

January 27, 2022



# Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

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## Devotional Meditation

Elder, Monica Stevens

January 26, 2022

### A Healthy Diet

Psalm 119:105

John 13:34-35

Philippians 4:8-9

Since I first read the *Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy in my teens, I have periodically been drawn to reread those books. Because the story contained in those books is a well-crafted tale and because I have grown and changed between each reading, I have gained new insights each time I entered the world of Middle Earth. Being confined to my house due to the snow, sleet and subsequent ice, I took my old, well-worn volumes off the shelf and once again entered the world of men, elves, dwarves, wizards, Ents, and hobbits. Those of you who are familiar with the story will know what I am talking about, and I ask those who are not to bear with me because there is a point to my rambling.

There are many threads woven into these stories and one thread concerns two wizards. They both came from the same background and they were both powerful and wise. For many years they both worked to preserve and protect all that lived in Middle Earth, but an arrogant desire for more authority and control slowly grew in one wizard, and over time he unwittingly fell under the influence of an evil power intent on destroying all that was good, just, and fair. This wizard delved deep into the dark arts and the mind of the evil one until he became nothing more than a puppet of the evil master and caused much suffering, ruin, and death in his name. The other wizard allied himself with sources of goodness and light, and rallied the varied folk of Middle Earth to counter the evil. This struggle between the forces of good and evil is the main conflict in the story.

As I was reading, I thought about life in our current time. If you read or watch the news at all, you will know that there are people who work to divide people from one another and they seem to revel in their divisiveness and the chaos they cause. Their messages and dark influence are pervasive and persistent. Many times people become ensnared without even realizing it. If that is the case, then what are we to

do? How can we learn to separate truth from untruth and hold fast to the truth?

Fortunately, or rather, I should say by the grace of God, we have the guidance of Scripture and the presence of the Holy Spirit to lead and direct our thoughts and action. Psalm 119:105 tells us that "(God's) word is a lamp to (our) feet and a light to (our) path." The Scriptures detail God's love for and involvement with creation, and humanity in particular. God created all that is, including humanity, to live in loving relationship with God. The Scriptures describe God's unfailing love and care for us, and they tell us how we should live in love with one another. In John 13:34-35 Jesus says, "I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." As followers of Jesus Christ, we are governed by the law of love. We have been given this command to love so that we may measure our own words and actions and the words and actions of others. If words and actions are born out of love and work to share the love of Christ, then they reflect and work for the glory of God. If words and actions lead to divisiveness, hate, violence, they are not from God and should not be followed.

The two wizards in *Lord of the Rings* started out on the same path, but they ended up feeding their minds and hearts two very different diets. One consumed greed, arrogance, and a desire for control, while the other had a steady diet of concern for others, right action, and an abiding love for all living things. The first diet led to death, destruction, and the ultimate ruination of the wizard. The second diet led to hardship and pain in the struggle to overcome evil, but ultimately it led to the salvation of all who worked for the good of others. As followers of Christ, we are called to live the law of love and to feed our minds and hearts on God's goodness and righteousness. Paul's words to the church at Philippi are as much for us today as they were for the Philippians: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things. Keep on doing the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you." May the love of God dwell in you and shine forth in all you do in the name of Christ Jesus. 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 OMICRON 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 fourth Sunday after the Epiphany either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

***God's Consecrated Community***

Based 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 and Jeremiah 1:4-10

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**A Christian's Concern for Climate Change**

**Join us on Thursday, January 27 at 7:00 PM** in the Sanctuary or on Facebook Live and YouTube as we welcome Dr. Laura Hartman from Roanoke College. Dr. Hartman will lead us in exploring the biblical and theological foundation that shapes our stewardship of the earth and its resources. How are we called as disciples of Jesus to tend to the earth? What options do we have to participate in redeeming the creation? Join us to ponder these questions of our faith.

Dr. Laura Hartman is an associate professor of environmental studies at Roanoke College. Her PhD from UVA is in religious studies with a focus on environmental ethics. She's the author of *The Christian Consumer: Living Faithfully in a Fragile World* (Oxford, 2011) and editor of *That All May Flourish: Comparative Religious Environmental Ethics* (Oxford, 2018). Her current obsession is environmental justice as it relates to church parking lots; also, buses. She lives in Roanoke with her wife, 12-year-old son, and golden retriever. Her hobbies include riding the bus, singing, and knitting (not usually all at once).



**Session** meets January 31 at 7:00 pm.



- 2** Dr. David Seamon, Isla King
- 3** Charles R. Knighton, Harold Lamm
- 4** Pamela Rakes
- 7** Mason Wood
- 13** Connie Anderson
- 19** Sandra T. Ford
- 21** Sharon Kirby

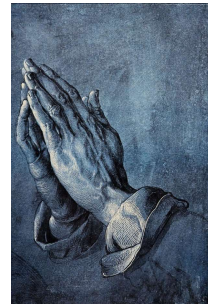
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### **Prayer Requests**

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

#### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Mike Boswell, 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, Troy Spencer (Pam Rakes' father), Scott Stevens (M. Stevens), Bruce Thomas (M. Stevens), Carl Utle, 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](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 Pearl Minter at [276 340-3476](tel:2763403476).

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## Grace Network Donations

### Baking Mix

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*

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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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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:

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1901 Patrick Henry Ave.  
Martinsville, VA 24112

### STAFF

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Deborah Burgess, Contemporary Music Director,  
[contemporarymusic@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto:contemporarymusic@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org)

### THE SESSION

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

### Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Stewardship and Communication

Betty Hudson: Christian Education

### Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

**Class of 2024**

Pearl Minter: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Neil Tatum: Facilities

Liz Ferrell: Worship

**TRUSTEES**

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

2024: Duke Ferrell, Milt Davis

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