

# Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2024 (180 Years)



## Week of March 17<sup>th</sup>

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.

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 is a Biblically and  
Prayerfully Guided Christian Family of  
Disciples, Loving God and Serving Others*

## The Approach to God

One: The Peace of Christ Be With You

**All: And Also With You**

**Prelude**

*"Lead Me to Calvary"*

Dan Forest

**Words of Welcome**

**Minute for Missions**

*Community Needs*

John Blair

**Call to Worship**

One: Jesus commanded us: Love one another in the same way I have loved you.

**All: We come to worship the God who is love that we may learn to love one another.**

One: Jesus said: No longer do I call you servants; now I call you my friends.

**All: We come to worship the God who through Christ has accepted us as friends. Let us sing praise to the God whose extravagant mercy and grace has changed our lives forever.**

**Hymn**

*"Give to Our God Immortal Praise"*

Hymn 63

**\*Prayer of Confession:**

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to You the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good and that which is hurtful and hateful. We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do. We love with condition. We judge and condemn. We speak evil of our brothers and sisters. We cast the first stone and keep the logs in our own eyes. We do not turn to You as the source of our healing. Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sin and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service. Amen.

**\*Assurance of Pardon** (*responsive*)

One: Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting and I also remind you of this surpassing grace:

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

**\*Gloria**

*"Glory to the Father"*

Rutledge

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

**Introduction to Scripture**

**Scripture**

James 4: 11-12

**Anthem**

*"Praise to the Lord the Almighty"*

Anderson

## **Sermon**

## **Speak No Evil**

Even today William Shakespeare is revered as one of, if not the greatest dramatists who ever lived. He wrote numerous plays including histories, comedies and tragedies. Most people have seen or read some of them, like Romeo and Juliet, or Macbeth, favorites in high school text books. There are, however, a number of others that are not so well known. One is Othello. Like Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth, it too is a tragedy because it ends on a sad note. An innocent life is taken because of the false rumors of a wicked adversary.

Briefly stated, here is the plot. Othello is a Moorish military commander serving in the Venetian army. He has recently married a beautiful and wealthy Venetian lady, named Desdemona. Passed over for promotion, Iago, one of Othello's officers, decides to take revenge upon his commander. Through his words and his actions, Iago weaves a web of lies and innuendos falsely accusing Desdemona of unfaithfulness. The resulting consequences are catastrophic. Not only does Desdemona die, tragically murdered by her enraged husband, but the lives of others are lost as well. In this play Shakespeare tells us in no uncertain terms, that language motivated by evil intentions can destroy a person's life.

Sadly, that is still true today and more so now than ever before. Not only can someone destroy a person's character and good name by unwholesome gossip, but they can also achieve that same goal through social media. Young people today are taking their own lives at unprecedented levels because of the mean spirited things that their peers are saying about them. The internet is chock full of stories about parents grieving the loss of sons or daughters who were verbally bludgeoned to death by the words and comments of others.

James was also aware of this shameful behavior and this is what he is addressing in his letter to fellow believers, Chapter four, verses 11 and 12. He says, "Don't speak evil against one another, my dear brothers and sisters." He knew that even Christians can be guilty of saying hateful things about one another. In fact, he used a special word to describe his distaste for this kind of behavior. The Greek word translated into English as "speaking evil" carries an even more nefarious connotation. It means "making malicious comments behind a person's back." In other words, it's not a face to face confrontation. The criticisms are whispered to others without the accused ever knowing who first uttered them. It's like being an Iago, secretly plotting to hurt another human being. It's harmful gossip with an evil intent with consequences that can go far beyond what was originally intended.

That's why there are numerous references in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testaments about such despicable behavior. Each of them uses the same word, "evil speaking" or one very similar to the one that James uses in his letter.

- In Psalm 101:5 the Lord says, "Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence."
- Speaking of the ungodly in Romans 1:30, Paul describes them as "gossips, slanders, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful."
- In 1 Peter 2:1, the apostle encourages believers to rid themselves of "all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind."

So, in light of what the Bible says and what James said in his letter about this pernicious sin, let's see if we can discern as to why it is so severely condemned. Amazingly in these two verses, James 4:11-12, he provides us with three reasons why we should steer clear of slanderous speech.

