Over the years I have put aside certain writings, whether poetry or prose, that caught my attention and moved me at the time. I found myself looking at such Lent and Easter files recently, and came upon this poem from William Leety, once a regular minister contributor to a Presbyterian periodical. I share it with you in the context not only of the Easter season, but of a time that has seen a flurry of deaths and funerals. The question, below, is salient.

Stone Rollers
By William Leety

"Who will roll away the stone for us?"*  
Neither surgeon nor radiologist  
Not the President of Congress, a Cruise or Patriot missile, not Gen. Schwarzkopf  
And not the counselor or divorce attorney or survivors’ group  
Not pastor, nor funeral director, nor tour guide on the getaway cruise after the funeral  
Not our parents, nor our children or lack of children  
And not boss or secretary, neither the conference in Honolulu or New York  
Not prayer, nor television preacher, nor the singing of George Beverly Shea or Mick Jagger  
And not the high school teacher nor Stephen Hawking  
Nor employment agency  
Who will roll away the stone?  
Not a glacier, greenhouse effect nor stopping the greenhouse effect  
Not a ‘front-end loader’ nor Mike Mulligan’s steam shovel  
Not Sisyphus and not Prudential  
Nor John Baptist, Moses or Elijah  
Not Martha’s apple pie nor Mary’s wide-eyed devotion  
Not Archimedes even  
Who will roll away the stone?  
Not amniocentesis nor the Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Nor exercise and high fiber  
Not the nursing home or home health aids  
Not new budget, new spouse or old  
Not solar power, EPA or Greenpeace  
Not touch, nor silence, and surely no word  
Surely no word  
Who will roll away the stone?  
Not annunciation nor the Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Nor exercise and high fiber  
Not the nursing home or home health aids  
Not new budget, new spouse or old  
Not solar power, EPA or Greenpeace  
Not touch, nor silence, and surely no word  
Surely no word  
Who will roll away the stone for us?"

*Mark 16:3b
April 5 Easter

What might have been, and raises questions we all have about a day that changed the course of history.

Aramathea to wait on that day? What were they waiting for?

What must it have been like for the Centurion, the Women at the Cross, the Skeptic, or Joseph of Arimathea to wait on that day? What were they waiting for?

Leading Up To Easter

April 2 – 5:30 PM Maundy Thursday Seder - A Middle Eastern dinner and Seder Service. As parishioners partake of their meal, they contemplate and participate in a service at each table. The night is complemented by special music. Please RSVP by calling Church office. 898-5406

April 3 – 7:00PM An original Janet Speer Drama for Good Friday called “The Wait.”

What must it have been like for the Centurion, the Women at the Cross, the Skeptic, or Joseph of Arimathea to wait on that day? What were they waiting for? With music and drama, this is a glimpse of what might have been, and raises questions we all have about a day that changed the course of history.

April 5 Easter – Bring flowers today to the 11 o’clock service to put on the cross on the lawn

7:00AM - Sunrise Service at Grandfather Home for Children; Reservoir Hill
11:00 AM - Easter Sunday Service

Faith Seekers’ Class

About the Faith Seekers Class: Explore various issues, using music, video and conversation.

Food: Coffee and snacks provided (usually)

Money: Receives an offering for good causes and needs

Time: 9:30 AM

Where: Upstairs in Room 215 (above Feild’s office)

Lessons for April: Faith Seekers

April 5: Easter Sunday; No class so you can attend sunrise service

April 12-26: What happened after the Resurrection?

Faith Seekers: Janet and Allen Speer will be attending a conference on how churches can help those with mental challenges. The Faith Seekers Sunday School class is in charge of this initiative. If you have any feedback, ideas, please send to Janet Speer. speerj@lmc.edu

American Red Cross Blood Drive

BEPC sponsors the American Red Cross Blood Drives several times a year. The next one will be held Thursday April 9th from 2:00-6:30pm in the King Fellowship Hall.

Sponsoring a blood drive is an important community responsibility and helps many people in this community. Please mark your calendars and if you are able, please help the Red Cross reach their goal! If you want to make an appointment you can go to www.redcrossblood.org and put in sponsor code: Lees-McRae or call Nurse Carl at 898-8862.

