

# Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2020 (176 Years)



## Week of July 5<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 for those that are uncomfortable to attend service yet.

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.

Please be in prayer for the end of the coronavirus and healing for those affected by it.



Bedford Presbyterian Church  
serving Christ since 1844

*A Biblically Guided Christian Community,*

*Loving God, Loving Others,*

*Serving the World & Growing Disciples*

**If you are watching the online service this Sunday morning,  
please have this bulletin ready to follow the service.**

**The Approach to God**

**Prelude**

*"Eternal Father, Strong to Save"*

Bill Rutledge

One: The peace of Christ be with you

**All: And Also with you**

**Welcome and Announcements**

- Please remember that when the Prelude begins the service is being recorded. We ask that you please refrain from talking when the service starts, as conversation can be heard on the recording.
- Please adhere to the re-gathering notes during service to keep yourself and everyone else safe.
- Please let the ushers dismiss you at the end of service.
- Something More has resumed, Tuesdays at 4:30 pm, virtual and in-person
- Any other announcements are printed at the back of this bulletin.

**Call to Worship:**

One: Almighty God, You who call us to prayer and who offers Yourself to all who seek Your face.

**All: Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us today and deliver us from coldness of heart, a wandering mind and wrongful desire.**

One: By the power of Your Spirit, place within us steadfast love and devotion,

**All: so that today we may worship and serve You with all our life, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.**

**Introit**

*"God of Our Fathers"*

Praise Team

**Prayer of Confession:**

Forgive us, Good Lord, for what we waited to do until it was too late, for what we mistakenly did before we thought twice, for what we were able to do because we ceased to see others as persons. For what we were unable to do because we failed to see our own possibilities, for what we pretended we could control when we should have stood in awe. For what we feared, which should have been belittled and overcome. Make us new so that we may begin anew. In the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen. (offer silent prayers of confession)

**Assurance of Pardon:** Joel 2: 12-13)

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord, Your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

(response)

One: Brothers and sisters believe the good news.

**All: Through Christ Jesus we have been forgiven. In Christ Jesus we have been empowered to live a new life.**

**Gloria**

*“Glory Be to the Father”*

## **Proclaiming the Word of God**

**Time for all God’s Children**

**Solo**

*“There Is a Savior”*

Libby Monk

**Scripture:**

Galatians 5: 13-18

**Sermon:**

Independence Day

Adapted from “Independence Day”, Thomas Bowen @ Sermon Central.Com

I read this bit of timely wisdom on Facebook the other day...

*I was always curious of what it was like to live during the times of the Civil War, the Spanish Flu, Great Depression, Civil Rights Movement, Watergate and the dust bowl... but not all of them all at once!!! Darn you 2020!*

What a strange, miss-able, year this has been so far. Continuing the trend, this weekend has found us all celebrating Independence Day, under very altered circumstances. Since most of the beaches, campgrounds and tourist destinations are closed, fewer people are traveling and those who are, are doing so by car - not by plane or boat. While there have been fireworks there were no parades, no ball games to go out to, none of the usual mass celebrations. The annual Coney Island Nathan’s Hotdog Eating Contest was still held this Saturday but there was no audience to cheer on the face stuffers. Instead, many families have just opted for a quiet backyard BBQ followed by an evening of streaming patriotic movies on TV. But we all still celebrated this weekend in some small way because of what happened in 1776.

We celebrate the memory of people we have only learned about through history books even as their statues are being pulled down by those refusing to see the greater good in these clay footed heroes of our past. We celebrate that these people had the gumption and courage to break the existing hold which England held on what were once a dozen wilderness colonies struggling to survive, while being burdened with by rules and unfair burdens imposed by the king of England.

They were pretty specific in that 1776 declaration of what they demanded independence from. If you read through the document, you find oppression of freedoms, abuse of power, removal of rights, false justice and imprisonment. Their charges were that the king was not fulfilling his responsibility to be a protector of the people and worse that he is abusing his distant subjects. Their declaration was to break free, to become independent from the strangle hold of a tyrant and to rule themselves as a nation of free and equal citizens.

It is curious that we celebrate the day of the declaration, not the day that independence from England was actually achieved. The fighting had begun in 1774, two-years before and would last another five-years until the American victory at Yorktown in 1781. I guess if they had lost their struggle instead of independence, today we would be celebrating the queen’s birthday.

