

The Christian Chronicle



Boones Mill Christian Church

7/1/2017

EDITION 7; VOLUME 2

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

I was doing some research on the web a few days ago, mainly looking for materials relevant to where we are today as a community of faith. I came across a webinar entitled Help! My Church Needs a New Beginning! I started reviewing it, and to be honest, I was about to turn it off because I was in danger of going to sleep – I wasn't hearing anything I hadn't heard many times before.

All of a sudden, the presenter said something that piqued my interest and got me to thinking in a novel way about our community and faith communities in general. He asked us, his listeners, to consider our church's focus: does our church have more memories than dreams or does our church have more dreams than memories. Well, being the person that I am, I immediately began to ask, "What is the presenter's question behind the question?" In other words, what did he want us to

"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Acts 2:17

discover about ourselves in our reflection on these two phenomena? While the presenter's agenda in asking for the reflection was never clear to me as I watched the rest of the webinar, it certainly has led to a good deal of reflection on my part. The rest of what I will say here is that reflection.

First I wondered what it would look like for a church to have more memories than dreams and what would be the upside and downside to being that way. It seems to me that the upside of being memory-focused is that we would have a keen sense of the value of those we follow in the faith. What I mean is that we would

JULY BIRTHDAYS

...

- 3RD: GORDON BERNARD**
285 Boon-Bernard Drive
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-2542
- 3RD: ANNA EVANS**
1795 Presidential Hts. #523
Colorado Springs, CO 80905
540-588-4958
- 5TH: GEORGE CARLSON, JR.**
210-364-9382
- 5TH: JEANNE ECHTERNACH**
8824 Boones Chapel Road
Boones Mill, VA 24065
301-704-5884
- 14TH: HEATHER CYPHER**
1638 Webster Conner Rd.
Callaway, VA 24067
540-493-6171
- 16TH: MATT SHAVER**
3853 Fauquier Ave.
Richmond, VA 23227
804-239-6020
- 22ND: RAEGAN BOLLING**
4841 Nelms Lane NE
Roanoke, VA 24019
540-400-8957
- 25TH: CHRISTINE COLLINS**
2250 Oak Ridge Farms Rd.
Danville, VA 24541
540-488-0092

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Y'ALL!

know with a certainty that without those who paved the way and without their having paved it, we

JULY BIRTHDAYS



- 26TH: EMILY BRUSH**
467 Charlie Road
Hardy, VA 24101
540-721-5584
- 26TH: CHARLES WRAY**
P.O. Box 463
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-5600
- 27TH: EMMA BRUSH**
467 Charlie Road
Hardy, VA 24101
540-721-5584
- 28TH: LAURA CONNER**
110 Ikenberry Road
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-312-2455
- 31ST: LONNIE WALTERS**
4280 Retreat Road
Boones Mill, VA 24065
540-334-2646

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Y'ALL!

would not be where we are and we would not be who we are. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of being “...**surrounded by so great cloud of witnesses**” HEBREWS 12:1b that we have strength for today, strength to “...**run with perseverance the race that is set before us...**” HEBREWS 12:1c Memories and a working knowledge of our history are both critical to who we are, who we want to be as a people seeking the will of God for our today and our tomorrow. But we know that as surely as there is a good side to remembering, there is potential for being debilitated by that focus. What we likely need to be careful of is having the past, or the honoring of our past and our forefathers and foremothers, as our primary focus. In another epistle the Apostle Paul counsels “...**forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I [we] press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ.**” PHIL 3:13b-14 I don't see Paul here saying we should forget the past but that the past cannot be allowed to interfere with the call of God to be all we can be.

