



BEDFORD

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



"Heavenly Window" found in the Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-et-de-Toute-Joie in Villeneuve-sur-Lot, France

December 31, 2023
1st Sunday of Christmas

Prelude *From Heaven Above To Earth* J. Pachelbel

Ringling of the Bells

Welcome and Announcements

***Opening Sentences**

Leader: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

People: We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Unison Opening Prayer

Sovereign God, You visited this planet in Jesus of Nazareth. Renew within us the sense of your presence with us. We give thanks for your works of love and your merciful provision for all our needs. To You belong honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

***Opening Hymn 22** *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

Confession and Pardon

Eternal One, we have neglected to look for signs of your presence, so we have not seen your works. We organize life for our own self-interest, so we have failed to find you in the people and events surrounding us. Even the wonder of new life leaves us unmoved. Break into our routine dullness to forgive and change us. Rename us, and make us whole.

Hear now our silent prayers of confession...Amen.

In light, truth, and grace God surrounds us with a love that will not let us go, turning our mourning into joy, our sin into forgiveness, and our fear into awe. God calls us each by name

and welcomes us into the family of faith, granting us peace that the world cannot give.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace**

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

You may stand and greet one another.

Time with the Children

The children are welcome to stay for the service or they may leave for Sunday Spirit.

Poetry Lesson

Psalm 148: 1-14

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels;

praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens,

and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

fire and hail, snow and frost,

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Epistle Lesson

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Sermon

"The Christmas Donkey" Rev. Courtney Steininger

Hymn 28

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Offering

Organ Voluntary

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

J. Brahms

***Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People 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, the power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

***Closing Hymn 56**

*The First Nowell ‘
Verses 1, 2, 3 and 6*

***Charge and Blessing**

***Postlude**

This Day Which Is so Full of Joy

J. S. Bach

*Please stand, if you are able.

Announcements

Please fill out the pew pads and pass them to your neighbor.

Child Care Available

In addition to Sunday Spirit for elementary school kids, childcare is provided during worship for kids not yet in kindergarten. Please contact Courtney for more information.



SECOND SUNDAY SOUP



Our next Second Sunday Soups are January 14,
February 11 and March 10!

We need 1 more volunteer for January and 2 volunteers for February & March!
If you are interested helping please email Elyssa.



MIDNIGHT RUN

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Friday, January 12th
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We will be holding a Midnight Run on Friday, January 12th. We are looking for donations of new or gently used items. Please see the sign up genius for specific items. We also need people to join us on the run. Please email Courtney if you would like to attend.

EMERGENCY SHELTER PARTNERSHIP

JANUARY 1 - 7, 2024 AND FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 3, 2024



We are looking for volunteers to make dinner, desserts, snacks, and drinks. Find a friend or someone you would like to get to know in the congregation to host dinner one night together!

It's a wonderful way to connect and help some of neighbors.

Go to the website or the enews to sign up.

Email Elyssa with any questions. Elyssa@bedfordpreschurch.org.

Bulletin & Weekly E-NEWS Announcements

To sign up for our weekly E-NEWS that has live links to all of our announcements, please go to the BPC website at **bedfordpreschurch.org** and select either '**Contact**' at the top **or E-NEWS** just below it. To have information entered into the Bulletin and/or the E-NEWS, please email Jessica at **Office@bedfordpreschurch.org** and Elyssa at **Elyssa@bedfordpreschurch.org** by the end of the day Tuesdays for entry into that week's media.

Upcoming Events at a Glance

Sunday, December 31st

10 am	Worship
11 am	Coffee Hour

Monday, January 1st- OFFICE CLOSED, Happy New Year!
ESP Begins and runs through January 7th

Thursday, January 4th

10 am	Bible Study. Please contact Alan McDougall at alanmcd@verizon.net .
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Sunday, December 7th	Epiphany
10 am	Worship with Communion
11 am	Coffee Hour

Our Leadership

Session

Clerk of Session, Michelle Gosh, President Brian Hiller-Dupont,

Anne Bentzen, Linda Burpee (Mission),
Jessica Cunningham (Personnel and Stewardship),
Amy Drabek, Danielle Gamar (Christian Education),
Ashley Glod-Hayes, Maria Andrea Laverde (Nativity Farm),
Sarah Ryan (Property & Maintenance),
& Bart Tyler (Members & Friends and Stewardship)
Moderator Reverend Carol Howard

Deacons

Chair Kim Lapple, Sarah Alley, Marcy Carlson,
Kathy DiBiasi, Michele Eames, Pat Ferguson, Andres Mejía,
Diane Palmento, and Lisa Sayre

Staff

The Reverend Carol Howard, Pastor

The Reverend Courtney Steininger, Minister of Christian Education

John Lettieri, Director of Music

Jessica DeAlto, Administrative and Financial Manager

Elyssa Michaels, Director of Congregational Life & Digital Ministries

The Reverend Thomas A. Hughart, Pastor Emeritus

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