First, it breaks the royal law. Did you notice what James says at the end of verse 12? He stated, "But you – who are you to judge your neighbor?" James is reminding us of what he said in chapter 2. In that passage of Scripture he spoke about keeping the royal law. He said, "If you really keep the royal law found in

Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right" (James 2:8). He was, of course, referencing what is recorded in Leviticus 19:18 in the Old Testament. We, of course, are also familiar with it because of what Jesus said. He told His disciples that the whole of the Old Testament, everything written by Moses and the prophets could be summed up in two commandments, loving God with all of your mind, soul and strength and loving your neighbor as yourself." I cannot think of anyone who would want someone to maliciously malign them behind their back. Can you? If we would not want someone to treat us in such a despicable manner, how could we, therefore, justify doing that same thing ourselves. Yes, indeed, malicious slander is a clear indictment that we have broken the royal law, the second greatest commandment and that, I believe, is a serious infraction of how God desires for us to live with one another.

Here's the second thing that happens when someone engages in gossip. It places them above the law. This is what James is getting at when he says, "Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it" (James 4:11). What does James mean when he speaks in this manner? James is not saying, "Judge not that you be not judged." Judgements about life and about people are unavoidable. For example, when someone does work for us, we have the right to determine whether that work was done correctly or incorrectly and to respond accordingly. In doing so we are passing judgement. What James is saying is that we cannot use our own standards to come to that decision. If, for example, the installation of a new window, meets the building codes of our state or locality, we can't create our own building code and then malign the installer for not doing the work according to the way we desired. The same is true in terms of morality and even within the realm of jurisprudence. Without going into a great deal of detail, let me simply state that in the past the laws of the United States and Great Britain were for the most part based upon the writings of an esteemed jurist by the name of William Blackstone. Guess what, the basis for his volumes on the practice of law were based upon the Scriptures. We have turned aside from his legal guidance in America today and consequently both our legal system and its application have become a complex, incomprehensible quagmire. In other words, it's very easy, whether we're speaking about personal relationships with others or legislative decisions, to put ourselves in a position where we place ourselves above the law, not just human law, but also the Law that has come to us from on High.

Here's the third thing that James is telling us about slanderous language. It usurps the authority of God. He says, "There is only one Lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and destroy" James 4:12. It's easy to play God and even to pronounce judgement when tempted to slander another human being. Going back to Shakespeare's Othello, that becomes immediately obvious as the play concludes. Innocent people meet a tragic end because an evil man has dressed himself in the robes of God to suit his own vengeful desires. The same thing unfortunately happens in our world today to individuals, businesses, institutions and even churches. More than one congregation has closed its doors because of a whispered, slanderous campaign to ruin the testimony of that congregation. With that in mind it would be well for all of us to remember who sits on the heavenly throne, the royal bench in eternity. Speaking to this very issue Paul said, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Let us, therefore, always remember that God has a way of setting things straight. Even when we feel that an injustice has been committed and we are tempted to set things right on our own with a little backroom gossip, let's not go there. Let's follow the example of the dear little lady who never had anything bad to say about another person. Wanting to trick her into saying something malicious about someone, two pranksters asked her one day, "That mean old devil, he really is a horrible rascal isn't he?" In response the dear little lady said, "Well there's one thing I can say about him. He sure is busy!"

## RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

### **Worship Song**

*"Love One Another"*

Tommy Walker

### **Affirmation of Faith**

WE BELIEVE that our lives are held within the encircling love of God who knows our names and recognizes our deepest needs.

WE BELIEVE that Christ is the divine Child of the living God, and that His grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.

WE BELIEVE in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.

WE BELIEVE that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures, and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.

WE BELIEVE that our journey has a purpose and a destination, and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.

WE BELIEVE that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road, and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.

This is our faith and we are humbled to profess in Jesus the Christ our Lord. AMEN

### **Doxology**

*"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"*

Hymn 34

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

All things come from You, O God and with gratitude we return to You what is Yours. You created all that is and with love formed us in Your image.

