

BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
7 pm Service



"Blue Madonna" by Frank Wesley

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son

Monologue

"Being Seen"

Kathy DiBiasi

Solo

Panis Angelicus

Cesar Franck

Joseph Gansert, Baritone Soloist

Third Reading

Luke 2:1-7

Eric Eichhorn

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Monologue

"Journey to Bethlehem"

Kathy DiBiasi

***Hymn 44**

O Little Town of Bethlehem
(Verse 1)

English Folk Melody

Meditation

Rev. Carol Howard Merritt

Offering**Offertory**

O Holy Night
Joseph Gansert, Baritone Soloist

Adolphe Adam

***Choral Response**

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! The Herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"**

Prayer of Dedication

Lighting the Christ Candle

“And Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

Jesus came into this world, crying out, as his parents wondered at his strong lungs, tiny fingers, and unfocused eyes. Mary held him so close to her chest so that she could feel him inhaling and exhaling. In their exhaustion, Jesus and Mary slept as the rhythmic movements of breath lulled both of them. When Jesus cried, Mary looked down on his fragile flesh and she knew that he was the Christ, the anointed one.

To anoint someone, to pour oil over their head, was to acknowledge the transfer of power, whether it had to do with handing over courage, healing, an inheritance, or a reign, that person was called forth and set apart with the act. The oil that flowed from Samuel’s horn to anoint David continues to pour throughout time when we recognize Jesus as the Christ.

As we celebrate Christmas, we mark the fulfillment of our longings and the substance of our hope. For Jesus Christ is “God with us.”

Lighting

All: We light the Christ candle, with the assurance that hope will be fulfilled, peace will reign, joy will abound, and love will abide. For God has taken on flesh and dwells among us.

(Light the first, second, third, and fourth candles. Then, light the Christ candle.)

Prayer

All: Anointed one, on this day of joy, illuminate us so that we might understand your mystery. As we celebrate your birth, may we be born again, by your Spirit. Amen.

Lighting of Our Candles

Hymn 60

Silent Night, Holy Night
(Verse 1)

Stille Nacht

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright

**Round yon virgin mother and Child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace;
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

Please remain seated.

Please dip the unlit candle toward the flame as the light is passed.

The Prayer for Christmas

O God, grant us such love and wonder that with shepherds and magi and pilgrims unknown, we may come to adore the holy child. As you came in the stillness of the night long ago, so enter our lives and world again this night. Overcome our doubts and our fears with the light of Christ's presence that we may see clearly the way to walk, the truth to speak, and the life you would have us live. Amen.

***Blessing**

***Hymn 40**

Joy to the World

George Frederick Handel

(Verse 1)

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

Please wait to extinguish your candles until you have processed outside. We ask that you leave your candles in the boxes by the doors.

*Please stand, if you are able.

**Monologues are from *I Am Mary* (Chalice Press) by Carol Howard Merritt




*Thank you,
Thank you,
Thank you!*

We would like to thank the following
people for their wonderful contributions
to our Christmas Eve services.

Richard Clymer, Trumpeter
Kathy DiBiasi, Pageant Director
Don Dupont, Pageant Director
Abbott Fleur, Timpani
Joseph Gansert, Baritone
Rowan Pedraza, Piano (11pm service)
Sarah Ryan, Pageant Director
Henry Tate, Piano (5pm service)

We would also like to wish
a happy birthday to our
very own, Reverend Carol!



Thank you to the following people for so generously donating to BPC to help with the beautiful flowers & greens in the sanctuary.

Bradley & Tate Atkinson

In loving memory of Bette Lou & Bob Mann, Adele Tegtmeier, & Carter's mom, Brenda.

Gordon & Judy Aydelott

In memory of my parents, Jesse and Ruth Agor, and Gordon's parents, Marge and Jack Aydelott.

Rick & Anne Bentzen

From the Bentzen family in gratitude for the blessings of our family's youngest generation.

Bob & Hope Black

Given by Hope and Bob Black in celebration of our family, and thankful for our many blessings.

Bing & Marcy Carlson

To our wonderful family, the members we've loved being with recently and those we've lost.

To Vickie Dey for all of her thoughtfulness and help for the older people in our congregation.

