

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2022 (178 Years)



Week of December 4th

We will continue sending out this combination of the newsletter and bulletin to keep you up to date on announcements, prayers, needs and scheduled activities for those that are uncomfortable to attend service yet.

Included will be the usual newsletter information along with prayers, scripture and a sermon.

We hope that you can utilize this format to keep up to date while being away from actual services, meetings, activities and watching the online sermon.



Bedford Presbyterian Church
serving Christ since 1844

A Biblically Guided Christian Community,

Loving God, Loving Others,

Serving the World &

Growing Disciples

THE APPROACH TO GOD

One: The peace of Christ be with you

All: And also with you

Prelude

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

Carol Tornquist

Welcome and Announcements

- Prayer time meets in the Anna Latimer room following service.
- Something More will meet at 3pm this Wednesday
- The Memorial service for Pat Clarke is today at 3 pm
- The Youth will be decorating the Christmas trees for our First Responders, Saturday.
- Abendmusik is December 11th at 7pm, please bring your friends and family and join us.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Van Dykes

Reader 1: This is the second Sunday in Advent. Three weeks from now we will celebrate Jesus' birth.

Two candles are lit

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of **PROCLAMATION** to remind us to tell others of our faith in Jesus: the Word sent from God who leads us in the way of salvation.

Both: Let us join with the angels in proclaiming our new born King

***Advent Hymn**

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

Hymn 169

***Prayer of Confession**

Almighty God, You not only created a world where once there was chaos, You not only brought forth humanity from the dust of the earth, You not only gave us Your holy law and Your truthful prophets, You also drew near to us. For Your advent into our empty world, Your light shining in our darkness, Your Word into our silence, we give thanks. Forgive us for forgetting that You came into this world to seek us and to save us and to give us new life. Today, O Lord, give us hearts open and receptive to Your advent, spirits expectant for Your presence, lives ready to rise up and follow You at Your call. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

One: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Through Jesus Christ we have been born again to new life.

***Gloria**

"Glory to the Father"

Bill Rutledge

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

Introduction to Scripture

Scripture

Luke 1: 39-55

Anthem

"Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates"

David van Kampen

Sermon

Mary's Magnificat

Adapted from "The Journey with Jesus: Notes to Myself Reflections By Dan Clendenin" <http://www.journeywithjesus.net/Essays/20061218JJ.shtml>

Did you know that today's portion of scripture from the Gospel of Luke has its own name? Throughout history it has been known as **Mary's song**, or, based on Mary's first words in reply to aunt Elizabeth, **'My soul magnifies the Lord**, as the **Magnificat**.

Some other portions of Scripture can also claim a distinct name, like the Sermon on the Mount, or the Beatitudes, the Shema, the Decalogue, and the Love Chapter, but here is a portion of scripture, neither quoting God, nor Jesus, nor an Apostle nor a prophet – yet it has earned its own name.

The Magnificat – is a song of praise. More appropriately it might even be called the first Christmas Carol, because it was composed by Mary soon after she had been told that she was going to bear our Savior. And every Christmas, this first Christmas carol comes up somewhere in the scripture readings – but as we focus on the birth of Jesus, we seldom give Mary or her carol much thought.

Oh we see her in a few scenes ... hearing the angel, then very pregnant riding on a donkey, and finally holding the baby. But have you noticed, we don't ever think of her as speaking, or playing any other central role in the life of Jesus?

Yet, here is a bit of interesting information. Dr. Luke, Paul's traveling companion, stated that he had researched his gospel account by personally interviewing primary sources. **And the only source he would have had for his first two chapters** documenting all the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and cousin John, including the angelic messengers and visiting shepherds, the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, and Jesus' Jerusalem adventure at the age of twelve.....**was Mary**. So, what do you think about Mary now?

