

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2025 (181 Years)

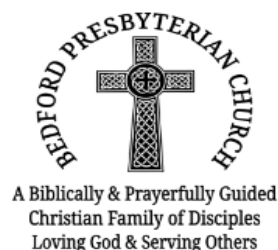


Week of March 16, 2025

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

"O Love that Will Not Let Me Go"

Shackley

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

One: Praise the Lord, my soul.

All: We will praise the Lord all of our lives. We will sing praise to Him as long as we have breath.

One: Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.

All: Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.

Hymn

"I'll praise My Maker While I've Breath"

Hymn 79

Prayer of Confession: *(in unison)*

Wondrous God, we confess that at times our doubts and fears override our hope and faith. We believe, but when challenging situations come along, we too quickly fall into hopelessness and despair. Lift up our spirits, Lord, and help us to remember Your promises. We give thanks for Your Son, Jesus, who continues to offer us new life, who continues to turn us around and upside down, who continues to break down the walls of death in our lives and who continues to move mountains for us and make our rough places plain. Forgive us, restore us and renew us. In the name of our risen Savior. 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

Scripture Reading

Matthew 17: 14-23

Anthem

"O Lord Most Holy"

Cesar Franck

Sermon

Faith That Moves Mountains

Years ago we were driving home on Interstate 64. Coming around a hidden bend in the road, I saw a disabled car pulling a trailer that had jackknifed in the middle of the highway. They had blown one of the tires on their trailer. The family was piling out of the car. It was a situation ripe for a huge multi-car pile-up and a lot of injured people. As soon as I could, I pulled to the side of the road. Cars coming at a high rate of speed around that blind curve would never be able to see the accident in time to slow down and stop. Running back to the curve, I started waving my arms at the oncoming traffic and fortunately they realized that something was amiss in front of them. A terrible tragedy was averted. Likewise, all of us have probably been involved at some point in our lives with a similar set of circumstances. We came across a situation that required our personal intervention. We helped someone who was desperately in need of our assistance.

Such was the case when Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Entering a village at the foot of the mountain, He was immediately confronted by a chaotic scene. A crowd of people was coming towards Him with a determined sense of urgency. At the head of this crowd was a distraught villager.

Coming to a halt and then knelling before Jesus, this villager was terribly upset. Failing even to introduce himself, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, have mercy on my son.” Obviously he knew who Jesus was and had come to Him for help. The next words literally tumbled from his lips just like a parent with a sick child talking to a doctor in the emergency room of a hospital. He said, “My son has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him” (Matthew 17:14-16).

Confronted by this situation, an entire range of emotions coursed through the mind and heart of Jesus. He saw the distress of the father and was moved by the urgency of his request. On so many other occasions people had approached Him with the same kind of needs—leprosy, blindness, palsy. This father’s plea for help awakened Jesus’ compassion. It also awakened a sense of disappointment. Earlier in His ministry He had sent His disciples to the surrounding towns and villages to proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom. He also told them to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and drive out demonic spirits (Matthew 10:7-8). Obviously, they were still not capable of living up to their calling. Frustrated and perhaps a little angry, Jesus said, “O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me” (Matthew 17:17). Jesus then rebuked the demonic spirit that had taken possession of the boy’s body and he was healed.

This event was one of those pivotal moments in the life and ministry of Jesus. It was not forgotten. It is recorded in three of the four Gospels, chapter seventeen in Matthew, chapter nine in Mark and chapter nine in Luke. For that reason if none other, we need to take a look at what is happening in these passages of Scriptures. There are some truths here that we need to examine.

Here’s the first one. Jesus was not “Mr. Milk Toast.” He had real and at times very powerful emotions. Often He is portrayed as a mild mannered gentleman who never had an unkind thing to say to anybody. That is simply not true. He had a deep well of compassionate concern for the poor and the lowly. That’s why He spent so much of His time reaching out to those in need, whether they were an individual who was ill or a multitude who were hungry. But He was also the kind of person who could give voice to His anger and frustration and this was one those occasions. Neither the crowd nor His disciples could access the kind of faith that opens the door to God’s presence and power. In spite of everything that He had said and shown them, His disciples still could not put their faith to work in a way that made a real difference. I wonder at times if Jesus does not get a bit angry and frustrated with us for the same reason. We talk about having faith, but we are either reluctant or don’t know how to put it to work.

Here’s the second truth within this passage of Scripture that we need to examine. No one is immune to evil. It’s both real and present. Talk to the people of Ukraine and they will tell you that evil is very real and very present. It falls out of the sky every evening when the Russian rockets begin to fall upon their homes and cities. Yes, there is a lot of evil in this world and sometimes it arrives with a personal agenda, to attack us as individuals. That was the situation that this father faced with his son. The presence of evil in that day and time was associated with illness. To be ill possibly meant that you were possessed by an evil spirit, a demon who could cause torment, pain and even death. Such was the case with the father’s son, thrown about by a demon’s presence within his body. Today we would say that the child was experiencing seizures. In one translation of this passage of Scripture, the seizures are even identified as being epileptic in nature. So what was really going on within that young man’s life? We will never know, but there is one thing which is clearly evident. Evil disrupts and brings harm to that which is good and it can slip into our lives almost unnoticed, like an unseen germ or virus. Then it begins to weave its pattern of destruction. Years ago I saw an example of its power to destroy. I met a man suffering from an acute case of arthritis, hardly able to move. Its origin was unknown. However, he had allowed and indeed cherished a spirit of intense bitterness towards his brother. Having been trained during my internship in pastoral care that our emotions play an important part in our physical well-being, I couldn’t help but sense that the man’s

intense arthritic pain probably had something to do with the bitterness which had taken control of his life. It had become a demon inflecting pain and paralysis.