Presbytery News

Presbytery Women to Have Spring Gathering

The Women of Western North Carolina Presbytery will hold their annual Spring Gathering at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church on April 25. Dr. Heath Rada, Moderator of our General Assembly, will be one of the speakers. Rev. Kristy Farmer, associate pastor of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church of Asheville, will introduce the 2015 women’s Horizon Study guide, “Come to the Waters.”

Each woman of every church in our presbytery is a member of the Presbyterian Women’s organization. This group provides support and comfort to others as we work in mission for justice and peace while striving to build an inclusive, caring community toward building God’s kingdom.

Anyone interested in attending the Spring Gathering can call Claire Fortune who is the contact for BEPC.
Permanent Funds Ministry

Your church’s Permanent Funds Ministry is not only alive and well, but working hard to ensure that the permanent finances of our church stretch well into future decades. This doesn’t mean the annual budget, but rather providing additional permanent mission and property preservation monies. Please take a minute and look at the illustration showing gifting categories. Then the next time you see McNair Tornow, Leslie Carter, Jim Swinkola, Dorothy Pullese or Ron McGowan, please let them know your thoughts and feelings about endowment giving in our church. There is one gift on the books now, and the goal is to add five more gift promises to the ledger before Christmas.

Permanent Funds Ministry

Missions:
- Local, presbytery, national or international

- Unique Ministries: hunger relief, educational, medical

Capital Projects:
- “Stick and motor” with a 90+ year life

Building Maintenance:
- Improvements with a useful life of less than 20 years

One Great Hour of Sharing, a Blessing in Connectedness

An all-time coldest 30-day stretch in northern America, including over eight feet of snow, is ten times the average for the period of time. We have all heard it over and over, but probably few of us have thought about the resulting difficulties for many Presbyterian churches which have not budgeted for these extreme unexpected expenses.

Repeated storms have had catastrophic impacts on our congregations as they face structural damage, huge problems of snow-removal, establishing alternative worship locations, and support for added utility costs for members and communities. Additionally, flooding caused by melting snow is continuing.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), funded largely by One Great Hour of Sharing, is responding to the Synod of the Northeast’s request for $300,000 to help alleviate these unforeseen expenses. PDA is also sending response teams to determine the best ways to meet ongoing needs of 33 congregations and 7 immigrant fellowships, to help these churches resume services and to provide emotional and spiritual care to the these church families.

BEPC has consistently supported these helping efforts through our donations to this Easter offering. We share in this ministry through the connected nature of our denomination.

Luana Anderson

Luana Anderson is known to our church family for her kind heart and gracious helpfulness. Someone has said that “Luana came here ready to work whenever and wherever she was needed.” Whether it has been sharing her American-Italian cooking delicacies, hosting fellowship meals, assisting with the design of the recent kitchen make-over, or keeping young children in the Sunday morning nursery, she is there with her welcoming smile.

Friends love the story of how she and her husband, George’s romance began. While George was serving in Viet Nam, he wrote to a Florida newspaper. Luana’s mom answered his letter and the two of them became penpals. When George came home, he went to meet her mom, but also met Luana, and the rest is history which has resulted in a marriage of almost 50 years.

They moved to the mountains some years ago for a quieter pace, discovered our church and say the friendliness is what initially drew them to be part of our congregation. Luana says one of their biggest blessings is their five grandkids who all live close by. And we are blessed to have such a special person (and her family) as part of BEPC.

--Tony Fortune

Sarah Manning

With her well known wonderful sense of humor, Sarah reports that when she decided to move to the NC mountains her “pesky” first cousins of Eastern NC required her to be trained by watching Charles Kuralt’s “North Carolina is My Home”. Her brother Larry, who also attends BEPC and who was exempt from the training, still lives in Moultrie, GA, where Sarah was born. He comes to visit for three months each year.

Sarah moved to Seven Devils in 1995 after retiring from Christian Children’s Fund (now called Child Fund). She had been the Director of Programs and was responsible for development of service programs for families and children in 20 countries. Prior to that time, she lived in NW GA as a welfare worker for DSS and later as a social worker for a program funded by Appalachian Regional Commission which demonstrated the use of day training centers for mentally challenged children as an alternative for institutional placement. Years before, after graduating from Mercer University, Sarah had volunteered for the Peace Corps. She served with a teaching group in Cebu, Philippines, who trained elementary and middle school teachers in techniques of teaching English as a second language. After returning to the states, she attended Tulane University, School of Social Work.