When our love failed, Your love remained true. You gave Your only Son to be our Savior. In gratitude, we offer You ourselves and all that we have, in union with Christ's offering for us. By Your Holy Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to the world; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

### **Sharing of Joys and Concerns**

#### **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.

#### **\*Hymn**

*"Bind Us Together"*

Bob Gillman

## THE SENDING FORTH

### **Benediction**

#### **Postlude**

*"O Lamb of God Most Holy"*

Robert Lau

**The flowers are given to the Glory of God, to all my wonderful friends and in honor of Roy's and my wedding anniversary, by Sally Cram.**

## **Bedford Hiking Club Strolls Into Spring**

**Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> @ 9 am.** Get your hiking boots out from under the bed and come join us for a spring walk up to Matt's Creek Shelter on the Appalachian Trail. We'll see where last fall's fire damaged the trail and witness new life returning to the burn site.



This is an easy out and back 4 mile walk with less than 200' of elevation gain, but there is some uneven footing to pay attention to. This trail is also good for dog walking. We will carpool from the church at 9a.m. or meet you at the James River Foot Bridge by 9:45. *(please email me if you plan on meeting us up there: [jtsalley@gmail.com](mailto:jtsalley@gmail.com))* Cancelled if raining.

### **ON THE AIR AND IN PRINT**

One of the blessings our members have come to appreciate is the way our church communicates with its members and friends. Our services on Sunday mornings are available in several different formats. We are now live streaming the services at 10 am every Sunday morning. The services along with the bulletins for each Sunday are also available at the church's website—[bedfordpresbyva.org](http://bedfordpresbyva.org). In addition, copies of each Sunday's sermon and bulletin along with links to the service are emailed to our church family and friends and some members upon request receive it through the USPS. Being able to read and view our services is a wonderful way to become dedicated students of God's Word as we learn to put it into practice day by day. Don't miss out on this opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Lord and His people week by week.

# March 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> <i>10 am Worship Communion</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> <i>10 am Worship 5¢ a Meal BCM collection Session Daylight Savings Time begins</i>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <i>Something More, 3pm</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> <i>10 am Worship</i>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <i>First day of spring</i>	<b>20</b> <i>Something More, 3pm</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <i>10 am Worship Palm Sunday</i>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <i>Something More, 3pm</i>	<b>28</b> <i>Maundy Thursday 7 pm</i>	<b>29</b> <i>Good Friday</i>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <i>10 am Worship Easter He Is Risen!!</i>						

## Joys- March 17<sup>th</sup>

**Joy-** Bill Hopkins surgery went well and is home

**Joy-** Donnie Callahan, home after back surgery

## Concerns-March 17<sup>th</sup>

**Avery:** Tinkie, hospice care

**Barnes:** Kim Hedrick- (friend) cancer

**Benton:** Tracey Thomas (daughter's friend) more surgery

**Blair:** Ecumenical youth group

**Boone:** Christy, thyroid surgery in May

**Callahan:** Mary Jane (friend) cancer

Steve Chaffin (friend) blood clots

Donnie (husband) home

**Compter:** two brothers- unbelievers

Prayers for friends to come to the Lord

Michael Compter- (brother) heart failure

Steve & Mary- (friends) Steve disabilities

Vicky-(friend) recurring lymphoma

May- (friend) breast cancer

David- came through surgery

Joe- (friend) successful surgery, long recovery

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

Garrett Winslow – struggling, autism

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Ryan- (grandson) searching for faith

Lory Graham- (friend) health issues, wife caretaker

Brenda Wilkerson- UVA- seizures

Ben Thomas (son) surgery, having cochlear implant

friend in CO, second surgery

**DeHart:** Dawn's mother gall bladder surgery

Michael Rutter- septic shock, amputation

**Easter:** Ruby Key (friend) cancer

**Fleming:** Dominick (Ann Marie's brother) heart surgery successful

**Foster:** Ron (brother-in-law) in home

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

Tom- home, referred to specialist

Prayers for everyone on dialysis

Ellen possible kidney transplant

**Goode:** prayers for Eunice, health issues

Rodney & Connie Groggins (husband's cousins) Connie Alzheimer's, Rodney caregiver,

Cynthia- (friend) physical therapy

Those held hostage in Gaza

Larry (brother-in-law) heart attack



**Grigg:** Beth Falwell- starting cancer treatments  
Chris Mays- diabetic complications

**Heinrich:** Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder  
Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

