

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2024 (180 Years)



Week of December 8th

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

“Jesus, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

Bach/Hayes

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Candle

James & Ann Marie Fleming

Reader 1: Today we relight the candle of **HOPE**. Now we light the candle for the second Sunday in Advent. This is the candle of **PEACE**. As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, we remember that Jesus is our hope and our peace.

(Light 2 purple candles)

Reader 2: From the Prophet Isaiah: “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” —Isaiah 9:6-7

All: Let us pray: Gracious God, grant that we may find peace as we prepare for our Lord’s birth. May divisions in ourselves and in our families be peacefully resolved. May there be peace in our cities and in the countries of our world. Help us to see the paths of peace in our lives, and then give to us courage to follow them. Lord, let us remember that you only are the giver of lasting peace and that you are always with us. Amen.

***Hymn**

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates”

Hymn 176

***Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God, always with us, always coming, we confess that we do not know how to prepare for Your Advent. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have ignored the promise of Your kingdom; we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God. Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds, the intelligent courage of the magi and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph, that we may journey with them to Bethlehem and find the good news of a child born for us. Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we ask You to make us ready for His coming. 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

Galatians 4:4-7

Anthem

“Psallite”

Praetorius

Sermon

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

In 1966 a new TV series was introduced to the American public. It was called "Mission Impossible." It aired for seven seasons and then returned for two more in 1988. But that was just the beginning. "Mission Impossible" moved to the big screen in 1998, inaugurating a series of dramatic action films featuring the Hollywood star, Tom Cruise. Over and over again Tom Cruise and his team of well-trained compatriots overcame seemingly impossible odds to fulfill their mission and rescue those in danger. Nothing, however, can compare with another mission impossible which took place just over two thousand years ago. That too was a carefully planned endeavor that required great care and skill in order to be successful. In fact, that's precisely what Saint Paul said in the passage of Scripture which was read this morning.

So let's spend a few moments today discovering how God put together a plan of action that was so carefully crafted, that its success continues to impact our world today. Looking over these verses in Galatians, a number of things become apparent. God's mission possessed four crucial elements. It had to occur at the **right time**. It had to occur at the **right place**. It had to involve the **right person**. Finally, it had to achieve the right outcome, the **right purpose** for which it was designed. Let's take a look at each of these key components of God's "Mission Impossible."

God's decision to insert Himself into our world had to take place at the **right time**. If you look back through the pages of human history, there are propitious moments when something new can be inserted into what is taking place here on earth. One of those moments was the first century A.D. People were eagerly awaiting the intervention of God. That was certainly true with regards to the gods of the Romans and the Greeks. Their deities were always involved in the affairs of mankind. No one has to look further than Homer's famous epics about the war between the Greeks and the Trojans, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, to recognize their presence. The divinities on Mount Olympus were all over the place, interfering with and sometimes even manipulating the events which took place between those two combatants. Furthermore, there were lots of other religious cults which emphasized the possibility of divine intervention. In fact, great leaders were often proclaimed to be divinely inspired. Such was the case with Alexander the Great. When he conquered Egypt, he was proclaimed to be a god. However, down deep the people of the Mediterranean world knew that these divine interventions were not real. They were simply projections of a deeper desire, to know and experience the one true God who had created them. Realizing that God had chosen this particularly propitious moment, when humanity was anxiously awaiting a divine manifestation, Paul wrote, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son" (Galatians 4:4).

It was the right time for God to do something that would change the course of human history. It was also the right time to do something in the **right place**. For the first time in human history, one nation ruled over all of southern Europe, a good portion of the Middle East, as well as the northern coast of Africa. That nation was the Roman Empire. There were no restricted border crossings within this empire. People could easily travel all across it on well-maintained roads or by ship on the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, there were trading routes to far distant places like India. Additionally there was one language which was spoken throughout this far flung empire. It was Kione Greek, a rich and expressive language that had been introduced centuries earlier by Alexander the Great. A citizen would be fluent not only in his native tongue, but would also know how to converse with others in Kione Greek, the language of the market place, the universal language of the business world spoken throughout the empire. Finally, there was an openness to new ideas and beliefs which had been championed by the Hellenistic culture of Greece. There was a remarkable degree of religious freedom as long as it didn't challenge the growing cult of emperor worship. Into this kind of world, God sent His Son, who was born at the very crossroads of the empire, the Middle East. It was the meeting place where three continents were joined together—Europe, Asia and Africa. If God wanted to do something new and different and start sharing it with the entire

world, the Middle East, especially the little providence of Judea, was the right place to begin. It was situated right in the middle of caravan routes going north, south, east and west.