We Presbyterians often recite in the Apostles Creed, declaring that Jesus was **"born of the Virgin Mary"** and along with both Catholics and Orthodox, we do honor Mary as the mother of our Lord Christ Jesus. But we do not worship her as Catholics do, since such worship is due to God alone. And also because we disagree with certain Catholic beliefs about Mary that do not have Biblical support.

- like her perpetual virginity, which is hard to believe since Matthew's gospel account names his four brothers: *James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas*, along with an unspecified number of sisters (Matt. 13:55-56)
- Or, her freedom from actual and original sin, since she was just an ordinary human being like everyone else (*doctrine of Immaculate Conception, 1854*).
- And the idea that she did not die but was taken directly to heaven. (*Bodily Assumption, 1950*).
- We also reject Catholic theology that declares Mary as **Mediatrice**, as a co-redeemer with Jesus of humanity.
- Or that she is the one you need to pray to and through if you want your requests to get to God.

Nevertheless, you might argue that – just like her son – no woman has influenced western history and culture more than **Mary**. So perhaps she deserves a bit more attention from us than we usually give her... lest we be guilty of throwing the mother of the baby out with the bathwater.

How then should we Protestants think about and honor Mary?

Today's Scripture gives us a good starting point.

First off - Mary was a woman of exemplary faith.

Other than her Davidic lineage, Mary was an ordinary peasant girl, perhaps only fourteen or fifteen years of age, from a working class neighborhood in **Nazareth**; a village so insignificant that it is not mentioned in the Old Testament, or by the historian Josephus, or in the Jewish Talmud. In fact, Nazareth had such a low-class reputation, that when Philip came looking for his brother Nathanael, to tell him that they had perhaps found the Messiah – Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael's reply was "*Can anything good come from Nazareth?*" (John 1:46).

Also, that Mary's angelic encounter took place in an ordinary house up there in the backcountry of Palestine, not the temple; and that she was quite alone at the time – so there was no one even to back up her story. But When the angel Gabriel foretold the birth of her son Jesus, Mary immediately responded in words of faith that have echoed through the centuries: "*Henaini*" **'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'**

Afterwards, hearing that her cousin Elizabeth was six months along in an equally miraculous pregnancy – and probably desperately in need of someone to believe her story and help her figure out what to do next – Mary then travels a long four-day's walk down to Zachariah and Elizabeth's home in the hill country of Judah.

When Mary arrives, Elizabeth's unborn son John senses Jesus' presence – both of them still in the womb – and he leaps for joy startling Elizabeth, who then, filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaims with a loud cry, "***blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why is this granted that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ... And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.***" (Luke 1:42, 45). So, Mary stayed with Elizabeth until John was born, then herself now three-months pregnant, walked back home to face her family and Joseph her betrothed.

Yes, Mary was a woman of great faith.

Catholics also remind us of another "Marian" truth that is easy to overlook but nevertheless stupendous. In some mysterious way the incarnation resulted not only from the work of God the Father, but also **from the will (the willingness) of the Mother, Mary**. Numerous church fathers have marveled at Mary's active cooperation in the history of salvation. According to Thomas Aquinas, **human redemption depended upon the consent of a pregnant teenager**. (Summa, III:30)

Surely she recognized the consequences of this pregnancy.

- At worst – stoning to death,
- Most likely a divorce from her betrothed – who was a respectable man.
- Certainly, the humiliation and shame that would be heaped upon her and her husband-to-be; conversations just loud enough to be overheard, about Mary's "condition."
- At best a change in all her plans and hopes for the future.

She did not ask to bear the Son of God, nor was she compelled to do so. She might have said no, or like Zechariah, responded to Gabriel's staggering annunciation in disbelief. But she did not shrink from God's call on her life, and instead enriched all humanity by her willing participation.

For these reasons Catholics honor Mary with the title of **Co-Redemptrix**, referring to her subordinate but essential participation in the redemption of humanity, by her willingness to give birth to Jesus and then share in His life, suffering, and death.

