

The Christian Chronicle



Boones Mill Christian Church

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MEAN SPIRITED OR PROPHETIC?

Pat and I had a brief conversation a few days ago in which we were discussing my process as I considered what to write for this newsletter. Essentially what I was doing was reporting my lament concerning the negativity that I was observing and feeling in just about everything I read or heard from both the “secular” and the “religious” pundits of our day.

Of course, life seems to happen in cycles. And if we live long enough and we are not sleeping through the events of our world, we begin to pick up on patterns that repeat kind of like the seasons. And, of course, there are

***Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!
Why do you want the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, not light; as if someone
fled from a lion and was met by a bear;
or went into a house and rested a hand
against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.
Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?
Amos 5: 18-20***

variations on the theme each time it cycles around just like the weather every year is a little different. And it seems to me that this current cycle of political rhetoric and political action, while being negative and fear mongering in a way that we haven't seen since the 50's and 60's, varies from previous cycles in that it seems to be especially vitriolic or mean spirited. At least that is what I am thinking and feeling. So I started looking around for another, maybe grander or deeper cycle in our history, an event outside our lifetime when things were similar to how I am experiencing them today.

And the time when the Hebrew prophet Amos was active came to mind. He came on the scene in the first half of the eighth century BCE during the long and peaceful reign of King Jeroboam II, a time of unequaled

APRIL BIRTHDAYS



- 3RD:** **JOYCE WALTERS**
4280 Retreat Road
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-2646
- 4TH:** **GREG AMOS**
- 8TH:** **BETTY CARLSON**
744 Foggy Ridge Road
Rocky Mount, VA 24151
540-483-1714
- 9TH:** **LINDA MOORE**
P.O.Box 134
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-2087
- 13TH:** **MICKEY LIONBERGER**
3229 Bromley Road
Roanoke, VA 24018
540-989-2068
- 14TH:** **JAIMIE ECHTERNACH**
3315 Valentine Road SW
Roanoke, VA 24018
540-797-8301
- 23RD:** **FAYE EVANS**
8800 Grassy Hill Road
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-5546

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
Y'ALL!**

territorial expansion and national prosperity for Israel. In other words, things were going as good as they ever would for the people. But all this prosperity led to gross inequities between the urban elites and the poor. Through manipulation of debt and credit, the wealthy amassed capital and huge estates at the expense of all of those who had less and lacked rights (power) and resources (money and property and opportunity). The situation made it impossible for the poor to hold on to what they had or to ever get out from under the thumb of powerful people. Is this sounding at all familiar yet?

Anyway, into this setting stepped Amos, a working man himself, a shepherd and tree pruner, definitely not a part of an upper class. And Amos strongly denounced the Northern Kingdom, Israel, in vivid language (might we say vitriolic language?), bitterly describing the decadent opulence, the immorality, the smug piety of the “haves,” those who “...**trampled the head of the poor into the dust of the earth.**” AMOS 2:7 Amos’s program, in contrast, called for “**justice**” and “**righteousness,**” AMOS 5:7, 24, 6:12 terms that denote social equality and concern for the disadvantaged and the disenfranchised.

And against the backdrop of the Israelite tradition about “**the Day of the Lord,**” Amos announced that such a day was imminent. “**The Day of the Lord**” was a time to celebrate what God had done in the past but more importantly it was the time when the people expected God to rain destruction on all those who had persecuted them through the years. But Amos said it wasn’t going to be a day of destruction just for Israel’s enemies as they had always foreseen it. Amos was saying that Israel would be destroyed as well when God executed the divine version of “**justice and righteousness.**” Just because Israel self-identified as God’s covenant people did not mean that they would be spared the wrath to come for oppressing the poor and disenfranchised. Actually, as God’s chosen people, they had a higher ethical standard to reach to live into that relationship with a God of justice and righteousness. Do we think that just because we claim to be in a special relationship with God means we will be spared when God executes the divine version of “**justice and righteousness**” in our day? It seems unlikely to me if we are not treating the “least of these” with equity and respect.