But we celebrate an ideal that was worth everything to the men who would sign the document. Something worth risking wealth and even life to gain, which was this idea of freedom, of every

individual's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I wonder what our founding fathers, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, would think of the nation we have become; what new freedoms we have now enshrined what old cherished freedoms we have lost.

Our Bible also says a lot about how precious and hard bought our personal freedom has been. Today's passage is about our freedom from Mosaic Law. The law is described elsewhere in our Bible as being something that helped to identify sin that showed people how to live a life honorable to God. However, too many religious leaders used the Law as a tool of control. They used it for power, position and self-promotion. They used it to take away others' freedoms in the name of God.

In contrast, the Apostle Paul declared that because of Christ Jesus, Christians now have new and precious freedoms: freedom from the law, freedom from living under control of our fallen nature and freedom to love and serve our neighbors.

Because the larger culture did not understand them, it must have been hard for those early Christians to celebrate the freedoms that Paul was encouraging. It must also have been very confusing for them. Having broken from their old religions, old traditions, old fears and now trying to figure out the ins and outs of this new faith, these new freedoms, while some very powerful preachers claiming to have the same faith kept telling them that the only way to really become a Christian is to first become a Jew and live under the law.

That is why Paul literally shouts through his letters that such is not true, but he also insists that our new freedom from the law was not freedom to sin, but rather freedom to live for Christ and for others.

Hindsight is a good teacher. Today we can look at United States history and find the investment made by those patriots so long ago was worth it. It is great to be free. It is fantastic that I can pretty much do what I want and say what I want. 244 years later we still enjoy the freedom that the Declaration of Independence called for on behalf of the colonies and their future citizens: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Freedoms that others living elsewhere continue to live without. However, there are still a few problems even here.

I am not complaining mind you, but, as a "free" nation, we seem to have a lot of rules: traffic laws, traffic lights, speed limits, income taxes and building codes. It is hard work to pursue life, liberty and happiness with so many rules.

It seems that with national freedom, must also come some controls which necessarily curb our absolute freedom. That is because – and this is a key concept – **the freedoms we enjoy as a nation are cooperative freedoms**. Ours is a union of people who have agreed to protect every individual's God given rights at a cost that is shared by the group. The freedom we have has limits that keep us from expressing our freedom at the expense of another. Freedom is never completely free

In our scripture today, Paul tells the believers in Galatia that through faith in Christ they were set truly free. Free from slavery to sin – free from the obligation to keep the law which is impossible to keep. However, as Paul explains that even with such freedom, there are still rules and limits.

Paul says that **rule number one** is, “you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become servants to one another.”

1. We cannot use our freedom to become immoral people!
2. We cannot use our freedom to abuse or use other people!
3. Our Freedom is not a license to sin in any way
4. We cannot use our freedom to sit around and do nothing!
5. We cannot use our freedom to avoid obligations to others!
6. He also adds, we are expected to use our freedom to sacrificially serve one another in love.

This sounds like a limited version of freedom, sort of restrictive, but it is not too burdensome. The freedom we receive as Christians is limited to being good and loving others.

Now we get to **the second rule**, *“For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

There is that “Love your neighbor thing” again. Sort of a pain isn’t it? To always be reminded about loving your neighbor. It starts in Leviticus, Jesus preaches on it multiple times in the Gospels and then Paul, James and John also remind us of our brotherly/sisterly obligations. Perhaps we need to take from these repetitions that this idea of loving our neighbor is of significant importance to God our Father. Here Paul writes that this one rule, to love your neighbor, replaces the entire law.

- This one rule if followed will set your life on an even footing and guide you in the right direction.
- This one rule will set you free of all the little nuances and petty restrictions of the Law.

But, loving your neighbor as self, what does that really mean?

Well, how do we demonstrate our love for ourselves?

- When we are hungry, thirsty or sick we do something about it.
- When I decide to go someplace I use my car, something I bought to meet my needs.
- When I am sick I go to the doctor...eventually.
- There are a lot of things I do for myself, some are needs, some are comforts, some are just for fun. But I am worth all of it, right?

According to Paul, our neighbors are worth equally as much. With Christ’s freedom comes the obligation to love and serve our family, community, neighbors and even individuals along our path. Even those people who don’t value you or me at all should still be important to us because they are also important and loved by Christ Jesus.