The Rev. Dr. Odell Smith suggested that Sarah attend BEPC as he was aware of her dissatisfaction with the Baptist Church where she was a member. Sarah says he was wise because this church has contributed to her spiritual growth and allowed her to exercise her faith in ways that she had not experienced before. She added that she has learned to love members of this congregation even as they have tolerated her “idiosyncrasies”.

All of her life Sarah has sung in school and church choirs. As a member of the Appalachian Chorale, which has several BEPC choir members, Sarah was invited to join the BEPC choir. Other current activities in which she is involved include: Town of Seven Devils—Board of Adjustment; High Country ABC Board; Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee for Avery County; and Feeding Avery Families.

- George Anderson
Behind the Scenes

Sharing Her Talent

If you have a flower garden or a rhododendron bush in bloom, you just might get a call from Deka: "Could we use some of your flowers for our church?" Deka Tate has been in charge of our sanctuary flowers for a number of years and says she gets them from everywhere - she grows many varieties and admits to scavenging from wide-spread sources, friends' yards, local meadows, anywhere she spies some colorful blooms which might enhance the beauty of our church.

Deka tells that many years ago, Marietta Breidenthall (a former member), gave her basic instruction on arranging flowers. That information coupled with Deka's artistic talent, have served our congregation well as she combines variety, color, and creative skill in making lovely arrangements for us each week.

"We have a Flower Calendar in the hallway near the nursery," she states. "We welcome memorials, flower gifts of honor, or just offers of flowers anyone has available. I thoroughly enjoy making God's house pretty."

Our congregation is thankful to this talented artist for sharing her gift of creating beauty.

The Three R's

Rest, Reading and Relaxation Room

The session approved transforming one of our upstairs rooms into a lounge. The idea is to provide a space suitable for the following:

1. An adult could lie down, if necessary
2. People could read and relax (e.g. between services in the summer, for men singing at both)
3. LMC students could relax between classes
4. "Grooms' Room", while the bridal party primp's in the parlor
5. Classroom / Meeting Room, as needed
6. Whatever!

We anticipate furnishing the room with the following items:

1. Full length sofa or Day Bed
2. Two Club Chairs
3. Side Tables (2 - 3)
4. Table or Floor Lamps (3 - 4)
5. Conference Table
6. Computer (Laptop or Desktop, refurbished) with Printer
7. Bookcase with books and magazines

All of these items could be moved in the event that we needed the space for children's classroom, at some point in the future. Some of these items will be captured from other places in the church. The others will be acquired by Nancy Clark, through her usual, seemingly inexhaustible sources of previously loved furniture. It is our estimate (really Nancy's!) that this project can be accomplished for approximately $1,500. As there is no money budgeted for this, we are looking for other sources for the funds, including donations. If you have questions, or would like to help, please speak to either Nancy or me. We certainly welcome your thoughts, suggestions and involvement. We'd love to have it ready to go before this summer.

- Dick Larson

Art in the Sanctuary

We have two artists, Robert Pullease and Deka Tate, who will be displaying art work in April.

Robert Pullease

"I've always been interested in woodworking, but it wasn't until we moved to Banner Elk that I discovered I had a love of scroll saw work. I started making ornaments using a cookie cutter as a template and moved on to pictures, mainly reflecting my time as a Marine. From the beginning I judged my skill by the size of the scrap pile. As my skills grew my scrap pile got smaller. I still look forward each year to discover a pattern for that year's Christmas ornament. Lately I have been making pictures of the pets friends have lost using their photo and running it through a computer program to produce a template. This picture, "Thy Will Be Done", is one of the most complicated ones I have done, taking 12 hours to cut and finish. Only one other "Uncommon Valor" depicting the flag raising on Iwo Jima took longer, 28 hours. The wood is 1/8 thick Baltic Birch plywood. The black backing is felt for the 3D effect. I attach the template to the wood and drill access holes for the saw blade in each area to be removed. Each separate cut out requires disconnecting the blade, moving it to a new drilled hole and reconnecting. For safety sake, so I don't ruin delicate parts I cut the center first and work toward the edge. The finished product is stained Golden Pecan and framed. Usually I frame my work but this proved too large and the subject needed a professional framer to highlight it.

