

December 22, 2021



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation
Elder Monica Stevens
December 22, 2021

A Song in the Air
Luke 2:9-14

There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.¹

There are many things that I look forward to every year during the Advent/Christmas season: lights, decorations, seasonal foods, favorite holiday movies, and get-togethers with friends and family (at least in non-pandemic years), lighting the Advent wreath, and the special emphasis of the liturgy leading up to and including the birth of Jesus. However, one of the things that really helps me find the Christmas spirit is the music. I love it all. I am definitely one of those people who tunes in to the All-Christmas All-the-Time stations at Thanksgiving and mourns a little when they go back to their regular programming December 26. Although, I do have to admit to some aural fatigue after the 97th broadcast of "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

For as long as I can remember, music has been a part of my Christmas celebration at home, at school, and at church. By the time I was in Kindergarten learning and performing Christmas music was just a normal part of what we did in school and at church. Also, I was lucky to grow up during a time when Christmas music specials on TV were numerous and much anticipated. I loved watching the lavishly staged numbers and hearing professional musicians perform songs I knew and loved.

Our church didn't have a Christmas Eve service, but we did all gather in the fellowship hall and then divide up into teams to go Christmas caroling throughout our church neighborhood. It was such fun singing and harmonizing favorite carols and such wonderful fellowship that we didn't seem to mind freezing our fingers and toes for the hour or two we were out in the cold. We could always warm our hands around steaming mugs of hot cocoa and tuck our feet up underneath us when we got

back to the church. When I was in college, our string group always played for Midnight Mass at a church near our school. Participating in welcoming the birth of our Savior with all of the pageantry and incense of High Mass was an ethereal experience for this Presbyterian girl and I relished every bit of it.

Have you ever noticed that in Luke's account of the angels visiting the shepherds, verse 13 says, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors.'" I will just bet that when you imagine that scene in your head, the angels are not speaking but singing. That could be because we are not that accustomed to speech choirs, or it could be because our minds automatically switch over to the glorious section of Handel's *Messiah* based on this text. A multitude of angels announcing Jesus' birth should be every bit as spectacular and wondrous as the news they are announcing, so nothing but marvelous music will do, at least in my mind. The spoken word reaches us on an intellectual level, but putting words to music allows the meaning of the words to encompass us in a sublime way that penetrates to the depths of our beings. I imagine that the shepherds not only heard the angels, but felt their song pulsing through every cell in their bodies. Music, especially singing, engages us body, mind, and soul.

As much as I would like the experience, I doubt that I will encounter an angel chorus in this plane of existence, but a congregation singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful," "Joy to the World," and "Angels We Have Heard on High" has the power lift my heart and soul in exuberant praise to God. Singing other Christmas carols such as "Silent Night," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" have the power to transport me straight to the manger to contemplate the wondrous mystery and blessing of the incarnation—God with Us in the form of a vulnerable human baby. In the excitement and bustle of this season, take the time to hear, feel, and be moved by the music of the season. Music is one God's creations, and God can and does speak to us through this gift. Please join us for our service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve at 5:00 PM, and then again for the morning service on the 26th when we can join our voices in worship, prayer, and praise as we welcome our newborn King. To the glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Amen.

1|Josiah G. Holland, 1872

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The Church is Open for In-Person Worship Service!

The safety of our congregation and community are our highest priority. In light of increasing infections due to the Delta variant and in order to follow state and local guidelines and CDC recommendations, **we strongly recommend that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth while anywhere inside the church and sanctuary.**

The church office will open for limited appointments. Please call to schedule. Please enter at the narthex for Sunday worship and during the week use the back door at the portico.



A Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols will be Friday, December 24 at 5:00 p.m.



Please join us for the first Sunday after Christmas either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

"Christmas in the Light of Day"

Based upon Luke 2:1-20 and John 1:1-4, 14



Attention all Elders: We are now ready and able to start our Extended Table ministry once again!

We serve communion to shut-ins on **the first Sunday** in the month and to King's Grant residents on **the first Monday**.

We are asking all Elders who are interested in this ministry, to contact Nancy Davis at davistwo@comcast.net or by phone at [634-1403](tel:634-1403). Please indicate which day or days you want to serve. There will be a training session on Sunday **December 12th** right after church in the Session room.

Remember "Once an Elder always an Elder"

Virtual Poinsettias



A total of \$815 was collected for the M-HC Warming Shelter through virtual poinsettias.