The removal of the Law as a guide over our lives should have made things easier....but actually it has opened up a whole can of worms...now we are faced daily with moral choices that we must make. Such as the wearing of **facemasks in public**, almost all states have mandated this.

Because so many people are refusing to comply, some states are now also instituting fines --- bringing in the law. Other states, like here in Virginia, continue urging you to do so as **a responsible way to care for your neighbor**, as **your patriotic duty**. Voluntarily wearing a face mask is your responsible balance of freedom.

But here, Paul was writing to people not in the middle of a pandemic but rather a battle over salvation. They do not have the advantage of hind sight. They are fighting their way toward the path of righteous living and are uncertain of the proper steps. Some of their issues are raised within the church itself; abusing the Lord's Supper, proper relationships with the opposite sex. There must have been many spirited conversations and accusations between fellow believers as they struggled with the freedom that Paul reminds them of.

Our fore-fathers in this nation recognized their lives were on the edge of slavery to the king. Having no rights or self-government and more loss of control over their own lives led them to declare their freedom from the rule of England. Too bad they didn't see that such freedoms should apply to all humans regardless of skin color or ethnic origin. Think of how much better life would be today for everyone had they listened to their own conscience while they wrote of the inalienable right of ALL people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Civil war would not have been fought, with so many lost lives, so much lost property, lost wealth, along with deep, historically imbedded grudges that continue to plague our nation today.

Paul tells us readers, that for Christians the path to freedom is only gained and then enjoyed through God's indwelling spirit. The battle he describes is between the sinful nature of every person resisting the guidance offered by the Holy Spirit. The choice is between being bound and controlled by a sinful nature or in finding the freedom to love everyone as much as God loves them, as much as we love ourselves.

The struggle for independence is still going on today. In our nation the battle over religious freedom is growing and I would suggest that if we don't join this battle, we will continue to see our rights and freedoms trimmed and removed. Our nation's founders obviously were much more open to the leading of God than many of our current politicians and judges.

The battle over our spiritual freedom continues as well. We all struggle with right and wrong every day. We must decide between loving only ourselves or equally loving our neighbor and we probably don't win as many battles as we could. In fact, I fear that many who now name themselves as "Christian" don't struggle or battle at all; having chosen self while ignoring others and letting sin and personal desire guide their selfish choices. Thank God that we live in a nation that has given us the freedom to let our light shine.... how dare we then hide it under a basket.

God offers us the help we need to grow and live into the true freedoms that He offers us. It takes real effort and control to listen to the spirit. It takes even more to follow its direction. Spiritual Freedom has never been free. It was dearly bought for us by Jesus the Christ, God's son our savior and living in that freedom is not easy, it requires maturity and yes -- even some self-denial for the sake of others. But it truly is the best life anyone could ever live.

Let's thank God for the freedoms we have and pray for the strength to honorably live them out in our world, with our neighbor.

## **Response to the Word of God**

### ***Affirmation of Faith***

Apostles' Creed

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 will 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.

### ***Invitation to Communion***

### ***Hymn of Preparation***

*"In Remembrance"*

Praise Team

### ***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

### ***Sacrament of the Lord's Supper***

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

### ***Prayers of the People:***

Generous God, You have given us life, a place to live and people to live with. Open our eyes to each other and to all our brothers and sisters, especially the poor, the oppressed, the alienated. Make us humble enough to help and comfort them, so that Your love, justice and peace may come to them. We make bold to consecrate ourselves and our gifts to You and to the service of others, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **The Sending Forth**

### ***Benediction***

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 15:5)

### ***Postlude***

*"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory"*

Bill Rutledge

### Joys- July 5<sup>th</sup>

**Joy and Praise** for the music and those that help with the worship service

**Joy:** Linda Crawford, (Linda's friend) doing well on chemo

### Concerns- July 5<sup>th</sup>

**Barnes:** Kim Hedrick- (friend) health issues

**Benton:** Linda Crawford- (friend) cancer, chemo, doing well

**Blair:** James Thorne- (scout) rare skin infection, doing better

Katy Neel- (LHS student) scleroderma

Glen Murgacz- (friend) biopsy for bladder cancer

Prayers for Tulsa rally attendees

**Boone:** Jim Hedrick - (friend) recovering from partial lung removal

Michael -(son) out of work during pandemic

Ray Graeber- (Sammy's cousin)- recovering from colon surgery

Nancy Boone- (Sammy's cousin's wife) cancer

**Chryssikos:** Linda Arendt- (neighbor) disabled

**Clarke:** Ben Daniels - (Pat's grandson) deployed to Syria late summer

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

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Mary Keys- (friend) ICU, blood infection, heart problems, stroke