Second I wondered what it would look like to be a church with more dreams than memories and again, what are the upsides and downsides to being that way. It seems to me that the upside of being a church with more dreams than memories would be a good amount of freedom to think about the “**what ifs,**” limited not by what has happened in the past (history and tradition), but open to the leading of the wild, unpredictable, untamable Spirit of our God, the one that always calls us to be more than we have been yesterday and more than we are today. As I reflected on this I was reminded of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus in John 3, a story familiar to us all. There Jesus seems to consider Nicodemus to be “playing dumb” when

Nicodemus takes the conversation to be about physical rebirth. But I am not sure that Nicodemus was just playing dumb. I wonder if “**going where no one had ever gone before,**” that is following a new Messiah with what looked like very shaky plan of how to “be” Messiah, might not be more than a little scary. It would have been for me had I been there and even today it still scares me to take on endeavors where I am not clear about the outcome. Of course, the truth is that life is not at all predictable; there can be good outcomes and there can be not-so-good outcomes. But being trapped by fear can keep us from finding what is out there for us if we imaginatively move into the call of God. And of course we can figuratively “**throw the baby out with the bath water**” if we get so caught up in following our dreams that we forget or devalue our memories. Without a set of corporate memories we have no sense of who we are really or how we got here, not to mention that we don't take advantage of the hard earned wisdom of those who have gone before us. There are some things I do not think the church needs to learn again! Once was enough!

As I continued to reflect on whether we are “**rememberers**” or “**dreamers,**” I realized that the presenter had not directly asked for reflection on a third critical aspect we need to consider as we

think about ways we are community. That would be the part of us that thinks about **“what is.”** What I mean by that is that it seems important to do some reflection on our personal and communal strengths and weaknesses as well as an accurate assessment of our financial and physical abilities and limitations as we attempt to answer God’s call today. Our Scripture is replete with advice about counting the cost when considering what and how to build – I don’t take that as necessarily talking about brick and mortar structures. It also advises us to constantly be about inventorying ourselves to be sure that we realize our own strengths and weaknesses, again both personally and corporately. I find myself wondering right in the moment if this wouldn’t be a worthwhile several week Bible study. I also think that we need to do some assessment of this community in which we live and have our being today. Like cars and homes and electronics, the makeup of that community has changed as well as what the people of the community want and need from a faith community has changed. It would seem to me to be wise to spend some time and resources on “reading” our bigger context.

OK – I know it took a lot of words to get to the point but here it is: Whether we are **“rememberers”** or **“dreamers”** or **“todayers,”** (“todayers” is all I could come up with in the moment – please feel free to help me come up with a better or more descriptive designation!) we are in this thing together. The fact that we are is no accident in my way of thinking. God put us, this group of very diverse people, together to figure out how to do the work of God and then to go and do it in God’s world today. And just like the legs of a three-legged stool, each group has its own strength and function. Still, without the other two groups, there is no sturdy and strong foundation for this community or this mission to which God has called us. I do not know anybody, myself included of course, who doesn’t have a **“bent”** toward one of the three foci above. That being the case, the key would be determining how to best work together toward our goal. That would start with a suspension of the assessment that any one focus is more important than the other two, a phenomenon that is easier for us humans to talk about than to actually do. It will also take a lot of prayers for humility and lots of **“listening without an agenda,”** again an easier thing for us to talk about than to actually do. Finally, I believe we have to be willing to give up terms and descriptions such as **“right”** and **“wrong”** when we are having conversations about where we are being called to go. Maybe we could replace them with something like **“Could you say a little more about what you mean?”**

My prayer for us is that we continue to have the serious conversations about what’s next, listening to God and listening to each other. May God bless us and keep us on a steady foundation!

Pastor Joe

BMCC

JULY 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	3	4 	5 SUMMER CHOIR PRACTICES 7:30 PM TODAY & AUGUST 2ND	6	7	1ST / 8TH \ / \ /
9 ELDERS MEET 8:15 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM CONSENSUS MEETING	10	11	12	13	14 RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE BMCC 1:00 – 6:00 PM	15 STEPPING STONES 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
16 SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	17	18	19	20	21	22 BMCC FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST THE ROANOKER 9:00 AM
23 SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM	24	25	26	27	28	
30 EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STUDY @ 9:15 AM WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM						