

December 17, 2020



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Pastor's Corner

Rev. Mark Hinchcliff
December 16, 2020

“Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later saying, “what do these stones mean to you?” then you shall say, “because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off, so these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.” Joshua 4:6-7

Around my neck I wear two different designs of crosses, and a medallion of half a heart. Each were gifts to me from members of my family. The medallion reads, “Together or apart, God is with us”. I think I can count on one hand the number of times in thirty-five years that necklace has ever been off my person. I don't wear it as jewelry, I wear as a means of remembrance to tell the story of what each piece means to me. On my right wrist is a bracelet comprised of fishing leaders. This is a reminder of a spiritual leadership event called the “Walk to Emmaus”. The bracelet reminds others around the world to identify other believers in Christ and to tell the story of God's presence then and now.

Christmas this year, 2020, is a time of remembrance of the fresh hope that the birth of Jesus brings to us all in the gift of a fresh start on life and relationships forever. One of my favorite traditions is bringing the family together to decorate now two trees each year. What may take no time for some to decorate a tree, may take our family days to complete. You see we all take turns carefully unwrapping each ornament which sparks one of us to tell the story of what memory each one evokes. If one may have been too young at the time to remember that story, it has now been passed on to the next generation when we're gone on to be with God.

The Holy Scriptures, like the memories of our lives, are just waiting to tell the stories to new listeners so the Word never ends. God's Word as we've seen during the pandemic will never be silenced and neither should your witness to those memories. Joshua 4 remembers the story of God's chosen crossing the Jordan on dry land into “The Promised

Land". Stones were left behind to memorialize the tribes of God's promise. But without the story, those stones are just rocks. Without your story of God's presence in your lives, your life may go unnoticed. In your actions or in your speech tell your story today.

Blessed be your days,

Pastor Mark

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Fourth Sunday of Advent

Please join us on Sunday as we continue the Christmas season with the **Fourth Sunday of Advent**. We will be live on Facebook at 10:00 a.m.

We want each and every one of you to remain safe and healthy during the Christmas season into the new year. We pray that the new year will bring hope to us all.

homily by Pastor Mark Hinchcliff

Scripture readings: Isaiah 9:2-3, Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 2:1-7, 8-15



Christmas Service: Live Nativity Scene

The Live Nativity Scene will take place at **6:00 pm Wednesday Dec. 23, 2020** outside FPCM under the portico. You may participate in several different ways:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Drive up in your car and listen with your windows down.
Drive up and tune your radio to a posted frequency.
You may tune in for a Facebook livestream which will be offered through a member invitation.

The event will be based upon the Scriptural birth narrative, modern day Christian authors, and Pastor Mark's Christmas message. Please join us for this special event!

Christmas Joy Offering



 CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. Contributions go towards developing and sustaining our leaders. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's perfect gift of Jesus Christ. This offering is an appropriate response to nurture members of the Body of Christ in their time of need; funds of support are used to develop our future leaders and provide financial assistance to current and retired church workers. Half of the Christmas Joy Offering is distributed to the [Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions of the PC\(USA\)](#). The other half of this offering provides leadership development and education at [Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.](#)

The [Special Offerings of the PC\(USA\)](#) are celebrations of specific ways God has been made known to us. Each is connected to a season of the church year and mandated by the General Assembly to help the whole Church join together in response to God's grace. They represent the largest, collective way Presbyterians come together to work for a better world. The Offerings actively engage congregations in ministries of compassion, justice, hunger, Christian formation, education, peacemaking and global witness. We join other congregations in making an impact on the world.

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. How may each of us honor God's perfect gift of his Son? What a loaded question to ask during Stewardship season! With all that God has given to us, how do you respond? How can you respond to the Love of Christ as you give and receive any and every gift this Christmas season?

Let us ask the Lord to teach us how to best respond as we read the Bible and pray for one another. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place. We need each other and your giving, participation and feedback is a gift! Leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. God designed us to be social creatures, and our culture works most efficiently when we each turn to Jesus Christ and follow Him. We are blessed to have many mature believers at First Presbyterian Church who love, encourage and lead us.

Contributions for the Christmas Joy Special Offering can be made at www.presbyterianmission.org/christmasjoy or mailed in to the church office.

Reminder: Please turn in your pledge cards if you haven't done so yet. Let us be the church together and respond to God's love and grace for each of us.

Earth Care



The news on the environmental front is often depressive. This might lighten our thoughts:

"Last year, the USDA said for the first time in 150 years that there were more farms in America instead of fewer. I think that's the single most hopeful statistic I know."

— Bill McKibben

The Earth Care group is hopeful of a productive day on **December 19th**. Watch for forthcoming news.

Upcoming Events



Christmas Music Program

Sunday, December 20 during the **10 am** worship service.

Live Nativity

Wednesday, December 23 at **6 pm**.