Pat Ferguson

In loving memory of Tom Ferguson, who loved celebrating Christmas in our beautiful church.

Michael & Kate Flynn

Dedicated to our kids, Isla and Ronan Flynn.

Victor Fried

Good will to all creatures great and small.

Carla Hawryluk

Peace on Earth.

Marilyn Hermansen

In loving memory of Roy W. Hermansen who remains in our hearts forever.

Don & Brian Hiller-Dupont

From Brian and Don Hiller-Dupont in loving memory of Phyllis Hiller.

Richard & Natasha Mast

Dedicated to the memory of Mark London.

Tom & Lindsay Miserandino

In memory of Nelson H. Erb.

Mandana O'Connor

Wishing everyone good health, peace, love and happiness from the O'Connors.

Jean Palmer

In loving memory of Joe Palmer.

Heather Raker

In loving memory of our father, Bruce L. Beatty from Holly Bernene and Heather Raker.

Jeff and Sharon Seidell

In gratitude for so many Christmas celebrations together as a family.

Andrew Strawcutter

For Daddy, born 12/25/26.

Matt Valenti & Jeanne Collins

To Tinsley and Luke.

Jill Ferguson Warmbier & Jane Ferguson Huebner

In loving memory of our father, Thomas Wells Ferguson, III.

About our Cover Photo

Frank Wesley was born in India on December 1923 into a fifth generation Christian family of Hindu/Muslim background.

He began studying at the government school of Arts and Crafts in Lucknow in 1943 continuing to postgraduate study, later joining the teaching staff. Further studies included four years at the Kyoto Art University in Japan (1954-58) where he studied art and wood block printing. In 1958 he joined the Art Institute of Chicago where he studied modern art. He returned to India in 1960.

His work has been internationally recognized. He designed the urn for Mahatma Gandhi's ashes. Five of his paintings were included in the 1950 Holy Year Exhibition at the Vatican. "The Blue Madonna" was used as the first UNICEF Christmas card.



Follow this QR Code to see other paintings of the Christmas story.

Welcome to Bedford Presbyterian Church

A Worshiping Community

Shortly after the founding of the town of Bedford in 1680, plans were made to build a multi-purpose "meeting house" for town gatherings and religious services. In its first years, the church was Anglican and Congregational, but became Presbyterian by 1720 under the pastorate of Rev. William Tennent.

Today, Sunday morning worship at BPC is grounded in progressive Presbyterian tradition. Our values are exemplified by our short mission statements:

- *Love Your Neighbor*
- *Teach Our Children*
- *Never Stop Learning*



More than Just Sundays.

Opportunities to participate in outreach abound at BPC. BPC was a co-founder of the Emergency Shelter Partnership in which local churches and synagogues provide shelter for homeless people during the winter months. The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry is an other organization we have a strong, ongoing partnership with. Additionally, we participate in Midnight Runs, and our high school youth participate in work trips both domestically, to Appalachia and internationally. We believe that living our faith means working for social justice work.

For additional information about Bedford Presbyterian Church, visit us online at: bedfordpreschurch.org or call us at 914.234.3672.



Bedford Presbyterian Church Staff

The Reverend Carol Howard Merritt, Pastor
Courtney Steininger, Director of Christian Education & Youth
John Lettieri, Director of Music
Elyssa Michaels, Director of Congregational Life & Digital Ministries
Jessica DeAlto, Office Manager
Edwin & Ellida Acevedo, Building & Grounds Maintenance
The Reverend Thomas A. Hughart, Pastor Emeritus

Sunday Worship Service in person and virtual at 10:00 am

Office@bedfordpreschurch.org ~ bedfordpreschurch.org

P.O. Box 280 ~ 44 Village Green, Bedford, NY 10506

914-234-3672

Our Leadership

Session

Clerk of Session Brian Hiller-Dupont, Linda Burpee,
Alison Cape, **President Jeanne Collins**,
Michelle Gosh, Alan McDougall, & Suzanne Millette
Moderator Rev. Carol Howard Merritt

Deacons

Chair Don Hiller-Dupont, Sarah Alley, Marcy Carlson,
Kathy DiBiasi, Michele Eames, Pat Ferguson,
Kim Lapple, Natasha Mast, Rebecca Rivard, & Sarah Ryan