Surely, having heard Uncle Zechariah's prophecy over Jesus' cousin, along with those given by Simeon and Anna during His Temple dedication; then with the visit of the Magi and their flight to Egypt, horror struck at the news of babies being slaughtered in an attempt to eliminate hers....**don't you think that Mary would have become a careful student of the Scriptures thereafter** – to see what the prophets had declared was the future for her son – and what Simeon meant about how Jesus would one day *"like a sword, pierce her own soul?"*

I wonder what Mary thought of the Isaiah passages, about the Messiah being rejected, beaten, broken, killed in behalf of our sins? Mary had to be a woman of great faith and willingness to raise and protect this child – knowing the future that He faced and she faced with Him.

But Mary was more than just a woman of great faith, she also a woman of prophetic pronouncement. Her "Magnificat" moves from the deeply personal to the explicitly political.

Speaking about herself, Mary proclaims, ***"God my Savior, 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."***

This peasant girl, who nine months later would bear the Son of God then goes on to praise God Almighty for ***"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."*** (Luke 1:48–49, 52–53).

I wonder what King Herod or Caesar Augustus would have thought had they heard her words? Because with the birthing of her son, of the Son of God, Mary boldly announced the inversion of conventional wisdom; dethroning political power, plundering rich people, and redistributing food supplies. The coming of this child signaled a new age and order.

Yes, knowing what she knew, Mary was faithful, willing, prophetic, and even grateful for the ministry that God her Savior now asked of her.

Finally, as Eastern Orthodox believers emphasize, the son of Mary would be the Son of God, **God made flesh**; and so they honor her with the title, **Theotokos** ("bearer of God").

In his poem, *The Annunciation*, John Donne marvels:

Salvation to all that will is nigh;
That All, which always is all everywhere,
Which cannot sin, and yet all sins must bear,
Which cannot die, yet cannot choose but die,

Lo, faithful virgin, yields Himself to lie
In prison, in thy womb; and though He there
Can take no sin, nor thou give, yet He will wear,
Taken from thence, flesh, which death's force may try.

Ere by the spheres time was created, thou
Wast in His mind, who is thy Son and Brother;
Whom thou conceivst, conceived; yea thou art now
Thy Maker's maker, and thy Father's mother;
Thou hast light in dark, and shutst in little room,
Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb.

Thus the term **theotokos** bestowed upon Mary by church fathers since the third century acknowledges her special role in redemption; she is nothing less than the "Mother of God." Using her name as an Anagram, George Herbert remarked, *how well her name an ARMY doth present, in whom the Lord of Hosts did pitch His tent.*

FAITHFUL, WILLING, PROPHETIC, POETIC. And If you wonder why Catholics and the Orthodox refer to Mary as the "**Blessed Virgin**," think again on the words of today's scripture.

*"Elizabeth said, **Blessed** are you among women and **blessed** is the fruit of your womb. And **blessed** is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.*

To which Mary responds, *"From now on all generations shall call me **blessed**,"*

Mary was truly blessed from her participation in the birth, life, painful death, and triumphant victory of her son, Jesus the Christ. And we are blessed in her sharing of these memories with us. So, honoring the Mother of God, leads to exaltation of the Son of God, which is precisely the message of Christmas.

Today as we come once again to the communion table to remember Christ's life given in redemption of ours, let us join with Mary in declaring, *"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."*

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Celtic Creed

We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life, of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female. We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, born of woman, servant of the poor, tortured and nailed to a tree. A man of sorrows, He died forsaken. He descended into the earth to the place of death. On the third day He rose from the tomb. He ascended into heaven, to be everywhere present and His kingdom will come on earth. We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire, life-giving breath of the Church, Spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of resurrection and of eternal life. Amen.

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God, we thank You for every opportunity we have to share the good news of Your love in Jesus Christ, the light You sent to shine in our darkness. As we prepare once again to celebrate His coming into our world. Bless and guide both how we live and these gifts which we share, that we and they may give effective witness to God's kingdom coming into our world. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Hymn of Preparation

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Hymn 232

Communion

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.