Military away from home

**DeWitt:** Terry Sharp- (cousin) ceases chemo treatment- hospice

**Diddams:** Lois- problems with medications

Paul (brother)- loss of wife, not doing well

**Dills:** Katy Neel- lymphoma

**Fleming:** family dealing with addiction and self- esteem

Steve Trombecky- (friend) home recovering

Political leaders to never close churches again

**Foster:** Thomasine Davis- (aunt) passed away

Joyce Abbott- (former member) cancer

Andre Nemenek- (Shepherds table cook) prostate cancer

Ellen- staples removed, doing well, would like calls and visits

Betty Dudek- home

**Glass:** Ken (Steve Glass' father) fell, broke hip and shoulder

**Goodman:** Barry Owen-(friend) cancer

Randall Sales-(SRHS coach) cancer

Katherine Saunders- (Hugh's daughter) hospice

**Gould:** Jay- home, recovering from heart bypass surgery

**Harris:** Judy- recovering from throat procedure

**Heinrich:** Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

**Koch:** Doris- fell, broken hip, at home

**Kuhn- Kibbey:** Nancy Milton- (friend) cancer, Alzheimer's  
Dot- idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, wet macular degeneration  
Grandson- alcoholism

**Ledden:** John- heart problems

**Mauser:** Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Tom & Betty Clark- downsizing, and Betty has new pacemaker

Norma Jean- (Gayle's sister) broken collar bone

Pat- (Al's sister) diabetes, tested positive for Covid-19

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

Forensic scientists who deal with crime

Rev. Pam Ledbetter-(friend) home, doing well

Doris Jean Coble- (cousin) in nursing home

**Salley:** David Etheridge- (fellow pastor) terminal cancer

Emily Salley- (sister-in-law) invasive breast cancer

**Saunders:** (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)

Scott- (son-in-law) chemo and radiation

**Scheurer:** Jim Hedrick-(friend) cancer, partial lung removed

Bob Lindell-(friend) prostate cancer

**Stetson:** Travel mercies for Tiffany and children

Lori- recovering from eye surgery

**Stevens:** Jackie Landis- heart problems

Russell-home, doing well

**Toney:** Judy- finished radiation

Karen Hyde-(friend) bladder cancer

Mike Gillespie-passed away, prayers for family

Cal Rice- (former pastor) bone cancer, refused treatment

**Wilkerson:** Ricky Wilkerson-(Dan's cousin) cancer

**Prayers for those dealing with loneliness**

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

**Prayers for an end of the coronavirus and healing for those infected**

**Prayers for our divided country and the violence occurring**

**Prayers to speak and listen to those who are different**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you for continuing to send in your contributions and pledges.  
You can mail your pledge or contribution or you can drop by the office,  
Mon-Thurs between 8 am -4pm.**

Even though we aren't meeting as normal, **5 ¢ a meal offerings and Heifer** are still welcomed and encouraged. Just mail them in as you do your pledges and contributions, with a note in the memo line.

**Do you enjoy yardwork?** If you do, we are looking for volunteers to work in the church yard mowing grass, weed eating and doing general yard work. If you are interested, please let the office know.

### Something More Returns on Tuesdays



Tuesdays from 4:30 – 6 pm, the "Something More" Bible study has resumed. Each week we will dig a bit deeper behind the previous Sunday's sermon.... or on whatever else may be on the mind of an attendee. So come with your questions and come with your Bible... but Come! If you feel comfortable, we urge you to come in person as we continue practicing social distancing guidelines. If you still feel the need to keep separate then ZOOM in, we will be able to see you and you will be able to hear us (start zooming in around 4:15). See you Tuesday in person or on TV. – John

### Happy Birthday!!

Ryan Johnson-6th  
Margaret Morris- 9th  
Charlotte McManis- 11th

