

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2025 (181 Years)

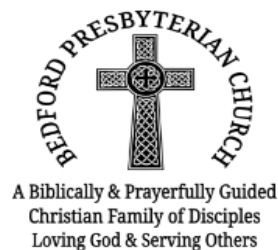


Week of February 9, 2025

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

“How Firm a Foundation”

Marianne Kim

Words of Welcome

Minute for Missions

Bedford Pregnancy Center

Lori Lewis

Call to Worship

One: Sing praises to God and to His name!

All: Sing loud praises to Him who rides the clouds.

One: His name is the Lord, rejoice in His presence!

All: Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy.

One: God places the lonely in families; He sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But He makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

All: Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day He carries us in His arms.

***Hymn**

“Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above”

Hymn 56

***Prayer of Confession**

Heavenly Father, we confess that sometimes we come before You with our lips, offering praise and words of devotion, but our hearts remain far from You. We acknowledge that our worship can become a mere routine, following traditions without the depth of true commitment. Forgive us for the times we have honored You with empty words, and not with the genuine love and obedience You deserve. Search our hearts, expose our hypocrisy, and help us to draw near to You with sincerity and a genuine desire to know You more deeply. In Jesus' name, 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

Scripture

Amos 4:4-5, 5:21-27

Praise Song

“You’re Worthy of My Praise”

Hymn 648

Sermon

Worthless Worship

There are many shows on TV that include a court room scene. In fact, there are some that are wholeheartedly dedicated to court room drama. On these shows there is usually a defendant, a judge, a prosecuting attorney and a crowd of witnesses viewing the proceedings. That's precisely the scene that Amos paints for us as he continues to present his prophetic message to the people of Israel. In chapter three he invites the people of surrounding nations, especially Philistines and Egyptians, to have a seat on a hill side court room and witness the proceedings. The judge is the honorable Lord God Almighty. Amos is the prosecuting attorney, and Israel is the defendant. Beginning this Sunday and continuing for two more weeks, you are invited to join the guests who have been invited to this tribunal. Three serious charges are being brought against the ancient people of Israel. Each has to do with a serious violation of the commandments which they agreed to honor. Each is a serious infraction with regards to their relationship with God and their fellow citizens. Each has become so heinous that judgement must now be rendered. In addition to the evidence that Amos will present, additional testimony will be provided by the judge Himself as He speaks to those in the courtroom through visions given to the prosecuting attorney. Finally, after all of the accusations have been presented, the judge will hand down a decision based on the evidence.

But before the proceedings begin there is some background information that needs to be shared. As is well known in the pages of the Bible, the people of Israel can trace their heritage as a nation to that solemn meeting with God at the foot of Mount Sinai. After being freed from slavery, they were led to this mountain by Moses, the servant of the Lord. It had been a difficult journey, the people often complaining about the privations they suffered along the way. Furthermore, they had built a golden calf and worshipped this image when Moses climbed the mountain to meet with God. Only his intercession saved them from destruction. Thoroughly chastened, they had at last entered into a solemn agreement with God, vowing to be His people and obey His commandments. Now, hundreds of years later, it appears that they no longer consider themselves to be a people precious unto the Lord, nor do they consider His commandments and guidance to be the hallmarks by which they live. The accusations presented by Amos will clearly delineate their total disregard for a relationship which they once considered to be sacred.

So now let the trial begin as we examine the first accusation. Previously presented this morning during the Scripture reading, it can be summed up by two words—"WORTHLESS WORSHIP." Rejected and found to be completely unacceptable, it has been declared by God to be worthless for three reasons. First, it is insincere. Outward demonstrations of devotion can never mask the lack of inner conviction. The people come to this temple in Bethel with lavish gifts and sacrifices, but it is all for show. They have no desire to serve or honor the Lord. Their gifts do not reflect a genuine relationship with the sovereign Lord of the universe. If anything, their sacrificial offerings are to impress their fellow worshippers. Likewise, their music reflects nothing more than their desire to hear themselves sing and play their musical instruments. It's all a show of praise for themselves. It has nothing to do with the God whom they profess to worship. As another of God's prophets speaking of God's behalf said, "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Isaiah 29:13).