Bible verse for meditation:

Mark 14:36
Father," he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Deka Tate

"Many years ago, I was first looking around my new yard and saw an unusual group of flowers. The identity I found in a very old wildflower book of my Mother's. Charmed by its name, "Jack-In-The Pulpit", I painted it. Margaret Tufts Neal saw it and wanted one so now there are two. This is a very old rendition of the wildflower. I moved to the mountains forty-five years past and reared my three sons. The youngest was born in Banner Elk. The oldest two went to kindergarten in our church and all three were baptized in our church. Rearing children and public service have always filled my agenda. I was Mayor for twelve years and mayor pro tem for five years. I am vice-president of the B.E. Chamber, a founder of the B.E. Heritage Foundation, member of the town Board of Adjustment, and an elder of our church. (These are a few of my favorite things!) Needless to say, my heart belongs to Banner Elk and its valley is a part of me now with all of its spiritual might. My name encompasses my past. Virginia (Deka) Lee Lambert Owen Tate.

Bible verse for meditation

Luke 12:27
Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."
So, eternal life. He loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have life. Truly, he has told you. The gift of God is eternal life, and he gave God himself; he died for all, so that those who turn to God may receive forgiveness of those sins. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. And one day the Lord will say, “Come, inherit the kingdom I have prepared for you.”

On April 11, there will be a Centennial Prayer Breakfast at the Best Western, beginning at 8 a.m. Whether you worry about world turmoil, the state of the union, problems in our area, or the burdens of your heart, come exercise the power of prayer with friends and neighbors. Several local pastors (including Field) will lead the program, and Dave Calvert will bring a special presentation on OASIS. If you are interested in more information or in volunteering, please contact Marcie Ownbey at 828-264-1532. Thank you for helping to meet the needs of those in crisis situations.

OASIS provides services for those in need:
- telephone crisis line, 24 hours a day/7 days a week
- crisis counseling
- emergency shelter
- case management
- medical advocacy
- job preparation
- life skills education/counseling
- OASIS also has many needs:
  - volunteers for crisis line (can be done from one’s home with total confidentiality on part of caller AND the person receiving call which is then referred to a counselor on call)
  - support for funding from Avery Commissioners for emergency housing in this county
  - venues for OASIS presentation to “spread the word” about their services in Avery County
  - volunteers to accompany clients to court when appropriate
  - wish list of needed items including clothing, shoes, towels, diapers, waterproof jackets and coats, toiletries, first aid supplies, etc.

Our church has included OASIS in our budget this year with a donation of $1800. If you are interested in more information or in volunteering, please contact Marcie Ownbey at 828-264-1532. Thank you for helping to meet the needs of those in crisis situations.

Church Happenings

JULIETS

Thirteen Juliets enjoyed lunching together at Cann Rahn Bay on March 11. Mark your calendar for our next get together on Wednesday, April 8. Time is 12:30pm. The place is Kay’s Kitchen in Newland, next to McDonald’s and across from Carolina BBQ. Hope to see you there. Please let us know if you would like to join us. There is a sign up sheet in the reception area of the office. You may also call the church office 898-5406 to make a reservation.

Faith Seekers Freezer Campaign

Freezer Campaign has become a wonderful outreach. Please know that if you are visiting someone and wish to pick up a meal from the freezer, that’s what they are for. The meals are not “assigned” and you can take one at any time. If you have leftover food and want to share it with someone in need, the freezer is located in the utility room in the back corner of the Fellowship Hall. Doors appear locked but give a good pull.

Dear BEPC Members,

I wanted to thank all of my church family for all of the prayers, cards, and phone calls during my recent health challenges. My back pain has improved and I no longer have to wear a brace all the time. I am trying to adapt to the vision in only one eye which has not always been easy, but with God’s help I have managed very well. Thank you once again for the support from everyone.

