



## John's Journal

I saw something online the other day that said something like *after midnight on December 31st, we can honestly use that old saying 'hindsight is 2020!'*

If ever there was a year to put in the rear view mirror, it is 2020. Not that things will automatically get better on January 1<sup>st</sup>, but it's always good to have new hope and new promise of new possibilities and opportunities. And that's what a new year brings.

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you can get excited as well about some of the new opportunities that await us in the new year.

First of all, I am so excited that we can offer this unique **Winter Virtual Bible Study** (see page 3). As I have mentioned several times, the education that I received at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education has benefited me greatly over the years. Not only did I make lifelong friendships during my two years there, but having such gifted professors to guide us along the way was such a blessing.

You have heard me mention a few over the years, but I am so pleased the Dr. Donald Griggs has stayed in touch with me and through the gift of technology has agreed to lead us through this study of the gospel of Luke.

Don is the author of several Bible studies - most notably this *Bible From Scratch* series. In his retirement, Don has remained active as a teacher as well as participant in many Bible study groups. It was during a recent session that he came upon this idea of reworking his Luke study to be used in a virtual setting.

Don is an engaging and challenging teacher, and I am looking forward to being his student once again. I do hope that you will take advantage of this unique opportunity to have someone of Don's stature and reputation to give of his time and energy so that we here in Graham, North Carolina can learn more about the Bible. See page 3 for more info and to sign up.

The other new year opportunity that I am excited about (and a little nervous as well!) is the new sermon series that I will be offering beginning on the first Sunday in January on ***The Gospel According to Hamilton*** (see page 4). I won't repeat myself here as you can read more info on page 4, only to say I am so excited to lead us through a sermon series based on this incredible piece of music and art.

You will see also on the next page the notice about the Installation of Shelby Smith as a new Ruling Elder on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Something new I am trying as a way of Officer Training for Shelby and the entire Session, is a series of training sessions that will take place during each month's Session meeting.

Using resources found on the *Theocademy* website - created by Presbyterians and resourced by Presbyterians, the Session will watch a designated video prior to the meeting, work on a study guide, and come to the meeting prepared to discuss the material. This is an effort to enable our Session to be better leaders, more knowledgeable about what it means to be Presbyterian, and more energetic about their roles as Ruling Elders. So, instead of a few Sunday evenings or a weekend trying to fit a ton of information into limited time, we will have the entire year to engage in this time of training and getting to know each other better as well. Please keep your elders in your prayers as they strive to be the leaders they have been called to be.

So, yes, it will be good to wave goodbye to 2020 as it comes to an end. The challenges for 2021 continue to be present as our nation struggles to overcome this deadly pandemic. Let us continue to pray that the vaccines that are now available will be quickly and prudently made available to wider segments of the population. As someone over 65, I am certainly looking forward to when they are available for my age group. I will gladly roll up my sleeve and get my shot.

And let us pray for our nation as new leadership takes office. May God guide our nation to be a nation of care and compassion and wisdom.

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

# WORSHIP SERVICE UPDATES

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## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

As we continue to follow guidelines that are set forth from Salem Presbytery, as well as following state guidelines and recommendations, we will continue to gather for worship online only. The presbytery suggested to remain online only until February. At the January Session meeting, the Session will evaluate where we are and make recommendations moving forward. As much as we hope to be back in-person for worship as soon as possible, we place and even higher value on being safe.

We are encouraged that vaccines are now available and hopefully soon will be available to a wide section of our population. When that happens, we should see numbers decreasing to a point where in-person gatherings are safer. Let us all pray for that day to be soon!

And let us continue to pray for all those effected by this deadly virus - for families of those who have succumbed to the virus, for first responders, and for front line health care workers who continue to do their jobs to the best of their abilities in the face of conditions that could never have imagined.