Second their worthless worship is ineffectual. It doesn't change the way they live. They come to the temple and repeat lots of words about repentance and right living and then go home and live the same old way they have been living in the past. Their worship does not change their actions or their attitudes. Their treatment of those living around them is just as self-centered and demeaning as it was before. As previously stated, the Lord wants their lives to reflect a desire for justice that will roll along like a mighty river and righteousness that will be like a never-ending stream of kindness and goodness. Unfortunately, that has not happened. Worship that has no impact on the way we live is truly worthless.

Finally and most importantly of all, their worship is idolatrous. They are not worshipping the Lord. They are worshipping false deities. Like their ancestors they are worshipping the golden calves of this world. They say they are honoring the Lord, but where within the sacred writings does it describe God as a deity riding on a golden bull like the one that now stands outside the temple in Bethel? It is a return to those awful days in the wilderness. When Moses climbed the mountain to meet with God and did not return as soon as was expected, what did the people do? They demanded that Aaron make them new gods whom they could worship. In response he fashioned a golden calf out of the gold the people brought to him and declared, "These are your new gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4). Now that ancient idolatrous practice has been reinvented in Bethel along with the worship of other deities like the star god Kaiwan.

Your honor, the Lord God of all creation, I now submit this first accusation against Israel for your review and judgement, recommending that those who have been involved in these acts of worthless worship be removed from Your presence, exiled to a foreign land beyond the neighboring country of Syria, whose capital is Damascus. I await Your decision and will now begin gathering my evidence for the second charge that I am preparing to present to this court. Furthermore, I advise those sitting on the hillsides of Bethel, both those of this present age and of the ages to come, to pay close attention to what has been presented, lest they too become guilty of the same offences which have now been brought to your attention.

So let's do what Amos recommends. Let's see if there is the possibility that God's people in this day and time can also be guilty of worthless worship. Is it possible that at times our worship is also worthless? Remember what Jesus said about the pharisee who tried to impress his friends with a self-congratulatory prayer? Did God hear that prayer? No, He did not. But when the tax collector humbled himself and earnestly prayed, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner," God answered that prayer and the man went home forgiven (Luke 18:9-14). Are we sometimes guilty of praying prayers and reciting responses that don't come from our hearts, just mouthing the words without any real understanding as to what they mean or without appreciating how they should be applied to our own lives? It's all too easy to just go through the motions when we worship—singing, praying and reciting that which has become a mere formality. To be honest, do we not find ourselves sometimes guilty of insincerity when we gather together for worship?

Additionally, is our worship ineffectual? We come to church week after week, hearing sermons that encourage us to make meaningful changes in the way we live. But once we leave, is the message and its implications for our personal conduct quickly forgotten? Do we dismiss the need to confess sins, offer apologies, right wrongs, or change attitudes and convictions? Are we not sometimes like the farmer who showed up for church on a cold, snowy Sunday morning? Only he and the preacher were present. The minister was about to offer a prayer and head back home. But the farmer objected saying that if he only had one cow in the barn, he would still feel obligated to feed it. Knowing that there were a number of things in the farmer's life that needed to be corrected, the minister preached a powerful sermon with the farmer clearly in mind. After he was finished he asked his single attendee what he thought of the message. The farmer replied, "Preacher, you sure would have told them if they'd been here."

Finally, what about idolatry? There are no golden calves standing in front of any of our churches. We don't worship foreign deities. Aren't all of the symbols we place in our sanctuaries representative of the Christian faith, like a cross for example? Nevertheless, foreign deities can still slip into our midst in other ways, invisible and yet very real and present. They come in the form of beliefs and practices that are not found in God's Word. For example, the Canaanite god Baal, a god that found its way into Israel's worship practices, was a weather deity, but he was also a god associated with fertility, including immorality. When Christian churches adopt standards of behavior that would be right at home with the gods of the Canaanites, have not those congregations bent their knees in reverence to a god other than the One revealed in the Bible? From its earliest days, the Christian church had to protect itself from such an

outcome. The rampant sexual immorality of the religions of the Greek and Roman world could not be allowed to take root and find acceptance in the lives of God's people as evidenced, for example, in chapters five and six in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