- Enid Tatje

The Bible Story

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. (John 14:1) Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, and soar on wings like eagles. (Isa 40:31) He will restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. (1 Pet 5:10)

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Cor 2:9) He has prepared a heavenly city for us, because this world is not our permanent home. (Heb 11:16, Heb 13:14) We are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus lives. (Phil 3:20) God has made a place for us; we will have a house in heaven, made for us by God himself. (John 14:2, 2 Cor 5:1)

The gift of God is eternal life, and He gave you eternal life when He raised Christ from the dead. (Rom 6:23, Eph 2:5) Very truly He has told you, “anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life”. (John 3:36, John 6:47) If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

So, we have a priceless inheritance, an inheritance that is kept in heaven for us, pure and undefiled, one that will never perish, spoil, or fade. (1 Pet 1:4) And one day the Lord will say, “Come, inherit the Kingdom I have prepared for you”. (Matt 25:34) And we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps 23)

Church Happenings

April Birthdays

1. Rad Moeller
2. Jane Stephenson
3. Cody Shook
4. Deka Tate
5. Matthew Wimberly
6. David Tate
7. Carolyn Jones
8. Jerry Olsen
9. Mark Polderman
10. Bud Hahn
11. Jesse Vergara
12. Harold Durham
13. Nancy Dosher
14. Wendy Moeller
15. Pat Samples
16. Larry Weed
17. Larry Kennedy
18. Katy Fletcher
19. Sadie Prince
20. Donna Dicks
21. Martha Key

Church Happenings

OASIS

At our most recent fellowship meal, our congregation heard a brief presentation on OASIS, given by Marcie Ownbey, director of this program which provides help for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Avery County. OASIS has been providing these services since 1978, with offices housed in Boone. Today, there is a local office at Cannon Hospital in Linville which gives more easily accessible assistance for those in our county.

OASIS provides services for those in need:
- telephone crisis line, 24 hours a day/7 days a week
- crisis counseling
- emergency shelter
- case management
- medical advocacy
- job preparation
- life skills education/counseling

OASIS also has many needs:
- volunteers for crisis line (can be done from one’s home with total confidentiality on part of caller AND the person receiving call which is then referred to a counselor on call)
- support for funding from Avery Commissioners for emergency housing in this county
- venues for OASIS presentation to “spread the word” about their services in Avery County
- volunteers to accompany clients to court when appropriate
- wish list of needed items including clothing, shoes, towels, diapers, waterproof jackets and coats, toiletries, first aid supplies, etc.

Our church has included OASIS in our budget this year with a donation of $1800. If you are interested in more information or in volunteering, please contact Marcie Ownbey at 828-264-1532. Thank you for helping to meet the needs of those in crisis situations.

Kiwanis Club of Banner Elk

Let us Pray…

In celebration of 100 years of community service, the Kiwanis Club of Banner Elk is sponsoring a Centennial Prayer Breakfast April 11 (Saturday) beginning at 8 a.m. at the Best Western. Whether you worry about world turmoil, the state of the union, problems in our area, or the burdens of your heart, come exercise the power of prayer with friends and neighbors. Several local pastors (including Field) will lead the program, and Dave Calvert will bring a special presentation on OASIS. If you are interested in more information or in volunteering, please contact Marcie Ownbey at 828-264-1532. Thank you for helping to meet the needs of those in crisis situations.

Kiwanis Club of Banner Elk
A Formal Request

A number of people from our church sing in the Appalachian Chorale, a group of approximately 100 members, that is based at ASU and that sings primarily classical choral music. Roughly half of the singers come from the community, while the remainder are ASU students. Concert attire for the performers is a long sleeved white blouse and long black skirt (ankle length) with black hose and shoes for the ladies. The men wear black tuxedoes with the traditional white shirt, black tie and cummerbund, black studs and cufflinks, plus black shoes and socks. For most of the community members this is not a problem. Some of the students, however, don't have these items, and it is a financial challenge for them to buy these items. So we're looking for help. If you, or someone you know, have any of these items that you no longer require, we would love to put them to good use. We are trying to set up a small lending wardrobe to assist these students. If any of you feel you might be of assistance, please let me know. I'll arrange to pick the items up, and transport them to Boone. Then, please, come and enjoy our concerts. They're free, and take place on the last Tuesday evening of the Fall and Spring semesters. Music enriches all of our souls. Thanks for your help.

-Dick Larson

BEPC Preschoolers Attend Palm Sunday Service at BEPC!