

## QUESTIONS AND PRAYER

By your baptism you were made one with the body of Christ, the church. Today we give thanks for every community that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate that your journey of faith has led you to Bethpage.

We, the members of Bethpage Presbyterian Church, welcome you with joy into the common life of our congregation. We promise you our friendship and our prayers as we share the hopes and labors of Christ's church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we all continue to grow together in the knowledge and love of God, and to walk together in the way of Christ.

## HYMN OF WELCOME

We are God's family, serving together.  
Bound by the Spirit, Welcome new friends!  
Grace freely given faith for the journey,  
Worship our Savior, love never ends.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

### GO IN GOD'S NAME

## HYMN #23

*"Angels We Have Heard on High"*  
([The Presbyterian Hymnal](#))

## CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

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### To Our Visitors

*We welcome you to worship today. If you are visiting with us please feel free to speak to the pastor or one of our greeters if you have questions or want more information about Bethpage.*

*Bethpage is a church committed to children and families and their needs. We have a nursery and childcare for infants through kindergarten. Feel free to keep your child in worship through the Time With the Children if that works for your family. Jaymie Barrier our children's caregiver will take your cell phone number and will text you if your child needs you during worship.*



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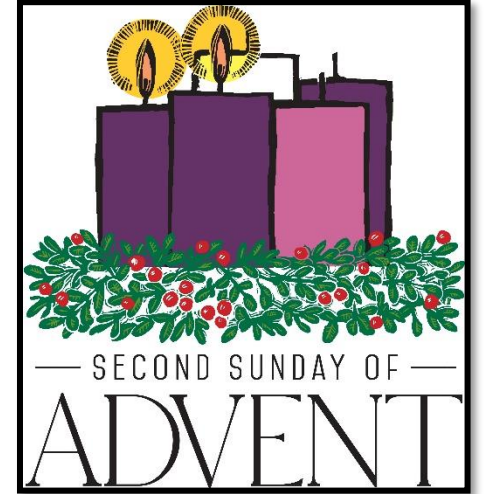
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## Welcome to Bethpage Presbyterian Church!

*"A family of faith in Jesus  
Christ, yesterday, today,  
and tomorrow."*

December 10, 2023  
10:00 AM



## GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## OPENING MUSIC

*"Christmas Comes"*

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

*Marsha Johnson & Marcia Graybeal*

The season of Advent continues.

**We join with the hopeful throng in the lighting of the Advent candles, symbols of our faith and signs of God's love.**

We light the candle of hope.

**We are a people of hope. Hope lives in us and will abide with us.**

The light of hope dares to pierce through the darkness of desolation and sin. Today we light the candle of peace.

**This light, too, must brave great darkness.**

In an age when people so seldom find peace within themselves, and when all the earth stands under threat of total annihilation, we light a fire called peace.

**Peace that is not merely the absence of war and conflict, but peace that is the fullness of blessing for all – that is the peace for which we dare to hope.**

Christ comes to bring peace to those who have been separated from God and from one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

## ***ADVENT PRAYER***

Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope and peace you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

***HYMN #8***                      *"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"*  
(The Presbyterian Hymnal)

## ***PRAYER OF CONFESSION***

God of the loving heart, we confess before you those places in our hearts where we have refused you entrance: people we have refused to love; habits we never get around to changing; good things we have left undone; and ways in which we hurt you, ourselves, and others. Come to us in the light of Christ. Shine on those places we have hidden from you. Show us new ways to live. Forgive us, O Lord. Sweep clean the rooms of our hearts, that Christ may find a home among us. Be known among us now and forever! Hear our silent confessions . . . (*Please take a moment for silent confession.*)

***RESPONSE #218***                      *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*  
(verse 1, Hymns of Grace)

## ***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS***

The Messiah comes to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. Friends, hear the good news. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**Alleluia, Amen.**

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE***                      *"Glory to God Whose Goodness Shines on Me"*

## ***THE WORD PROCLAIMED***

### ***TIME WITH CHILDREN***

***ANTHEM***                                      *"Mary Did You Know?"*

***OLD TESTAMENT READING***                      Isaiah 9:2-3, 6 (Pew Bible, p. 638)

***HYMN #5***                                      *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*  
(verses 1 & 2, The Presbyterian Hymnal)

***NEW TESTAMENT READING***                      Luke 2:8-14 (Pew Bible, p. 58)

***SERMON***                                      *"Fear Not"*                                      Rev. Valerie Hicks

## ***THE PEOPLE RESPOND***

### ***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH***

from A Brief Statement of Faith

In life and death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

### ***GIVING GOD OUR OFFERING***

Offertory

Doxology (*sung*)

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. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, receive these gifts and bless them that they might be used to further your kingdom. Lead us into a right relationship with you. Touch our hearts this Christmas time and inspire in us greater love and faithfulness. In Christ's name we prayer. Amen.

### ***RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS***

*Mitzi Marie Foster*  
*Bennie Ronnel Lunsford II*  
*Michael Anthony Shimanski*

### ***LITANY***

We rejoice that we are one with each other in the family of God.

**We celebrate the gifts that you will bring to Christ's church.**

We welcome you with love and acceptance.

**We look forward to serving together and growing in our faith as we serve.**

We want Bethpage to be a place where you are comfortable, a safe place to express your questions and doubts, a place where you sense the Sprit's presence and a place where you can grow in your discipleship.

**We praise God for bringing you to this place on your journey. Alleluia. Amen.**