

**December 9, 2021**



# Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

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## **Devotional Meditation**

**Elder Monica Stevens**

**December 8, 2021**

Come and Worship!

Luke 1 & 2

It seems that everywhere we go, we are surrounded by sights and sounds that are particular to the holiday season leading up to Christmas. Even without young children at home I still love to see reindeer, Santas, brightly wrapped packages, Christmas trees, decorations, lights, wreaths, and uniquely decorated Christmas sweaters. I never tire of hearing the music of the season as it fills the air in stores, on the streets, and across the air waves. I enjoy all of the cultural trappings of the holidays, but what I most long for goes much deeper than candy canes and tinsel.

I long to hear Isaiah calling out across the centuries: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...For unto us a child is born..." "Arise, shine, for your light has come." I want to hear the angel Gabriel announce the coming births of John the Baptist and Jesus and feel the surprise, wonder, and awe that Elizabeth and Mary felt. With Mary I want to lift my heart and my voice to proclaim God's goodness and faithfulness as I ponder the coming birth of God's Son. I want to stand with Zechariah when, for the first time in nine months, he is able to speak and he praises God and prophesies the coming of our Savior and the role his own son will play to prepare the way for Jesus. I don't know how I could do it, but I would love to fly and sing with the angels, but also be a shepherd startled from my sleep by the angels' song. I long to visit the manger and kneel before the infant King, knowing that I was somehow seeing the fulfillment of my deepest wishes, and then running back to my flocks, and shouting the good news for all to hear as I went.

In my quiet moments of meditation and prayer I can think on all of these things, but I realize that outside of Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah and then to Mary, none of these acts took place in solitude. Mary had Elizabeth for the Magnificat; Zechariah had his crowd of friends and family when he uttered the Benedictus when John was born. Of course the angels had the shepherds who, once they heard the news, visited the Holy Family for themselves, and then spread their news to anyone in earshot. The great, good news of the season is meant to be shared and experienced in

community. God acts, and we respond. In each instance above, those touched by what God had done responded with their worship and praise.

From the very beginning of time, God has reached out to creation in glory, majesty, righteousness, faithfulness, mercy, and love. Humanity appropriately responds to God with humility, praise, adoration, contrition, supplication, faithfulness, love, and service. This is the grand pas de deux, the eternal dance of God with humanity. This is the essence of worship. God leads and we follow. God acts and we respond. God calls and we answer with our joys, concerns, and service. God offers himself and we humbly receive the gift of God's presence with us, Emanuel. It may just be my perception, but it seems that during the seasons of Advent and Christmastide, God and all the heavenly host seem much closer, much more accessible. It feels as if the whole creation is straining with us toward the coming of the Christ Child.

Through worship we experience the holy mystery of God's presence with us, and we in turn offer all that we have to praise, honor, and glorify God. God calls us to join together in worship with Zechariah, Mary, the angels, the shepherds, and all of God's children throughout the ages to lift our hearts and voices in longing, wonder, and praise. God's love and glory is meant to be shared and lived together in God's presence. As the last verse of Angels from the Realms of Glory encourages us:

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,

Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One;

Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ the newborn King!

Worship with us as we honor and praise God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Amen.

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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.

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Please join us for the third Sunday of **Advent** either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

**"In Our Midst"**

Based upon Hebrews 10:10; 19-25 and Zephaniah 3:14-20

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**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](mailto:davistwo@comcast.net) or by phone at 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"**

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# First Presbyterian Weekday School

The Weekday School had a wonderful Fall Celebration on November 19th in the Fellowship Hall. Lots of parents, grandparents, and friends attended. The one, two, three, and four year old classes presented songs for their families. The four year old class played some handbell songs they had been learning in music class!



Since we have been back at school from Thanksgiving vacation, the children and teachers have been getting very excited about Christmas! The classes are very busy making lots of Christmas decorations and art work and learning about the true Christmas Story. "Mr. Sam" taught us about the meaning of some of the Chrismons on the beautiful Chrismon tree in the Sanctuary during our Chapel time.

We are looking forward to our Christmas Vacation that begins on December 17th.

We want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

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**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 ongoing 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, Steeple Views, on Facebook, and on our website from December 12th to January 2nd. 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, fill out the form below and mail it to the church office with your check or put in the offering plate (if you are making a donation, please mark your check "Poinsettia.")

Person(s) requesting virtual poinsettias

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In honor or memory of (circle one)

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Send to:

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



### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO HOST CHRISTMAS MUSIC**

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host a Community Christmas Music Program on Sunday, December 12, 2021, at 3:00 P.M., at the Historic Henry County Courthouse. Talents from the

community will be featured, along with beautiful Christmas trees on display. Admission is free. The Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum will be open prior to and following the program. The building is handicap accessible.