To sum it all up, Amos told the people of Israel that they were guilty of worthless worship. Had you been a member of a jury hearing his testimony, would you have agreed with Amos? Would you have determined that he was right, that the ancient Israelites were indeed guilty of worthless worship. How about today? Is it not imperative that we too must be careful not to follow in their footsteps, lest our worship also meet a similar fate, rejected because God loves us too much to accept such unworthy praise.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Worship Song

"The Heart of Worship"

Matt Redman

Affirmation of Faith

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Doxology

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Hymn 34

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, we come before You in gratitude for Your abundant blessings. You are our provider, and from Your hand comes all we have. As we give our tithes and offerings today, may it be a reflection of our thankfulness for all that You have graciously given us. We offer these gifts not because You need them, but as an act of worship and a joyful response to Your love. May they be used to spread Your word and serve Your people. 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***

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

Hymn 569

THE SENDING FORTH

****Benediction***

Postlude

"Cwm Rhonda"

Wilbur Held

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of my husband,
Sampson C. Boone III, March 22, 1955, to February 14, 2023, by Christy Boone.

February 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 <i>Men's Breakfast 9 am</i>
2 <i>10 am Worship Communion</i>	3	4	5 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i> <i>Music Course 6 pm</i>	6	7	8
9 <i>10 am Worship 5¢ a Meal BCM collection</i>	10	11	12 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i> <i>Deacons' 1 pm</i> <i>Music Course 6 pm</i>	13	14 <i>Valentines Day Tea 2 pm</i>	15 <i>Fun & Games 1pm</i>
16 <i>10 am Worship Scout Sunday</i>	17	18	19 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i> <i>Music Course 6 pm</i>	20	21	22
23 <i>10 am Worship</i>	24	25	26 <i>Something More, 3 pm</i> <i>Music Course 6 pm</i>	27	28	

Joys- February 9th

Joy- Christy Boone- thankful for help at Shepherds Table and to Lori for picture in fellowship hall

Concerns- February 9th

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

Connie- (friend) hospice

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

Bob (friend) doing better

Laurie: mother has cancer

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

Frank Sicillano (brother-in-law) cancer in pain

Granddaughter, massive heart attack

Gerda Schubert- hospice

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,

Previous Pastor heart surgery went well

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

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

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

Goode: (friend) Tommy Atkinson stroke

Goodman: Friend Betty is near death

Grigg: Chris Mays- diabetic complications

Grubb: John cancer, doing well

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
Elisa- (daughter-in-law) family needs

Rutledge: friend in Hawaii health issues

Saunders: Gloria

Saunders: Ron, home recovering from double pneumonia
Special prayers for California and people in track of fire
Son-in-law, cancer not spreading

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,
Lori travel mercies, Savannah surgery
Morgan (nephew) life decisions
Cook at Shepherd's Table, baby in NICU

Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems
Matt- lung cancer, still suffering
All Virginia towns impacted by hurricane
Chief 'Hops' cancer that is spreading, UVA
Plane crash first responders

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 February 9th

Sunday: 10 am Worship
5¢ a Meal Offering
BCM donations/collections

Wednesday: Deacons 1 pm
Something More 3 pm
Music Course 6 pm

Friday: Valentines Day Tea, 2 pm

Saturday: Fun and Games 1 pm

Sunday: February 16th
10 am Worship
Scout Sunday

February Birthdays

Heather Poindexter -12
BJ Poindexter -13
Ken McManis -13
John Salley -23
Janis Easter - 26
Richard Overstreet -27
Karen Overstreet -28

February Anniversaries

Jim & Judy Harris - 13

Something More

Come and join us on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 pm for a time of Bible study and fellowship. It's a lively discussion on all kinds of things related to our walk with Christ as well as an opportunity to dig a little deeper into the spiritual truths of God's Word presented during our worship services on Sunday mornings.

Amos Sermon Series

Beginning last Sunday and continuing in the weeks to come, we will be exploring the book of Amos in the Old Testament. In order to come to a better understanding of what took place in that day and time as well as insights for our lives today, there are three things that we need to do. First, read the book of Amos, selecting both modern and traditional translations. Second, review the sermon manuscripts that are available at church and on the church's website, bedfordpresbyva.org. Finally, go online or acquire a Biblical commentary about Amos to learn more about this amazing prophet. All of these resources will enable you to come to a greater appreciation for what Amos had to say and how his prophetic messages still speak to us today.