In Thanksgiving for:

Rita Bateman, *Milt and Nancy Davis*

Mark Hinchcliff, *Judy King*

Laura and Dewey Milton, Daniel Stevens and Alexis Hoeflerlin, *Monica Stevens*

Ruby Pace, *Bonny, Farrell and Dyer Pace*

Nanette Smith, *Bonny, Farrell and Dyer Pace*

Joe, Susan and Sam Smith, *Bonny, Farrell and Dyer Pace*

In Loving Memory of:

Bob Abercrombie, *John and Anne Abercrombie*
Chris Abercrombie, *John and Anne Abercrombie*
Doc Altizer, *Johnny and Ashby Pinkard*
Doc Altizer, Laura Buffkin, Colleen Dallas, Cynthia Dobrinski, Buck Flythe, Clara Hartley, Helen Hawkes, Reed Moore, Jim Murray, Bill Plonk, Gene Stanley, Marie Thompson, and Vicky "Sarah" Wells,
Marjorie Dunn
Jim Baker, *Nancy Baker*
Laura Buffkin, *Carrie Buffkin*
Martha Davis, *Robert Davis*
Walter W. "Buck" Flythe, *Helen H. Flythe*
Harriet, Travis, Paul, Bill and Alison Mattox, *Anne Lackey*
Melissa DeVault McGrath, *Joe and Jerri DeVault*
Reed Moore, *Milt and Nancy Davis*
Jim Murray, *Judy King*
Ed Pace, *Bonny, Farrell and Dyer Pace*
James and Ruth Richardson, *Pearl Minter*
Kenneth Smith, *Bonny, Farrell and Dyer Pace*
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Snow & Mr. and Mrs. F.S. DeVault, *Joe and Jerri DeVault*
Inez Spencer, *Pam Rakes*
Andrew and Randy Stevens, *Monica Stevens*
Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Walker, Jr., *Betty Hudson*



King's Grant Christmas Parade is Thursday, December 16 at 4:00 PM and is open to residents, Families, Staff, and Community. Decorated vehicles or golf carts are encouraged. There will be event signs posted for outside participants to follow to the starting point upon screening of

temperature at the guard house. Due to COVID-19 precautions, we ask that all outside participants remain in your vehicle for the duration of the parade and depart the campus directly following the event unless you are intending to visit with a loved one. In that case, you will need to fill out a travel form at the guard house and check in with the receptionist at the front desk beforehand. **As a courtesy, please contact [276-634-1000](tel:276-634-1000) or email etoler@kingsgrant.cc to RSVP.**

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. **Christmas Joy envelopes will be available in the pews now through Dec. 19.**

The church office will be closed Thursday and Friday December 23 and 24 for Christmas.



THE HEART THAT GREW THREE SIZES
FINDING FAITH IN THE STORY OF **THE GRINCH**

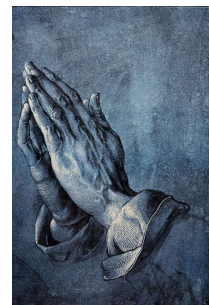
Sunday November 28 - Sunday December 19
Youth & Adult Classes at 9am
Classes meet in person (or you can join on zoom)
Contact Sam with questions sam@peakspresbytery.org

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Carl Bishop, Family of Bob Abercrombie (John's brother), Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Judy Epperly (Nancy Baker), Daniel Handy, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Anne Peterson, Scott Stevens (M. Stevens), Bruce Thomas (M. Stevens), Carl Utley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski (Susan Pilson), 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](tel:2766323431), office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org.

Congregational Care and Fellowship

If you are in need of prayer, a meal, transportation, etc...due to a death in the family or the birth of a baby, please reach out to the Congregational Care and Fellowship committee by contacting Lynn Pritchett at [276 252-6068](tel:2762526068).

Please remember **Canned Soup**



The 4th quarter food donation item is ****canned soup****
(please NO tomato**)**.

The 1st quarter 2022 food donation item is **Baking Mix (small) or Flour**



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!

**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*



Steeple Views Reminder

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Steeple Views is published weekly on Thursdays. **DEADLINE** for submission of articles is Tuesday evening.

If you have information you want included in Steeple Views, **PLEASE SEND TO:** steepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org. If you send to another email address, the information may get lost and subsequently not included in the newsletter.

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Sharon Kirby, Editor

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

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/

Church Office Phone: 276-632-3431

Our mailing address is:

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Martinsville, VA 24112

STAFF

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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

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2021

Lynn Pritchett: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Rob King: Facilities

Monica Stevens: Worship

Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Stewardship and Communication

Betty Hudson: Christian Education

Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

TRUSTEES

2021: David Garland, Ed Linker

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

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