I won’t here review the language that Amos uses in his short book of prophecy. You can do that for yourself. Let me just say that it is harsh, full of violence, judgment, and destruction all in the name of God’s justice and righteousness and in the name of God’s protection of the poor and disenfranchised. So what I learn here is that maybe there is a time for “againstness” rather than niceness, judgment rather than acceptance, and vitriolic talk rather than soothing words or no words at all. May God guide us, empower us, and bless us as we are about the work of God in the world. May we never fear confronting the powers that would have us be quiet and gentle and meek and mild and accepting of oppression, racism, sexism, bigotry, religious intolerance, etc. God is right there with us when we are about resisting all of that.

God’s blessings!

Pastor Joe

DON'T FORGET!!!

- **April 13th Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service:** Christians have for centuries gathered on Thursday evening of Holy Week to remember Christ's gathering his disciples in an upper room for a special meal before moving toward the events culminating in his crucifixion. It was on this occasion that Jesus took bread and wine and identified them with himself as a means for remembering him always. This service is designed to draw Christians back in time to recall and experience the significance of that night in the light of their present knowledge of the risen Christ thus the central focus is upon the Lord's Table. First, the community recalls Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper and partakes. Then the community devoutly remembers the events that transpired leading to Christ's betrayal, denial, and death. The distinguishing feature of the service is the symbolic extinguishing of lighted candles, signifying the approach of Jesus' death. When only the Christ Candle remains, it too, is extinguished as a symbol of Christ's crucifixion. After a period of complete darkness, the Christ Candle is relit in anticipation of the Resurrection. "Tenebrae" means shadow. The gradual extinguishing of lights is symbolic of the flight of the disciples, the approach of his enemies, and the suffering of Jesus. The total darkness recalls the days Christ was in a tomb. Participants do not represent Jesus or the disciples, but the whole of humanity, which shares in causing Christ to suffer. Join us for the service at 7:00 pm – you will be blessed.
- **April 16th Easter Sunday:** We will participate in the Community Easter Sunrise Service at Mountain View Memorial Park on Grassy Hill Road beginning at 7:00 am. This will be followed by the BMCC Community Easter Breakfast at the church building at 7:30 am. There will be no Sunday School classes that morning but the Resurrection Day worship service will be at the normal Sunday morning time, 10:30 am.
- **Linda Moore reminds us** that we must re-sign up every year for the church to benefit from our Kroger Plus Card purchases through the Kroger Community Rewards Program. It doesn't affect our fuel discounts, etc. It does get the church a few extra dollars every year! You simply go to <https://www.kroger.com/account/communityrewards/enroll> and "connect" your card to Boones Mill Christian Church – our # is 82675. Thanks!
- **April 28th Friday American Red Cross Blood Drive:** Hardly anything that we could do would help more people at critical times in their lives than donating blood and supporting those who can donate blood. Please see George Carlson to sign up to provide food or to volunteer to help. Hours for the blood drive are from 1:00 – 6:00 pm at Boones Mill Christian Church.

BMCC

APRIL

2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	3	4	5 SOUP @ 6:30 DEVOTIONAL @ 7:00 CHOIR PRACTICE 7:30 PM	6	7	8
9 PALM SUNDAY STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	10	11	12	13 MAUNDY THURSDAY TENEBRAE 7:00 PM	14	15
16 7:00 SUNRISE @ MOUNTAINVIEW BREAKFAST @ BMCC AT 7:30 AM EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:30 AM	17	18	19 CHOIR PRACTICE 7:30 PM	20	21	22 BMCC FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST THE ROANOKER 9:00 AM
23 SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	24	25	26 CHOIR PRACTICE 7:30 PM	27	28 AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE @ BMCC 1:00 – 6:00 PM	29
30 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM						1