

# Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2025 (181 Years)



## Week of February 23, 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**

*"Sweet Hour of Prayer"*

Larry Shackley

**Words of Welcome**

Lori Stetson

**Call to Worship**

One: O come, let us sing to our God and make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

**All: We lift our hearts and voices in joy and thanksgiving for being here together in the presence of our wonderful God.**

One: Come, let us worship our awesome God, for we belong to Him.

**All: We will listen for God's word and live in the hope that it inspires.**

**Hymn**

*"Come, Christians, Join so Sing"*

Hymn 87

**Prayer of Confession:** *(in unison)*

Father, rid our hearts of complacency. We don't want to be satisfied with material wealth. Self-security is no security at all. Make us hungry for You! You told the nation of Israel to look at the nations around them that seemed to survive and thrive. Israel was better off than they because they had You, yet they coveted nations that had less. This was folly on their part, but Lord, don't let us make the same mistake. We don't want to desire the treasures of the wicked; We want to seek You. Even if You prosper us don't let it steal our hearts. Don't let it woo our hearts away from You. It's Your presence that makes us rich! Forgive us of complacency and fuel our hearts with passion for You. In Jesus name we pray, amen.

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

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 Patri**

*"Glory to the Father"*

Bill Rutledge

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

**Introduction to Scripture**

**Scripture**

Amos 6:1-7

(page 854)

**Worship Song**

*"Awesome in this Place"*

Dave Billington

**Sermon**

*"Decadent Prosperity"*

Years ago I heard this advertisement on TV and I've never forgotten it. It opens with a smiling suburbanite who says, "I'm Stanley Johnson. I've got a great family." We see him standing with his wife and three children in front of their house. Then he says, "I've got a four-bedroom home in a great community." We see his rather expansive home in the background. Next he asks us, "Like my car? It's new." Stanley is driving a brand-new Jeep Grand Cherokee. The next scene is a golf course where Stanley is playing golf with his friends. He tells us, "I even belong to the local golf club." Now back home riding on his lawn tractor he asks us, "How do I do it? I'm in debt up to my eyeballs. I can hardly pay my finance charges!"

With a smile on his face, the advertisement ends as Stanley asks with a half-hearted plea, "Will somebody help me?" It's a plea that somehow you get the feeling he really doesn't mean, because down deep he's not worried at all. He's living "the good life." He's living in the age of DECADENT PROSPERITY.

This advertisement perfectly expresses the attitude of the people in Israel in the days of Amos, especially those who considered themselves to be wealthy. They were living "the good life" and as far as they were concerned, "Life was like a bowl of cherries." In fact, Amos, who is continuing to serve as God's prosecuting attorney, presents evidence to support his claim that the people of Israel are guilty of casting aside all restraint in their pursuit of material prosperity. He provides us with a pretty good summary of what has been taking place in the sixth chapter of his book of prophecy. Let's take a look at it together.

He begins in verse one by addressing the leading citizens of both Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, and Samaria, the capital of Israel. These are the political and financial leaders of both nations who run their countries with little regard for their citizens. They feel secure, living in cities with great big high walls and strong armies. Thinking that all is well they have adopted an attitude of complacency, a feeling of smug satisfaction and contentment. So in verses two and three Amos reminds these heir-do-wells that the citizens of three other cities also thought of themselves as safe and secure until destruction suddenly fell upon them. Amos was warning his listeners that when you're living in the lap of luxury you can become completely oblivious to an imminent danger just around the corner.

Amos then goes on to describe the decadent lifestyles of these leading citizens in verses four through six. Like a master of ceremonies on a TV game show, he announces, "Behind curtain number one" and immediately pieces of beautiful and expensive furniture are revealed, beds with inlaid ivory and immaculate couches for lounging with guests. Then he asks for curtain number two to be pulled back so that everyone can see the chiefs preparing choice cuts of lamb and beef for barbecuing. Behind curtain number three, a group of musicians are seen, playing music on harps, just like David did when he was a shepherd lad. Behind curtain number four, a group of party goers are enjoying not small glasses but great big bowls of fine wine. Finally a fifth curtain is pulled back to reveal a group of well-off socialites bathing themselves in high priced oils and perfumes. The scene before the audience, perhaps a gathering of the everyday folk in Samaria, is almost beyond belief. Most of their homes have little or no furniture. Rarely do they ever eat meat at meals and never the finest cuts available. Music, let alone owning a musical instrument, is beyond comprehension. The wine they occasionally drank doesn't look or taste anything like those expensive brands and when did any of them have enough money to buy luxurious body lotions?

The final sad observation noted by Amos at the end of this extravagance in verse six is that those who are living this decadent way of life seem to be completely oblivious to what it is doing to their nation. Many of them could trace their heritage all the way back to a revered patriarch, but even that has not stemmed their over-the-top lifestyle. They don't care about honoring the moral mandates of their ancestors. Speaking directly to these people, Amos bemoans the fact that they are "not grieved over the ruin of Joseph" (Amos 6:7). They could care less. They want to live in the moment with no thought of tomorrow. Neither are they concerned about what might happen to those who come after them. In response Amos offers a dire prediction in verse seven, "Therefore, they shall be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away" (Amos 6:7).