So God chose the right time and the right place to introduce the **right person** to all the world. Who was this right person and why was He chosen above all others? Those who are familiar with the Scriptures immediately know the answer. The right person was none other than Jesus, the little boy of an impoverished Jewish couple. At first glance, that seems an unlikely choice. Why wasn't Jesus born to a royal family with connections to the rich and mighty, perhaps the son of an emperor? The answer is found in the identity of His upbringing. In that same verse in Galatians, Paul tells us that "God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Yes, Jesus was born of a woman like every child who has ever been born, but not just any woman. He was born to a Jewish woman, a woman who along with her husband raised up a child who was dedicated to God. From an early age He was taught that there was one true God who had revealed Himself in the Old Testament. Like every Jewish lad, He received a good education at the local synagogue. He could read and write and was fluent in Hebrew and Aramaic, a Semitic language similar to Hebrew. He was also probably conversant in Greek, since He grew up in Nazareth. Located in Galilee, the northern part of Judea, Nazareth was near the Decapolis, ten cities that were populated by non-Jewish, Greek speaking Gentiles. So Jesus was familiar and knowledgeable of a culture far different from His own.

Even more importantly, when Jesus began His earthly ministry, He spoke to a world searching for God. That included His own people, the Jews, who desperately longed for God to speak to them once again, just as He had in the days of Moses and the prophets. It also included the Gentiles, those non-Jewish people who lived around Him. They too wanted to be introduced to the one true God. Many of them had abandoned the gods of their pagan ancestors. They knew that all those stories about ancient deities were nothing more than make-believe fantasies. They were attracted to the God of the Jewish people and began to worship Him, even though they did not keep all of the religious traditions and customs of the Jewish people. These people were known as "God-fearers" and there were a growing number of them throughout the Roman Empire. As you can see, God chose the right kind of person to introduce Himself to the world. He came from a Jewish family who honored and revered the Lord. Additionally, He was a member of a group of people, the Jews, who were now not only living in the land of their ancestors, Judea, but who were now also scattered throughout the Roman world. They were engaged in business and various professions in every city and province of the empire. Through them the Lord could reach out to a vast multitude of people. God chose the right time, the right place and the right person when He decided to enter into our world through Christ Jesus.

Finally and most importantly of all, God chose the **right purpose** for His Son's entrance into our humanity. Once again Paul tells us why. In that next verse of the book of Galatians, he says that Jesus came "to redeem those under the law that we might receive adoption as children" (Galatians 4:5). Now what does this mean? When God sent Jesus into our world, He had a special purpose, a special mission in mind for His Son. It was redemption. His job was to purchase the freedom of mankind. Condemned by disobedience to the law of God, humanity was incarcerated in a prison of their own making, separated from God and one another. The time had come for someone to free them from the pain and suffering of their misconduct and that someone was God's Son. In fact, this is what Jesus said about Himself when He spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth, His hometown. Reading from the scroll of the book of Isaiah He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). Little did those hearing these words realize that their freedom would be secured by the life of the very One who was speaking to them. Jesus would redeem them, literally pay for their release by giving His life in exchange for theirs. He would die on the cross in payment for their sins. Both they, and indeed all of us, can, therefore, be adopted into the family

of God and receive the inheritance of an eternal life. Additionally, because of what Jesus was willing to do for us, we can address God not only as our heavenly Father, but also as our “Abba,” our Daddy.

So if you’re still wondering why I named this sermon “Mission Impossible,” here’s why. Like the team of experts who rescued those in distress on TV and in the movies, God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. What would otherwise be impossible for us to achieve on our own, became a reality, because as Jesus Himself said, “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). When the Lord sent His Son into our world, He chose the **right time** and the **right place** and the **right person** for the **right purpose**. He sent Him to deliver us from our sins and to grant us eternal life. That and that alone is worthy of being called “Mission Impossible.”

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Worship Song

“The First Noel”

Tommy Walker

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God has come to us; that God brought us into being, that this God gave us breath and purpose that we have been blessed to be a blessing to others, that we have fallen short of this commandment, but that God has nevertheless loved us despite our brokenness.

We believe that God is coming to us; that God is not happy to leave us alone, that this God will come to us as a particular human being, that God will be made known to us in flesh and bone like ours, that Mary will soon give birth and Joseph will soon clap his hands in joy, that Jesus Christ will be born and our salvation made complete.

We believe that God will come to us; that God will have the final word and that Word will be good, that this God will give us the presence of the Spirit to continue our work, that we are called to be disciples to all the corners of the earth, that the day is coming when tears and pain will be no more and all will gather at the Table to sing an endless and perfect “Alleluia!”

Doxology

“Doxology on Advent”

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, our spirits do rejoice in all Your gracious acts towards us, most of all, the event we so look forward to—the wonderful and precious gift of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the willingness of Mary to believe that the impossible could and would happen. Help us to have a like faith. Open our hearts and minds to believe that Your promises can come to surprising fulfillment. Show us how we can best serve You with mercy and in humility, empowering people to live lives of dignity and worth. 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.