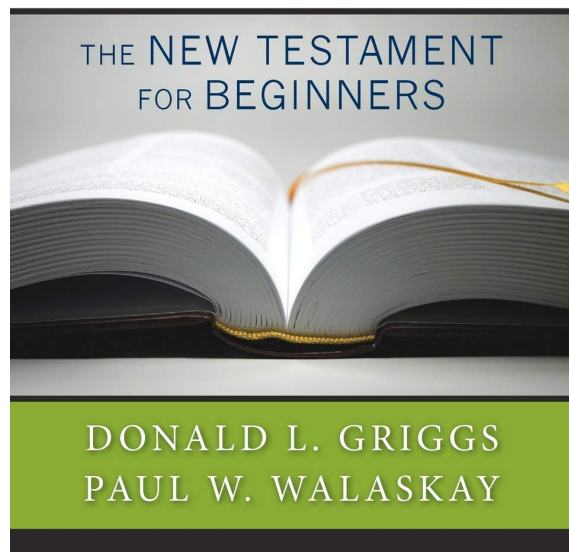
As of January 1, 2021, we will welcome Shelby Smith as an active Ruling Elder for our congregation. During worship on Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, it will be our privilege to officially install Shelby to this office.

Having this occur virtually will certainly be different, but no less meaningful. Please offer your prayers for Shelby and our Session as they begin their work for 2021.



# LUKE'S GOSPEL

from Scratch



#### Praise for The Bible from Scratch series:

"What great substantive, but readable, material for participants and such creative plans for leaders! It's a winning combination."

—CAROL WEHRHEIM, Christian educator, author, and teacher

"Everyone can learn something from studying the Bible with Don Griggs."

—PATRICK D. MILLER, professor emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary

"Written by a widely respected teacher of teachers."

—JAMES A. WALTHER, professor emeritus, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

"This is Don Griggs at his best!"

—FREDA GARDNER, professor emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary

Donald L. Grigg's popular volumes *The Bible from Scratch: The Old Testament for Beginners* and *The Bible from Scratch: The New Testament for Beginners* presented basic themes, histories, personalities, and meanings of the Bible. With this expansion of the series, Griggs offers an opportunity to build on that foundation with a series of volumes based on the individual books of the Old and New Testaments. A leader's guide and a participant section are included for each book, making each volume an excellent resource for group or individual study.

This addition to the best-selling series considers the Gospel of Luke, perhaps the most popular Gospel. Readers will explore the beloved stories of the birth of Jesus, the boy Jesus conversing with teachers in the temple, the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the poor widow and her two copper coins, and rich Zacchaeus in a sycamore tree.

**DONALD L. GRIGGS** is a noted Christian educator, former professor of Christian education at Presbyterian School of Christian Education, trustee of Union Presbyterian Seminary, and author of several books. Among his books are *Teaching Teachers to Teach* and volumes in the Kerygma study series.

**PAUL W. WALASKAY** is Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Union Presbyterian Seminary. An ordained minister in the American Baptist Church and the United Church of Christ, he has served churches and university campuses in New York and North Carolina.

### BETHANY WINTER VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

What a unique opportunity we have this January! You are invited to join a study of the **Gospel of Luke** that will be offered via Zoom beginning on **Monday evening, January 11, from 7:00 to 8:15**. Our seven-week study will be led by **Rev. Dr. Donald Griggs**, a retired Presbyterian pastor/educator living in Livermore, California. In the study we will learn what is unique to Luke's Gospel, what the author intended to communicate about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and what Luke's message means for us today. Don Griggs was a professor at Presbyterian School of Christian Education when Rev. Johnson was a student. He has served in many roles as a Christian educator and loves studying and teaching the Bible.

What a treat it will be to explore this rich Gospel with Don Griggs. We are reminded from the title of the book that **WE ARE ALL BEGINNERS** when it comes to biblical knowledge! Our seven-week study will have the following themes:

- Luke Says Hello and Introduces Jesus: A Study of Luke 1:1-2:52
- Jesus Begins His Work: A Study of Luke 3:1-4:44
- Jesus the Healer and Jesus at Work in Galilee: A Study of Luke 5:1-9:50
- Jesus the Teacher and His Journey to Jerusalem: A Study of Luke 9:51-19:27
- Jesus in Jerusalem: A Study of Luke 19:28-22:38
- The Arrest, Trial, and Death of Jesus: A Study of Luke 22:39-23:56
- Resurrection and Ascension: A Study of Luke 24:1-53


The church has ordered several books and they are available in the church office for \$5.00 each. It is also available on Amazon on the Kindle platform.