Virtual Poinsettias



Every year our sanctuary is decorated with poinsettias donated by members of the congregation in memory or in honor of loved ones. Due to the pandemic, we will not be buying flowers for the sanctuary, but you are invited to submit the names of those you would like to remember in this way.

Your name and the names of your loved ones will be printed in the bulletin, Steepleviews, on Facebook, and on our website from December 20th to January 3. It is not required, but if you would like to make a donation for your virtual poinsettia, all donations collected will be sent to the MHC Warming Center.

If you wish to designate virtual poinsettias, please provide the information below and mail it to the church office with your check (**if you are making a donation, please mark your check "Poinsettia"**). **Rita will also be sending the order form out via email so be on the lookout for that.**

1. Person(s) requesting virtual poinsettias
2. In honor or memory of (please indicate **"in honor of"** or **"in memory of"**)

Send to First Presbyterian Church, 1901 Patrick Henry Ave., Martinsville, VA 24112

Virtual Poinsettias

In Thanksgiving for/BY:

The FPC Family, **Anonymous**
Rob King, **Judith King**
Laura & Dewey Milton and
Daniel Stevens & Alexis Hoeflerlin, **Monica Stevens**
The Session, **Victoria Esarey**

In Loving Memory of/BY:

Jim Baker, **Nancy Baker**
Sonny Benfield, **Sue Benfield**

Jim Ford, **Sandra Ford**
Joe Hinchcliff, **Mark and Tracy Hinchcliff**
Anne R. Hollard, **Pearl R. Minter**
Lummie Morris, **Mark and Tracy Hinchcliff**
Randy and Andrew Stevens, **The Stevens Family**

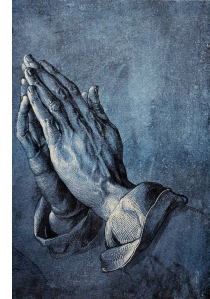
Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Doc Altizer, Carl and Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Mallory Hall-DeSantis (B. Tatum), Daniel Handy, Helen Hawkes, Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Regenia Noel (M. Stevens), Anne Peterson, Gene Stanley, persecuted Christians and all troops in defense of freedom throughout the world.

Please submit prayer requests to Rita in the church office, (276) 632-3431, office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org.



Please remember

Peanut Butter

Please stay safe, stay healthy

The new food item for First Presbyterian Church for the 4th quarter is **18 oz. peanut butter**. Please consider donating extra when you are able to get out and about as your donations will become more important than ever.

Hygiene Items - We are always in need of these items!

DECEMBER Dish Detergent, Deodorant, Laundry Detergent

**Items may be brought to church but please call the office to make sure Rita is there. Alternatively, you may drop off at Grace Network, Monday - Friday, 9-2 PM*

Blessings, Tracy

Youth Ministry

The Youth will be meeting on **Sunday afternoons at 12pm.** Grab a snack or lunch & join us on **Zoom!** If your middle or high school child would like to join us, please contact Sam at sam@peakspresbytery.org for an invite link to the Zoom meeting.

Presbytery of the Peaks

For updates and announcements, please click on the link below or copy and paste into your web browser:



[https://www.peakspresbytery.org/images/2020 Peaks Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf](https://www.peakspresbytery.org/images/2020%20Peaks%20Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf)

Our Mission

Share God's Love, Embrace Our Neighbors, Nurture Each Other

Printed copies of Steeple Views are available at church. Current and back issues are also on our website:

www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/page.cfm/topic/newsletter

Useful Links

FPC website: www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/ or www.fpcmartinsvilleVA.org/

FPC online directory: members.instantchurchdirectory.com/

FPC Facebook page: www.facebook.com/FPCMartinsvilleVA

Presbytery of the Peaks: www.peakspresbytery.org/

Presbyterian Church (USA): www.pcusa.org/

Daily Bible Readings: www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/daily/

Steeple Views is published. **DEADLINE** for submission of articles is Tuesday evening. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Sharon Kirby, Editor

steepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Church Office Phone: 276-632-3431

Our mailing address is:

First Presbyterian Church

1901 Patrick Henry Ave.

Martinsville, VA 24112

STAFF

Rev. Mark Hinchcliff, Pastor, pastor@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Sam Smith, Youth and Family Ministries Director, sam@peakspresbytery.org

Cynthia Dobrinski, Music Director & Organist, 276-734-0212

Rita Bateman, Secretary/Office Manager, office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Drema Austin, Bookkeeper, bookkeeper@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Carol Carter, Weekday School Director, wds@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Deborah Burgess, Contemporary Music Director, contemporarymusic@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

THE SESSION

Moderator: Rev. Mark Hinchcliff

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2020

Denny Casey: Christian Education

Ron Rebman: Administration

Kym Tatum: Fellowship

Class of 2021

Lynn Pritchett: Stewardship

Rob King: Facilities

Monica Stevens: Worship

Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Communications

Betty Hudson: Congregational Care

TRUSTEES

2020: Milton Davis, Duke Ferrell

2021: David Garland, Ed Linker

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

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