Closing Hymn

"Wait for the Lord"

Hymn 166

THE SENDING FORTH

Benediction

The love of God be upon you; the peace of Christ be in you; and the comfort of God's Spirit be with you; and with your children; from this day that we have here today, until the day of Christ's glorious return

Postlude

"Deck the Hall"

Carol Tornquist

Joys- December 4th

Joy- Al & Gayle Mauser celebrating 25yrs of being members!

Joy- Eunice glad to have friends worshipping with her today

Joy- The Diddam's housewarming

Concerns- December 4th

Avery: Tinkie, hospice care, Frank, cancer returned

Barnes: Kim Hedrick- (friend) cancer

Ruth (sister) broke back, surgery

Wayne Kingery- (brother-in-law) stroke, terminal cancer

Benton: Tracey Thomas- (daughter's friend) transplant

High school friend- prayers

Sister-in-law, breast cancer

Blair: Steve Arrington- (friend) not doing well

Marshall Dunlap- (friend) cancer

Boone: Michael Bamber (friend) recovering from chemo

Daughter was laid off

Chryssikos: Kathy, eye infection

Clarke: Weebie, hospice care, Harvey, neuropathy

Compter: two brothers- unbelievers

Prayers for friends to come to the Lord

Bob- (friend) Parkinson's

Michael Compter- (brother) heart failure

Steve & Mary- (friends) Steve disabilities

Alan (friend's brother) multi health issues

Bob & Vicky- n(friends) passing of Vicky's brother

Cram: Winslow's-(friends of Sally) family & medical problems

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Ryan- (grandson) searching for faith

Al & Gayle- Gayle health issues, Al caretaker

Creasy: Walker Wright (Elizabeth's brother) stroke

Daniels: Laurie, caretaker, husband

Michael, (husband) cancer

Prayers for family on passing of Pat Clarke

DeHart: Dawn's mother radiation treatments

Diddams: Dick & Lois- Dick home recovering

Easter: Ruby Key (friend) cancer

Foster: Ron- (brother-in-law) to get out of hospital and into home

Howard & Lynn (brother) difficulty with legs, wife dementia

Tom- breathing problems, sinus infection

Goodman: Charles- blood thinners and dialysis

Grigg: Danny Miller (co-worker) cancer relapse

Heinrich: Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

Kuhn- Kibbey: Dot- idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, wet macular degeneration

Dick- macular degeneration, taking shots

Dick's sister (Kibbey) - dementia, Washington state

Mauser: Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Barbara-(Al's sister-in-law) intense headaches

Morris: all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders
Families of those who serve
Kyle Coble- (cousin) leukemia
Rev. Pam Ledbetter, auto-immune, diabetes

Narwid: Ed- not doing well

Neal: Harold- health issues, Alpha Gal

Nichols: JC (nephew's son) mitochondrial disease

Poindexter: Heather- rheumatoid arthritis

Saunders: (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)
Scott- (son-in-law) terminal brain cancer

Scheurer: Jim Hedrick- (friend) cancer
Bob Lindell-(friend) prostate cancer
Sonny (son) doing well

Smith: Dorothy Smith- (John's mother) pray she comes to the Lord
Katherine Tabor- (friend) stage 3 cervical cancer

Stetson: Clay Ramsey- thyroid cancer
Nick, Tiffany & Savannah (can grow new parts of intestines)

Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems
Bill Gray- loss of leg, cancer
Smith Farris- (friend) recovering from surgery, pneumonia
Doug Nelms- (friend) cancer
Michael Parker- (nephew) health issues

Toney: Judy, Summit room 133
Jack Auer (brother) fell, aneurysm
Karen (daughter) has covid

Van Dyke: Donna Mannel (friend) MS
Nancy- lymphoma, prayers for remission, treatments

Winberry: Chris- severe heart issues, improving
Tom & Dee-(brother) COPD, maybe hospice, prayers for family

Prayers for our nation and our President

Prayers for those dealing with loneliness

Prayers for healing the divisive spirit among our leaders/nation

Russian invasion ends and not resort to nuclear weapons.