That brings us to one last, but very important aspect of this Scriptural account. After Jesus healed the boy, the disciples came to Him and asked why they had not been able to drive out the evil spirit. In response, Jesus said, "Because you have so little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). The reason for their inability to heal the father's son, therefore, seems to be that they needed more faith. They needed an extra helping of faith in order to make the boy whole again. However, upon closer examination that is not what Jesus was saying at all. It was not a greater amount of faith that was needed, a tiny amount no bigger than a mustard seed would be adequate. Rather it was the focus of their faith that was of crucial importance. In Mark's account, which provides more information about what took place, Jesus told the father that all things are possible for those who believe. The father replied, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief" (Mark 9:24)! He was acknowledging his lack of faith in the hope that Jesus could help him find an additional quantity of that precious commodity as payment for the healing of his son. Thankfully, no additional faith was necessary and that is something that Jesus was pointing out when He told the disciples that only a little bit can move a mountain. It's not the amount of faith, but rather the focus of the faith that makes the difference.

Perhaps verse 21 in Matthew's account can throw some additional light on what I'm driving at. It read, "But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting." It describes the kind of faith that is necessary when dealing with the really tough issues in life, like the persistent presence of evil. This verse is not found in some of the most ancient New Testament manuscripts. Nevertheless, it points us in the right direction with regards to what it means to have faith. Faith is not believing that God is going to do something for us. It is simply placing ourselves and our situation into the hands of God. It is focusing not on what we need, but rather on the One who provides what we need. When we pray and fast we are crawling up into the lap of God and simply saying, "Hold me. I'm trusting in You and in You alone."

So to wrap things up let me remind you of a biblical story found in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. Remember those three brothers who would not bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue? The king of the Babylonians gave them one last chance before being thrown into a fiery furnace. This is how they responded to the king's threat, "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18). Were they trusting in what God was going to do for them or were they simply trusting in the Lord regardless of whether or not He delivered them from the flames. That my friends is the kind of faith that moves mountains, and perhaps the kind of faith we need right here at Bedford Presbyterian Church.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Hymn

"He Is Able"

Hymn 639

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

Lord, we thank You for the gift of faith, a beacon in the darkness, a strength in times of doubt. Help us to grow in faith, so that we may trust Your wisdom and love, and so live lives that honors You. Bless our offering today and use it for Your glory. 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***

“How Firm a Foundation”

Hymn 411

THE SENDING FORTH

Benediction

Postlude

“Postlude on Foundation”

Dale Wood

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in memory of Roy and our
wedding anniversary, Sally Cram

A Journey to Jerusalem

Today we will continue our Journey to Jerusalem as we meet a father who was desperately seeking Jesus’ help to cure his stricken son. It will be an opportunity for us to discover that even a little bit of faith, as small as a mustard seed, can accomplish great things.

March 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>Lenten Lunch, 12 pm</i> <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	6	7	8 <i>Spring Ahead one hour</i>
9 <i>10 am Worship 5¢ a Meal BCM collection</i>	10	11	12 <i>Lenten Lunch, 12 pm</i> <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	13	14	15
16 <i>10 am Worship</i>	17	18	19 <i>Lenten Lunch, 12 pm</i> <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	20	21	22 <i>Winter Fun & Games, 1 pm</i>
23 <i>10 am Worship Spring Potluck</i>	24	25	26 <i>Lenten Lunch, 12 pm</i> <i>Something More, 3 pm</i>	27	28	29

30 <i>10 am Worship Session</i>	31					
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Concerns- March 16th

- 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
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
Michael (brother) congestive heart failure, lump on lung
- 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
BJ Parker's niece hospital, complication from flu
- 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
Margaret having health issues

Rutledge: friend in Hawaii health issues

Saunders: Ron, home recovering from double pneumonia
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, Savannah
Morgan (nephew) life decisions
Cook at Shepherd's Table, baby in NICU
Granddaughter Lily taken to urgent care

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 March 16th

Sunday: 10 am Worship

Wednesday: Something More 3 pm

Saturday: Fun & Games, 1 pm

Sunday: March 23rd

10 am Worship

Spring Potluck

March Birthdays

Maggie DeWitt - 17

Nick DeWitt - 18

Ronnie Saunders – 24

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.

Smith Mountain Lake Gives

SML is an annual online fundraiser held in March for charitable organizations in Bedford and Franklin counties. Bedford Christian Ministries is participating this year. BCM helps families with food, clothing, household goods, and utility/rental assistance. It is one of the outreach ministries of our church. This year our church family can assist in two additional ways. We can make a donation to SML Gives and we can tell our friends and neighbors about this special opportunity to support BCM. Go to the BCM Facebook page and search for SML Gives for additional information. Donations can be made at www.smlgives.org from March 17-19.

Spring Fun and Games

The next Spring Fun and Games will be held at the Bedford Presbyterian Fellowship Hall on Saturday, March 22nd from 1 to 4 pm. Please bring your favorite board game and some snacks to share. Any questions or comments, please contact Deanna.

Covered Dish Luncheon

On Sunday, March 23, bring your favorite covered dish as we “spring into spring.” After the morning worship service we will enjoy great food and fellowship as we celebrate the departure of winter and the arrival of the warmth and sunshine of the springtime.

Special Film Presentation

The Pastor Nominating Committee would like to invite our church family to a special showing of the film, *The War Room*, on Saturday, March 29th. The movie will be shown beginning at 1:00 pm in the fellowship hall. Refreshments will be provided. The film focuses on the power of prayer. This is an especially important theme for our lives as individuals, as well as for our congregation and PNC as we continue to search for the next pastor of our church. Please place this date on your calendar and plan to attend.