Now, what does any of this have to do with us? When a person, a family, a church or even a nation begins to pursue a lifestyle of decadent prosperity, they have started down a pathway that doesn't end well. The first thing that happens is the abandonment of a disciplined and well-ordered way of life. Gluttony of mind, body and spirit take over. Will Durant, a noted historian, offers this illustration in the first volume of his *The Story of Civilization*. When the Persian Empire was established it was customary to eat only one meal a day. They lived highly disciplined lives. But as time passed and prosperity became the order of the day, things changed. They still ate only one meal a day, but it began at noon and lasted until late in the evening.

The second thing that transpires is a growing sense of complacency. People stop caring about what's going on around them. Enjoying the present becomes more important than planning for the future. When a dangerous situation arises, instead of taking precautions, an attitude of surrender and resignation arises. The Epicurean philosophy of "eat drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die" takes over. Do you remember the Biblical account of the hand writing on the wall spelling out the end of the Babylonian Empire in the

book of Daniel? What was the king doing that night on the eve of his country's capitulation? He was throwing a party, using the sacred vessels that had been stolen from the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 5:1).

Finally, when decadent prosperity becomes the order of the day, the kingdom of God fades away. It is gradually covered up by the desire to possess more and more of the things of this world. The acquisition of stuff becomes the driving force in a person's life and sometimes even in a congregation's thinking. Let me share an observation from the history of the church where I served years ago. In 1912 the church was meeting in a little frame chapel in midtown Portsmouth. They wanted to build a bigger and better church building to serve their congregation. It was an all consuming passion. When they called their new pastor he took that passionate desire and turned it into a reality in just three short years. There was only one problem. He was an evangelist. He wanted to see people coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Under his leadership, the membership had exploded. New members were being added every Sunday. He saw the new building, which at that time was the largest sanctuary in Portsmouth, as a launching pad for reaching even more people for Christ. The church family had other ideas. It was their brand new worship center where they could sit back and relax in the Lord. The church had been motivated to reach the lost so that they could build a building. That desire was now replaced by a feeling of complacent contentment. The following year, 1916, the pastor resigned because he was interested in building the kingdom of God, not an earthly edifice to self-satisfaction. The congregation had forgotten what Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

So let me close with this question. Has a feeling of decadent prosperity begun to make inroads into our lives as individuals, as families, as a church, and even as a nation? Is it taking hold of the kind of culture and society in which we want to live? A person doesn't have to be rich to adopt this kind of an attitude about life. Neither does that individual have to be like the smiling gentleman in the advertisement who was up to his eyeballs in debt. All anyone has to do is to sit back and enjoy whatever benefits they can glean from life, without ever bothering to look around and see the needs of others or to face up to the future challenges that may soon be confronting them. That's what the Israelites did and it destroyed them. Within forty years their nation was wiped clean from the landscape of the Middle East. To quote another Old Testament prophet who lived about the same time, "They sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

## ***RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD***

### ***Worship Song***

*"Change My Heart, O God"*

Hymn 373

### ***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 they 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, You Spoke Your Word Through Amos"*

Gillett

**THE SENDING FORTH**

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

*"In Thee Alone, O Christ, My Lord"*

Pachelbel

**The flowers are given to the Glory of God** and in remembrance  
of Gerda Schubert, a very special lady.

# February 2025

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

### Joys- February 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Joy-** Stetson's- Savannah came through surgery well

**Joy-** DeWitt- both Nick and Maggie got accepted at VTECH

### Concerns- February 23<sup>rd</sup>

**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) prayers for family on passing

**Boone:** niece undergoing radiation treatments

Travel mercies as Christy visits daughter

Friend's son in rehab

**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, doing better

**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:** 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 with 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

**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 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Sunday: 10 am Worship

Food You Love Potluck

Wednesday: Something More 3 pm

Music Course 6 pm

Sunday: March 2<sup>nd</sup>

10 am Worship

Communion

### **February Birthdays**

John Salley -23

Janis Easter - 26

Richard Overstreet -27

Karen Overstreet -28

### **March Birthdays**

Sonya Smith- 2

Sally Cram - 3

Eunice Barnes - 12

Maggie DeWitt - 17

Nick DeWitt - 18

Ronnie Saunders – 24

### **Something More**

Come and join us on Wednesday afternoons at 3 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.

### **Men's Breakfast**

Our next Men's Breakfast is Saturday, March 1st, 9am in the fellowship hall. Enjoy a hearty breakfast and a wonderful time of fellowship. James Fleming will be sharing a personal testimony about his walk with Christ.

### **Office Hours**

During the week of February 24 through February 28, the church will be open 9 am to 12 noon, Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday. Regular office hours will resume when our Administrative Assistant is able to resume her normal work schedule.

### **Lenten Lunches**

This year Lenten Lunches will be served each Wednesday at noon, beginning on March 5th, at the Main Street United Methodist Church. Lenten Lunches are an opportunity to enjoy a delicious lunch along with inspiring music and a devotional on the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our church will be in charge of the lunch on March 12. We will need eight to ten volunteers to assist David Grigg in preparing and serving the meal. Sign-up sheets will be placed in the sanctuary for those who wish to volunteer or you can call the church office