019:

A. J. Campbell

Ron Osborne

Jean Payne

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love learn serve



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Staff

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