



“The Value of Fulfillment”

10:00AM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2023

WWW.BETHANYPRESBY.ORG/SERMONS

To trust in Jesus
To love like Jesus
To grow in Jesus
To bring others to Jesus

WORSHIP THE LORD

WE GATHER

PRELUDE "And the Song Was of the Morning" **by Gilbert M. Martin**
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WELCOME **Pastor Ellen Dawson**

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Please Stand*) **Jaymi Neely**

Come, sing praises to God! Rejoice in his presence!
For he is our God: a Father to the fatherless,
and the defender of all who need protection;
the One in whom the lonely find a home, and the prisoner finds release.
Bless the Lord, the God of our salvation,
who sustains and strengthens us, day after day!
Let us worship the Lord!

OPENING PRAYER **Jaymi Neely**

HYMN (*Please Stand*) "Angels We Have Heard on High" **No. 188**
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1 Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain:
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? [Refrain]

3 Come to Bethlehem, and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

CALL TO CONFESSION **Jaymi Neely**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jaymi Neely

O Triune God, call us to repentance as we look back on this past year and look forward to a new year. Forgive us for past unfaithfulness, silence in the face of injustice and inaction amid suffering. Forgive us for judging others, talking about people in negative ways and dismissing those with whom we disagree. Forgive us for being afraid, for refusing to offer forgiveness, and for not trusting your will for our lives. In this new year, move us toward faithful stewardship, heal divisions, and deepen our faith, we pray. Amen.

Silent Prayer of Confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jaymi Neely

God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting! What a joy to know because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we are free from our burdens and can move forward in hope. Brothers and sisters, in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Amen and Amen!**

RESPONSE *(Please Stand)*

“Gloria Patri”

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Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Jaymi Neely

Since God has forgiven us in Christ. Let us be at peace with one another. The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all...**and also with you.**

Let us share the peace of Christ with our neighbor.

WE LISTEN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Jaymi Neely

FIRST READING

Isaiah 63:7-9 (NRSV)

Jaymi Neely

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel

that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully,”
and he became their savior in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

SECOND READING

Matthew 2:13-23 (NRSV)

Pastor Ellen Dawson

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"The Value of Fulfillment"

Pastor Ellen Dawson

WE RESPOND

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

THE OFFERTORY

"Sing, Noel!" by Natalie Sleeth

Bethany Choir and Sunday School Singers

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THE RESPONSE *(Please Stand)*

"Doxology"

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

THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION *(Please Stand)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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 and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

WE ARE SENT

HYMN *(Please Stand)*

“Go, Tell it On the Mountain”

No. 218

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Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

1 While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [Refrain]

2 The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]

3 Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

BENEDICTION *(Please Stand)*

Pastor Ellen Dawson

POSTLUDE

WELCOME TO BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We are delighted to have you in worship with us today!

FOR OUR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN - A Nursery Room, under the guidance of Nursery Director, Melina Robinson, is across the hall from the pulpit side of the Sanctuary. It is equipped with a speaker system from the sanctuary so any parent(s) who wishes to stay with their child(ren) in the nursery can hear the worship service. **A Cry Room** is at the rear of the Sanctuary – entry is through a door in the Narthex near the usher's table. *We encourage you to use these rooms as needed.*

Worship Bags are available for children to use during the worship service. The bags can be found at the Usher's Desk, or outside of the Nursery.

Sound amplification devices are available to those who might need or want to use them. Our ushers are available to help with any needs that you have during worship.

NEWS FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CHECK THE CHRISTMAS CARD BOX IN THE WELCOME CENTER FOR ANY CARDS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN LEFT FOR YOU.

Feel free to take and deliver cards for friends who may not be able to get them themselves.

SECRET SISTER NOTICE - if you have signed up to be a part of the secret sister program and have not received information regarding your secret sister, please contact Pat Mishizen at 412-417-3541 or Judy Davidson at 412-343-7530

WANTED

Sound Board Operator Volunteers for the 8:15am service!

Sound Engineer Volunteer for Thursday Evening Bloom Sessions!

Call or text Mike Segeleon at 412-389-0985 if you have any questions or would like to be a part of this ministry!

PROGRAM AND EVENT NEWS

“GRIEF GROUP” will begin on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7pm in Room 224. A group discussion from “A Grace Disguised, How the Soul Grows Through Loss” by Jerry Sittser. All are welcome! Contact Sharon Salvini for a book.

BLOOD DRIVE at Bethany – NEXT SUNDAY, JAN 7 – A Blood Drive will be held at Bethany on January 7, 2024. Appointments are recommended and can be made on the Vitalant website at vitalant.org

WEEK AHEAD

Sunday, Dec 31 – NEW YEARS EVE

10:00AM – Worship

Monday, Jan 1 - NEW YEARS DAY

Church Offices are closed

Tuesday, Jan 2

6:30PM – Men's Huddle

7:00PM – Coed Dart Ball

7:00PM - ALANON

Wednesday, Jan 3

10:00AM – Fellowship of Prayer

11:30AM – Knitters

7:00PM – Choir

7:00PM - Scouts

Thursday, Jan 4

9:00AM – Quilters

5:00PM – New Deacon Training

7:00PM – Dart Ball

7:30PM - AA

Friday, Jan 5

Saturday, Jan 6

Sunday, Jan 7

BLOOD DRIVE

8:15AM and 10:45AM– Worship

9:30AM – Sunday School

12:00PM- Confirmation Class

12:00PM – Indoor Prayer Walk

5:00PM - BYG

MISSION NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

SARRIS CANDY – Proceeds from Sarris Candy sales in the month of December will go to Sojourner House.

CHURCH FINANCES AS OF DECEMBER 24, 2023:

	2023 YTD (\$)	2022 YTD (\$)	+/- (\$)
Contributions*	\$ 549,267	579,755	\$ (30,488)
General Fund Subsidies (Transfers)	367,308	330,000	37,308
Investment Income **	13,407	(26,020)	39,427
Total General Fund Income	\$ 929,982	\$883,735	\$ 46,247
Year to Date Budget	1,002,150		
+/- Budget	\$ (72,168)		

*For purposes of this report, any prepaid pledges have been spread over 52 weeks. ** Investment income is updated monthly upon receipt of investment statements. A friendly reminder from the Stewardship team, please write the amount of your giving on the outside of the envelope when turning in your offering. This helps make the job of those counting much easier.

END OF YEAR NOTICE- The Check Is In the Mail....

As the end of the year approaches, please keep in mind that all contributions for 2023 must be received by the church no later than **December 31, 2023**. IRS general rules state that a check placed in the church offering plate in January 2024 cannot be recorded as a 2023 contribution, even if the check has been dated 2023. The only exception to this rule would be for contributions that are mailed and postmarked in 2023. These contributions would be deductible in 2023 even though the contributions were not received until 2024. If you have any questions please contact Kim McCann at 412-221-5132 or finance@bethanypresby.org.

A REMINDER THAT ALL 2023 CONTRIBUTIONS NEED TO BE RECEIVED AND/OR POSTMARKED BY 12/31/23.