If you are reading this newsletter online, you can register [HERE](#).

If you are reading a print version, please register by calling the office (336.227.4041), by emailing John at the church.

**PLEASE REGISTER NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9TH.**

the gospel according to

H  MILTON

Let's begin the new year with something new . . . something different . . . something a little "out of the box" as they say! Join us on the first Sunday of January as I will begin a new Sermon Series: ***The Gospel According to Hamilton***.

As we probably are aware, *Hamilton* is a wildly successful Broadway musical written by Lin Manuel Miranda, that garnered sixteen Tony award nominations in 2016. Anyone who has been privileged to see the live performance, either in New York or in traveling companies, or even has seen the show taped for television, can attest to its quality and appeal.

Even if you aren't thrilled with the type of music we see in *Hamilton* we can all appreciate the talent that the cast displays in every number, not to mention the compelling story itself of Alexander Hamilton.

I came upon this idea of this series quite by accident, as I was looking for a graphic for something else online, and came across the graphic above. I was intrigued by the idea and followed the link and was immediately taken in by the themes I found and the challenge that I saw for myself in creating this series. I am really looking forward to seeing where it takes us!

The series will begin on Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, and will continue for seven weeks, which will take us to Lent. Here are the dates and themes for the series:

- January 3<sup>rd</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: Legacy*
- January 10<sup>th</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: Forgiveness*
- January 17<sup>th</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: What Comes Next?*
- January 24<sup>th</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: Grace Changes Everything*
- January 31<sup>st</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: That Would Be Enough*
- February 7<sup>th</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: Take a Break*
- February 14<sup>th</sup> - *The Gospel According to Hamilton: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?*

We talk a lot about seeing the message of the Gospel in the world around us. I strongly believe that God speaks to us through art, through music, through everyday events in our lives. God certainly endowed Lin Manuel Miranda with incredible talents in writing this work of art. My prayer is that I will be able to convey some of the themes that can relate to our lives as Christ's followers.

This should be fun!!

JWJ



# JANUARY WORSHIP THEMES

## **January 3<sup>rd</sup> - Second Sunday of Christmas:**

Matthew 13:1-9

*The Gospel According to Hamilton: Legacy*

## **January 10<sup>th</sup> - Baptism of the Lord:**

TBA

*The Gospel According to Hamilton: Forgiveness*

## **January 17<sup>th</sup> - Second Sunday After Epiphany:**

TBA

*The Gospel According to Hamilton: What Comes Next?*

## **January 24<sup>th</sup> - Third Sunday After Epiphany:**

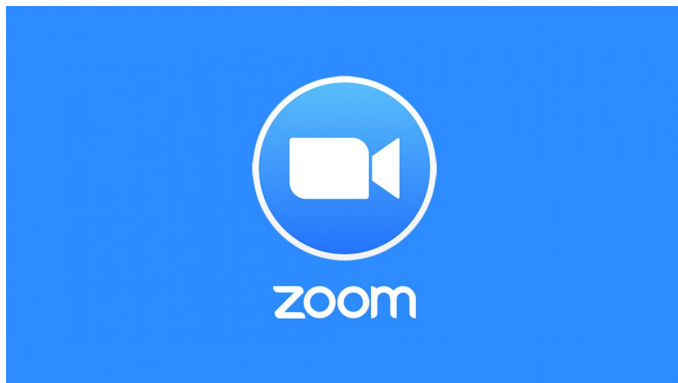
TBA

*The Gospel According to Hamilton: Grace Changes Everything*

## **January 31<sup>st</sup> - Fourth Sunday After Epiphany:**

TBA

*The Gospel According to Hamilton: That Would Be Enough*



There are three options to gather for online worship: Zoom, Facebook Live and YouTube Live. Links for these options will be available in your usual weekly emails, as well as on our Facebook page.