Nations to stand up for freedom.

Prayers for new residents to come to worship with us

Prayers for our constant responders

Prayers for Ukraine

December 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3 <i>Christmas Parade 11 am</i>
4 <i>10 am Worship 2nd Sunday of Advent Communion Prayer Time 3pm Memorial Service Pat Clarke</i>	5 <i>Cub Scouts</i>	6	7 <i>Something More 3pm</i>	8	9	10 <i>Youth Christmas Service, FH</i>
11 <i>10 am Worship 3rd Sunday of Advent 5 ¢ a Meal Offering Prayer Time Abendmusik, 7 pm</i>	12 <i>Cub Scouts</i>	13	14 <i>Something More 3pm</i>	15	16	17
18 <i>10 am Service 4th Sunday of Advent Session Prayer Time</i>	19 <i>Cub Scouts</i>	20	21	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve Service, 7 pm</i>
25 <i>10 am Service Prayer Time</i>	26 <i>Cub Scouts</i>	27	28 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	29	30	31

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you for continuing to send in your contributions and pledges.
You can mail your pledge or contribution, or you can drop by the office,
Mon-Thurs between 8 am - 4 pm.**

Activities for week of December 4th

Sunday: 10 am Worship
Second Sunday of Advent
Communion
Prayer Time following service
3 pm Pat Clarke Memorial

Monday: Cub Scouts

Wednesday: 3 pm Something More

Sunday: December 11th
10 am Worship
Third Sunday of Advent
5 ¢ a Meal Offering
Prayer Time following service
Abendmusik, 7 pm

December Birthdays

Nancy Dwyer - 4
John Blair- 10
Bill Mitchell - 17
Shawn Webb - 18
Kathy Chryssikos - 24
Jade Creasy - 28
Gayle Mauser - 30

December Anniversaries

Al & Gayle Mauser - 12
Roy & Libby Monk - 20



Youth Service Project

Our newly formed multi-church Youth Group will be participating in the "tree snack decorating" service project for First Responders and other folks who must work over the holiday weekend. We ask that if you have a small 3ft tree that you can donate, please drop it off at the church by Sunday, Dec. 4th.

We also ask that you begin to bring in individually wrapped snacks that we can decorate the tree with, something that can be wrapped with string and hung on the tree...i.e. granola bars, lance crackers, small candy bars and packets, small individual pkgs. of chips, popcorn and pretzels and jerky [like Slim Jims].

We will be working on decorating the trees on Saturday afternoon, Dec.10th so we would like the snacks dropped off before then.

Thank you for helping with this vital ministry!!



Barbara Compter invites you to come out for a free Christmas concert at the Bedford Public Library on Tuesday, December 6th at 1:00. The informal concert will feature familiar Christmas tunes by the trio of ladies in Riddle On The Harp. Hope you will be able to join us for some holiday music.



BCM Ongoing Needs

The following are items that are needed the most, if you can help, you can drop your items at BCM, or place in box in hallway beside elevator on the ground floor and we'll deliver.

- Canned meats
- Canned vegetables
- Pop Tarts/ Cereal bars
- Sugar
- Canned spaghetti
- Tea Bags (black tea)
- Pancake Syrup
- Toilet Paper
- Bleach and Detergent
- Dish Soap
- All size sheets and blankets
- Wash cloths and towels
- All types of kitchen appliances, (coffee makers, toasters etc)
- Pots and Pans and kitchen utensils
- Irons
- Hygiene products, (shampoo, toothpaste, etc)

Also, financial gifts for the Shepherd's Table would be greatly appreciated.

They provide meals three times a week. The number of people stopping by for a meal has grown significantly and food costs have risen dramatically.

Please make your checks payable to Shepherd's Table.