

Editor's Foreword

This issue of *Journal for Preachers* is filled with a smorgasbord of biblical scholarship and homiletical reflection which we hope will be of assistance to you as you prepare for Lent. We are so grateful for the contributions of a wide range of contributors—most of whom serve congregations or in specialized ministries, and represent a range of ages and experience. You will appreciate their biblical scholarship and also their capacity to have grasped the various emotions of this season.

In addition, Tom Long—a writer for *JP* across the years and a friend and mentor to many of us—offers a splendid tribute to the life and witness of the late Carl Frederick Buechner, who died at the age of 96 at his longtime home in Rupert, Vermont, on August 15, 2022. Frederick Buechner, a novelist, essayist, and Presbyterian preacher, was a model for so many, and Tom Long's assessment of his contributions is framed within earlier years—the forties and fifties—of the American pulpit which were, Tom notes, “like classical art before impressionism.” After the tumult of the 1970's, Tom takes the measure of both Fred Craddock's and Frederick Buechner's contributions and makes the claim that Craddock was the “craftsman of the new homiletic” and Buechner was its poet laureate. His language was so rich and imaginative, and Tom Long is right when he states that “as long as there are anxious Christians, feeling alienated from the high doctrines of Christianity and sometimes distant claims of scripture, there will always be grateful preachers eagerly quoting Buechner and telling of an anxious chain-smoking Pontius Pilate and an Abraham, the tenacious Jew at the neighborhood shul with soup on his tie at the bar mitzvah.”

So dive inside these pages and enjoy their creativity. As I close this foreword, I want to lift up a quote from Amy Miracle's sermon offered for this issue: “Shiny Enough: Facing Envy.” Amy notes that Jesus was a small fish in a tiny pond, what with his dozen followers and modest crowds. “If there was an ancient world equivalent of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people, Jesus wouldn't have even been considered for the list.” “Yet,” she goes on, “we make the claim that God lived in his life in an unprecedented way...because he allowed God to dwell in him fully. He chose to embrace his actual, limited, challenging, beautiful life and invited God into every corner of it.”

“This is our Lenten project this year: to try to do a little bit of that, to be honest about our temptations, our yearnings, our restlessness, our dissatisfaction.” So may it be, friends. Enjoy this issue and preach with power and authority!

Ted Wardlaw