**Kuhn- Kibbey:** Dot- fell broken ribs, vertebrae, long recovery

**Lambert:** brother doing better

**Mauser:** Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems  
Steven-(son's boss) going blind  
Barbara (AL's sister) intense headaches  
Gayle- doing better

**Morris:** all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders  
Forensic scientists who deal with crime  
Kyle Coble- (cousin) leukemia  
Rev. Pam Ledbetter  
James Morgan (cousins husband) spot on lung  
John Hargett (friend) slow recovery may never walk  
Ann Ortega- tumor near pancreas

**Monk:** Libby's mother, stroke, Oakwood

**Narwid:** Ed- not doing well

**Neal:** Prayers for family on passing of son

**Riley:** Christine, stroke, Oakwood

**Rutledge:** broke 2 ribs

**Saunders:** (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)  
Scott- (son-in-law) doing well

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

**Smith:** Dorothy Smith- (John's mother) that she comes to the Lord

**Stetson:** Clay Ramsey- thyroid cancer  
Nick, Tiffany, Savannah- Savannah, going home  
Lori- health issues

**Stevens:** Jackie Landis- heart problems  
Two firefighters who suffered falls  
Russell- surgery delayed AFib

**Van Dyke:** continued prayers for Dot and Dick Kibbey

**Webb:** Shawn caretaker to aunt and grandma

**Prayers for our nation and our President**

**Prayers for healing the divisive spirit among our leaders/nation**

**Russian invasion ends and not resort to nuclear weapons.**

**Prayers for new residents to come to worship with us**

**Prayers for Ukraine**

**Pray for World Peace**

**Prayers for Israel**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Activities for week of March 17<sup>th</sup>

Sunday: 10 am Worship

Wednesday: 3 pm Something More

Thursday: Choir Practice 10:30 am

Sunday: March 24<sup>th</sup>

10 am Worship

Palm Sunday

### March Birthdays

Maggie DeWitt - 17

Nick DeWitt - 18

Ronnie Saunders - 24

### Forty Days of Love

**Join us on Wednesday beginning February 14<sup>th</sup> at 12pm at  
Main Street United Methodist Church for Lenten Lunches.**

Lunch is provided by area churches for a \$5 donation with a time of music, prayer  
and a message from a local pastor.

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### Montreat Donations and Service Projects

We are blessed this year to have six youth who will be attending this year's Montreat Youth Conference. This year's theme is "Planting Peace"...how timely! Last year we were able to raise the funds needed to help with the cost of the conference with donations as well as service projects. We are asking for your help again. If you would like to just donate to this wonderful experience for these young people, you can write out a check to Bedford Presbyterian Church that has Montreat Youth Conference written in the memo. If you have some yard work that needs to be done or some other project that you think these young folks can help you with, please get in touch with John and Judy Blair so they can schedule that with you. Thank you for the blessing of giving these youth a wonderful life changing experience.

## EASTER AT BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our celebration of Easter this year will be a little different from the past. We're going to highlight three pivotal events that took place during the last week of Jesus' life:

- The first will be **Palm Sunday**. Decorating the church with palm branches and using video images on the monitors, we will invite the congregation to imagine that they were a part of the multitudes who greeted the Savior on that occasion. They will have an opportunity to decide with whom they would most likely identify themselves—the Roman soldiers, the Pharisees, or the Disciples. We will also examine why Jesus shed tears as He entered the city of Jerusalem as recorded in Luke 19:37-44.
- The second will be the **Tenebrae** service on Thursday, March 28, at 7 pm. Under the direction of Bill Rutledge, the choir, guest musicians and a number of speakers will present an emotionally powerful portrait of the darkness that sought to triumph over the love of God in Christ Jesus. During the service, which will include the Lord's Supper, the lights in the sanctuary will gradually be dimmed until there is only silence and darkness.
- The third will be **Resurrection Sunday**. It will be a day of victorious celebration. The church family will be invited to bring flowers to place on a cross in the front yard. The sermon will remind the congregation that for the disciples and followers of Jesus the resurrection was a unique experience. It was unexpected, then unbelievable and finally an undeniable reality.

