



# THE Ken Mawr CHRONICLE

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The newsletter of Ken Mawr United Presbyterian Church  
“*Declaring God’s grace & Demonstrating God’s love*”

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Nathan Drake writes in *Reformed Worship*: “Some parts of the Bible tend to get all the spotlight—the Gospels, Paul’s letters, the Psalms, Genesis, Isaiah. But it’s rare that we hear the names of Nahum, Habakkuk, or Obadiah on a Sunday morning. The 12 books known as “the minor prophets” are often left out of morning worship because of the harsh nature of the words and ideas they contain. Inside these 12 books we find some of the Old Testament’s most shocking images and terrifying judgments: slavery, exile, genocide, sexual debauchery, wanton immorality. In other words, a minor prophets coloring book would probably not be a bestseller in a children’s bookstore.”

The words spoken by the minor prophets are specific words to a specific people. Israel is being devastated by war and is in the grip of idolatry. God sends a string of prophets to plead with Israel so they will denounce evil and turn back toward God. But amid the sorrow, we find God’s great grace: an unconditional love for his people and a desire to save them from their own wickedness and the wickedness of the world around them.

The minor prophets live in Israel’s “dark night before the dawn.” They speak to Israel in the time before the rescuer comes, when everything is looking fairly hopeless. After the minor prophets conclude, God’s people are left with 400 years of silence—a silence that is finally broken by the birth of the Messiah.

Although it’s tempting to gloss over these difficult books, we should resist that easy way. Throughout the story of the Old Testament we see the world’s need for a Savior. The books of the minor prophets represent the urgency of that need. To be honest, alongside and inseparable from some of God’s harshest judgments we will hear some of God’s greatest promises of mercy.

While we could read a few of these books in their entirety in worship (the whole book of Obadiah is only 21 verses), most are too long for a typical hour-long worship service. Unless there are some of you that clamor for lengthening the 8:30 and 11:00 AM services by about 30 or 40 minutes, we will use as much of the whole text as possible. I also encourage you to read through the whole book on a day when you have the time. The longest of the minor prophets is 14 chapters, so it shouldn’t take more than an hour.

I’ll be preaching from select verses that are the most representative of the message of that prophet, and we may use other portions of the book throughout the service. Amos 5:4-14 makes a good call to worship and Amos 5:18-20 a fitting prayer of confession. The truth is, the minor prophets have a major message for us to hear this fall. I have a sincere hope of worshipping with you very soon, and I remain...

Yours in Christ Jesus,

*Pastor Karl*