# January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div> <div>27</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>28</div> </div>	<div> <div>29</div> </div>	<div> <div>30</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)</div> </div>	<div> <div>31</div> <div>New Year's Eve</div> </div>	<div> <div>1</div> <div>New Year's Day</div> </div>	<div> <div>2</div> </div>
<div> <div>3</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>4</div> </div>	<div> <div>5</div> </div>	<div> <div>6</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)</div> </div>	<div> <div>7</div> </div>	<div> <div>8</div> </div>	<div> <div>9</div> </div>
<div> <div>10</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>11</div> <div> <div>7:00 PM Winter Virtual Bible Study</div> <div>7:00 PM Session Meeting</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>12</div> </div>	<div> <div>13</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)</div> </div>	<div> <div>14</div> </div>	<div> <div>15</div> </div>	<div> <div>16</div> </div>
<div> <div>17</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>18</div> <div> <div>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</div> <div>7:00 PM Winter Virtual Bible Study</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>19</div> </div>	<div> <div>20</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)</div> </div>	<div> <div>21</div> </div>	<div> <div>22</div> </div>	<div> <div>23</div> </div>
<div> <div>24</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>25</div> <div>7:00 PM Winter Virtual Bible Study</div> </div>	<div> <div>26</div> </div>	<div> <div>27</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (not meeting)</div> </div>	<div> <div>28</div> </div>	<div> <div>29</div> </div>	<div> <div>30</div> </div>
<div> <div>31</div> <div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (online only)</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>1</div> <div> <div>First Day of Black History Month</div> <div>7:00 PM Winter Virtual Bible Study</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>2</div> </div>	<div> <div>3</div> </div>	<div> <div>4</div> </div>	<div> <div>5</div> </div>	<div> <div>6</div> </div>

**Your Church Staff:**

*Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson*

*Director of Music: Christopher Bagley*

*Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby*

*Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt*

**Elders:**

*Bill Abplanalp*

*Chip Allen*

*Helen Brown*

*Randy Cousins (Clerk of Session)*

*Tina Patterson*

*Nancy Purcell*

*Ben Russell*

*Shelby Smith*

*Tracey Troxler*

*Glenn Patterson (Treasurer)*



**The Session met for its regular monthly stated meeting via Zoom on December 8th. Here are some highlights:**

- Heard a devotion from Tracey Troxler
- Received a positive update on the sale of the property from Glenn Patterson
- Approved chartering Boy Scout and Cub Scout troop/pack
- Received a treasurer's report from John (in Glenn's absence)
- Received an update on the installation of new HVAC system
- Discussed plans for virtual Christmas Eve service
- Received an update on plans for virtual Bible study beginning in January, led by Dr. Donald Griggs (virtually)
- Expressed thank you to Karen Maxwell for her service on the Session and her service as Clerk of Session
- Unanimously elected Randy Cousins as Clerk of Session for 2021

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 12TH  
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY  
BEN RUSSELL AND BILL ABPLANALP**



Bethany offers a huge **THANK YOU to Karen Maxwell** for her service on the Session. Karen rotates off the Session at the end of the year, which also concludes her service as Clerk of Session. We are so grateful to her for her dedication to the church she loves, and to her Lord.

Thank you, Karen!



# LOOKING BACK AT 2020!







## So, What Now?

We've spent the last many weeks singing hymns associated with Advent (the Coming of our Lord) and Christmas (the birth of our Lord). Songs like *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"* and *"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"* rolled off our tongues during the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day. We started hearing actual Christmas music as early as Halloween. Songs like *"Joy to the World"*, *"O Come All Ye Faithful"* and of course, *"Silent Night"* were played in stores and over the airways, giving us premature ear-worms of the sacred and secular pieces associated with an ever-increasingly long season. So, what now?