**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 or email [etoler@kingsgrant.cc](mailto:etoler@kingsgrant.cc) to RSVP.**

**The Worship Committee** is currently making plans for a Christmas Eve service and we would like to have our youth participate in acting out the Christmas Story. If your child is interested in participating, please contact Sam Smith ([sam@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:sam@peakspresbytery.org)) or Monica Stevens ([mlkstev@hotmail.com](mailto:mlkstev@hotmail.com)) **no later than Wednesday December. 15 at noon.**

**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.**

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## [From the Transition Team](#)

When Pastor Mark retired on August 31, our church began the process of finding a new pastor. A Transition Team, made up of Monica Stevens, Denny Casey, and Joan Montgomery was appointed by the Session's Administration Committee. In an effort to keep the congregation informed we want to tell you the work that has been done and the work to be done.

- The Transition Team met with Carl Utley, our General Presbyter, on 9/16/21 for training.
- Responsibilities of the Transition Team are:
  1. Identify and recommend to the Session a candidate for Interim Pastor;
  2. Identify Transitional Priorities for Interim start up;
  3. Consult staff and elders about needs from Interim Pastor;
  4. Complete the Presbytery's Ministry Information Form (MIF) and seek appropriate approvals. The MIF describes our church in location, membership,

- mission statement, narrative questions, and top 10 Leadership Competencies, salary range, and basically what we are looking for in an Interim Pastor;
5. Work with the Interim during transition as requested by Interim; and
  6. Communicate to congregation about transitional process.

- We were charged with interviewing staff and session members for what they wanted professionally and personally in an Interim Pastor. That has been completed.
- The Transition team met several times to consolidate the interview responses and to complete the MIF.
- The Ministry Information Form was approved by the Session at its November meeting and has been sent to the Presbytery for approval.
- Upon approval, candidates will be identified based on matching our needs with candidate applications.
- The Transition Team is waiting for a date from the Presbytery for our second training on interviewing candidates for the Interim Pastor position.

Although the process seems slow, even to us, we want the congregation to know that the process is moving forward. The Transition Team welcomes input from the congregation by contacting Monica Stevens at [mlkstev@hotmail.com](mailto:mlkstev@hotmail.com), Denny Casey at [d.a.casey@comcast.net](mailto:d.a.casey@comcast.net), or Joan Montgomery at [joanmontgo@gmail.com](mailto:joanmontgo@gmail.com). We also ask for your prayers during this process.



**Gifts to the Church in Memory Of:**

**Reed Stone Moore**

J T and Martha Crawley  
Harris Harvey Neal & Co.  
Gary and Susan Collins  
F Woods Carter  
Joseph, Susan and Sam Smith  
Bill and Connie Garrett, Jr.  
Milt and Nancy Davis

**Cynthia Dobrinsky**

Catherine S. Bridges  
Johnny and Ashby Pinkard

**Gene Stanley**

Bill & Connie Garrett, Jr.

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## Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

### PRAYER CONCERNS

Carl and 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, Brenda Pendelton (A. Pinkard), 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, [office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto:office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org).

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## 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:276-252-6068).

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### *Please remember* Canned Soup



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

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*

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## 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](mailto: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

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### 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_Peaks_Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf)

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#### Our Mission

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

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**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](http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/page.cfm/topic/newsletter)

#### Useful Links

FPC website:

[www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/](http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/) or [www.fpcmartinsvilleVA.org/](http://www.fpcmartinsvilleVA.org/)

FPC online directory: [members.instantchurchdirectory.com/](http://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/)

FPC Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/FPCMartinsvilleVA](https://www.facebook.com/FPCMartinsvilleVA)

Presbytery of the Peaks: [www.peakspresbytery.org/](http://www.peakspresbytery.org/)

Presbyterian Church (USA): [www.pcusa.org/](http://www.pcusa.org/)

Daily Bible Readings: [www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/daily/](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/daily/)

**Church Office Phone:** 276-632-3431

#### Our mailing address is:

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

**STAFF**

Sam Smith, Youth and Family Ministries Director, [sam@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:sam@peakspresbytery.org)

Rita Bateman, Secretary/Office Manager, [office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto:office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org)

Drema Austin, Bookkeeper, [bookkeeper@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto:bookkeeper@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org)

Carol Carter, Weekday School Director, [wds@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto:wds@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org)

Deborah Burgess, Contemporary Music Director,

[contemporarymusic@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto: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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