

December Events

- 24 Christmas Eve Sunday!**
10:00am, usual service time. Nursery will be provided.

January Events

- 6 Southern New Hampshire Rescue Mission**
See Eric Wittenberg to hear more, or sign up in the foyer.
- 7 Elder Commissioning, during worship gathering**
Youth Ministry Team Meeting, after worship
- 20 Ladies' Ministry, 9:15am**
If you would like to know more, contact Loni Bragdon, Heather Biron, or one of the other ladies on the ministry team.
- 21 New Members Workshop**
If you are interested in learning more about Bedford Road and possibly joining the covenant membership, see Ray Pouliot.
- Lord's Table Devotion Team Meeting, after worship**
See Jim MacDuff for more information.

Detailed announcements are available via email. Sign up on the website or by sending us a message at info@bedfordroad.org.

Financial Summary

2023 Budget	\$224,885	Budget to Date	\$216,250
Weekly Budget	\$4,325	Giving to Date	\$224,920

You can give via the offering box in the back of the sanctuary, via mail, or online at bedfordroad.org/giving.

Website: <http://bedfordroad.org> Email: info@bedfordroad.org
Phone: (603) 424-9623 Mail: PO Box 443, Merrimack, NH
Pastor: Dr. Erik K. DiVietro pastor@bedfordroad.org

December 17, 2023



**BEDFORD ROAD
BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Creating environments where people
encounter Jesus and journey together*

A Heavenly Host

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Luke describes the multitude that appeared to the shepherds as a “heavenly host.” In the Old Testament, this term was often applied not to angels but to the deities of pagan nations. While Luke clearly has angels in mind here, he uses a term recognizable by non-Jewish readers to declare that ALL of creation, even that which they falsely worship, declared Jesus’s birth.

I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the Lord.”
(Isaiah 66:18–20a)

God offers hope through Jesus to all nations, all peoples. All will bow before Him, but whether it is in reverence or in fear will be up to them. We light this fourth candle to celebrate God’s love and grace for all who will receive Christ.

**God and Savior,
 May we be mindful of the breadth and depth of your love for all of mankind, and in this season, help us not only to speak the Gospel but to live it as well. Amen.**

Ring Structure of Matthew’s Gospel

PASSION NARRATIVE (26:1–28:20)

Matthew tells the events of Jesus arrest, trial and crucifixion quite succinctly. It mirrors the opening narrative.

JERUSALEM DISCOURSE (23:1–25:46)

A bookend to the Sermon on the Mount (cf 5:1), Jesus focuses on endgame themes and establishes himself as the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets.

TEMPLE NARRATIVE (20:29–22:46)

Finally arriving at Jerusalem, Jesus answers the final challenges of the religious leaders, who determine to kill him.

MINISTRY DISCOURSE (18:1–20:28)

Matthew turns his focus to the behavior of those in the kingdom, as a sort of parenthetical aside. Jesus discusses the Church’s conduct and humility.

REJECTION NARRATIVE (13:53–17:23)

The message of the Kingdom is misunderstood, even by the disciples, setting the stage for Jesus’s fulfillment in his death.

OPENING NARRATIVE (1:1–4:35)

The events of Jesus’s incarnation and entrance into ministry demonstrates his qualifications to set up the Messianic kingdom, both temporal and celestial.

KINGDOM DISCOURSE (5:1–7:27)

Jesus presents us with the idealized version of the Torah lived out as a restoration of relationships and identification his divine kingdom.

MIRACLE NARRATIVE (7:28–9:34)

Jesus demonstrates sovereignty over illness and disability, as well as the natural forces in the earth.

APOSTOLIC DISCOURSE (9:35–10:42)

The Apostles are sent out with specific responsibilities and delegated authority from Jesus, the King.

PARABLE DISCOURSE (13:1–52)

Jesus draws on two common experiences to give a vision of the kingdom as it will be manifest in him.

QUESTIONS NARRATIVE (11:1–12:50)

Jesus answers competing claims to authority, inverting the common ideas of the kingdom.