It might feel like the holiday season is behind us, but we're not quite done with the Christmas season yet. We recognize January 6 as **Epiphany**, a day set aside to commemorate God's revelation to the world through the person of the baby, Jesus Christ. On the Sunday before this day, we typically celebrate the Epiphany story of the visiting Magi (often referred to as the Three Kings or the Three Wise Men) and King Herod's attempt to find and kill this baby born to dethrone him (Matthew 2). *"We Three Kings"* is probably the most recognizable of the Epiphany Hymns. Immediately following Epiphany Sunday is **The Baptism of the Lord**. We celebrate the Epiphany season for several weeks leading up to Ash Wednesday.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher A. Bagley, Director of Music





**GIVE+**Church

**Giving to your church is as easy as 1-2-3**

Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "GivePlus Church" to download for FREE.

We are grateful for those of you who have kept your pledge up-to-date using our new online giving platform. As we continue to live in this time of pandemic, having this option for giving has been most helpful.

One added feature - also free - is the option of using an app on your smartphone. Just go to your app store and search for "GivePlus Church" and download it for free. You can then search for Bethany and follow the instructions.

There are two documents that you will find useful in answering your questions about this new electronic giving portal. They are on our website here: <http://www.bethanypreschurch.org/online-giving-faq.html>

**In this time of upheaval in our normal routines, it is important to remember that the work of the church continues as we continue to live up to our commitments. We are confident that this new platform for electronic giving will be a great enhancement to our stewardship efforts at Bethany.**

Please make every effort to keep your pledge up-to-date, either giving by check or using this convenient method of giving online - securely and safely.



**FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF NOVEMBER 2020**

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$125,910.81
Less Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$156,019.24
Plus Other Income (from investments)	\$15,317.31
<b>YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-\$14,791.12</b>

**Scan this QR code for direct access to our Online Giving Platform**



*Happy New Year*  
**2021**



## January Birthdays and Anniversaries!

### Happy Anniversary to:

Becky & David Eatmon  
Nancy & Rick Purcell  
Joyce & Bobby Peele

January 6<sup>th</sup>  
January 23<sup>rd</sup>  
January 24<sup>th</sup>

### Happy Birthday to:

Joy Saleeby  
Sarah Osborne  
Bill Abplanalp  
Mike Sutton  
A. J. Campbell  
Norman Mize

January 6<sup>th</sup>  
January 6<sup>th</sup>  
January 10<sup>th</sup>  
January 17<sup>th</sup>  
January 23<sup>rd</sup>  
January 24<sup>th</sup>

## Children & Youth Ministries

- **Sunday school for Youth and Children** / Meets on second floor of Education Building at 9:45 each Sunday (as announced during the pandemic)..
- During **Worship**, (when we return to in-person worship) children are invited to sit in designated pews (front rows on north side) / there are activities provided
- Our **Nursery** is staffed by a professional, paid worker, as well as volunteers each Sunday.
- Watch your calendar and inbox for special activities for our young people throughout the year.

HAPPY  
2021

*Find your place!*

ADULT MINISTRIES

### Christian Education Opportunities

**The Fellowship Class** - Bible study class using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum. The class will resume when we return to our normal schedules.



### *Bethany Prays*

Christopher Bagley  
Frederica Beatty  
Jean Berry  
Jack Cook  
Bill Faucette  
Christy Lutterloh  
Norma Proctor  
Joan Richardson  
Nancy Sutton  
Tiffany Tauchren  
Eleanor Thompson  
Randy Thompson  
Grace Johnson

Karen Maxwell  
Carol Brooks  
Pat Kennedy  
Peter Slater  
Diane Miller  
Barbara Cousins  
Ben Johnson  
Joey Leake  
Pete Campbell  
Shannon Russell  
Alex Thomas  
Sylvia Donley  
Janie Holt Clapp

Stewart Dillard  
Richie Fishburne  
Jeremy Harden  
Ruby Martin  
Anne McDaniels  
Shelvia Russell  
John & Ann Sutton  
Mike Sutton  
Katherine Turner  
Ida Whitney  
Frank Wrenn  
Bill Abplanalp



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