***Closing Hymn**

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

Hymn 168

THE SENDING FORTH

***Benediction**

Postlude

“Fugue on Savior of the Nations, Come”

Quehl

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and memory of Edward and Virginia Fleming and Anthony and Mary Capiraso, the parents of James and Ann Marie Flemin

December 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <i>10 am Worship Communion 1st Sunday of Advent Session</i>	2	3	4 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	5	6	7
8 <i>10 am Worship 2nd Sunday of Advent 5¢ a Meal BCM collection</i>	9	10	11 <i>Deacons' 1 pm Something More, 3 pm</i>	12	13	14
15 <i>10 am Worship 3rd Sunday of Advent Abendmusik 6:30 pm</i>	16	17	18 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	19	20	21
22 <i>10 am Worship 4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Tree decorating</i>	23	24 <i>Candlelight Service 7 pm</i>	25 <i>Christmas He Is Born!</i>	26	27	28
29 <i>10 am Worship</i>	30	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>				

Joys- December 8th

Joy- James Fleming, is joyful for our church family

Joy- Jim Barefoot is home and recovering

Concerns- December 8th

Avery: Tinkie, hospice care

Barefoot: Jim, home, continues to improve

Barnes: Kim Hedrick- (friend) cancer

Jerry Dillon (nephew) health issues

Jody Lineberry- leukemia treatment unsuccessful

Benton: Nicole- (stepdaughter) in Asheville helping Helene victims

Boone: niece undergoing radiation treatments

Brunot: Jim's brother Bill, completed chemo

Callahan: Mary Jane (friend) in remission

Steve Chaffin (friend) blood clots

Compter: Jeannie, Seth (both friend) health issues

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

DeHart: Lucile Kesterson (Dawn's mother) aging memory issues

Julian Kesterson (Dawn's stepdad) nursing home, multiple falls

Easter: Jim (brother) 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

Prayers for everyone on dialysis and those in paths of storms where centers are gone.

Bob- (Ellen's brother) heart surgery went well, home

Goodman: Friend Betty is near death

Grigg: Beth Falwell- starting cancer treatments

Chris Mays- diabetic complications

Grubb: John cancer

Hann: Alice's brother, congestive heart failure, cancer

Harris: Jim, back pain

Judy- shoulder replaced

Heinrich: Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

Kuhn-Kibbey: Dot reinjured her back

Sarah McCabe Oakes,(friend) amputation leg, pelvis

Lambert: Margaret sciatica pain, arthritis

Linton: Candy (Parker's friend) health issues from car accident

Mauser: Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Barbara (Al's sister) intense headaches

Gayle- home

McManis; Charlotte, doing better

Monk: Libby's mother, Mary Duncan, Bedford Nursing Home

Granddaughter had a seizure

Morris: all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders

Forensic scientists who deal with crime

Rev. Pam Ledbetter

James Morgan (cousins husband) spot on lung

Margaret's brother in NC prayers for those impacted by storm

Elisa- (daughter-in-law) family needs

Neal: Jeff (Harold's son) heart attack, stents inserted, home

Rutledge: friend in Hawaii health issues

Salley: Jillian Salley doing better

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: Nick, Tiffany, Savannah is back in hospital

Morgan (nephew) life decisions

Cook at Shepherd's Table, baby in NICU

Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems

Earl Carter- health issues

Matt- lung cancer

All Virginia towns impacted by hurricane

Van Dyke: Prayers for people hit by feet of snow in PA and NY

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 December 8th

Sunday: 10 am Worship
2nd Sunday of Advent
5¢ a Meal Offering
BCM donations/collections

Wednesday: Deacons 1 pm
3 pm Something More

Sunday: December 15th
10 am Worship
3rd Sunday of Advent
Abendmusik 7 pm

December Birthdays

John Blair- 10
Bill Mitchell - 17
Shawn Webb - 18
Gayle Mauser - 30

December Anniversaries

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

Abendmusik
December 15th at 7 pm

Operation First Responder Christmas tree decorating party December 22nd

For several years now, BPC has been spreading a bit of Christmas cheer to first responders and other service organizations that have their employees working on Christmas eve and Christmas day. As a small gesture of our appreciation for all they do, we "decorate" small trees with snacks that they can eat during the holiday week. This year we will be decorating those trees after church on Sunday, December 22nd. We will have cookies and beverage for you to enjoy as we do this service ministry together.

** We ask that you begin to bring to church, items that are individually wrapped and can easily be tied with string and hung on a branch...i.e. granola bars, lance crackers, cookies, small candy bars and packs of candy like M&M's and skittles, small bags of chips, popcorn, pretzels and cookies, small pkgs. of jerky, like Slim Jim's.

**We will need some of you to offer dropping off a tree or two before Christmas eve. Each tree will have a card that has the location where it is to be dropped off. It will also have the name and phone # of our church. That will go at the top of the tree so they can call for pickup when the tree is empty. Each person should pick up the trees they deliver after we get that phone call.

Thank you for helping with this wonderful ministry!

If you have any questions, please get in touch with Judy Blair