

January 6, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder Monica Stevens

January 6, 2022

Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12

When we encounter the word "epiphany," probably a couple of meanings come to mind. One meaning is that "Aha!" moment when something suddenly becomes clear in a flash of insight and the other is that liturgical season that occurs on the heels of Christmas. Both have relevance today.

The liturgical season of Epiphany marks the Biblical account of the magi seeking, finding, and worshipping the Christ child. These visitors from the east were guided to the manger by the light of a star. The star led them to Judea, but they had to stop and ask directions from Herod. They most likely believed the child would be part of the royal court. However, Herod was unaware of this possible threat to his rule, so he called on his Jewish scholars, who, using the prophecy from Micah, determined that Bethlehem was the site of the birth. Herod had an epiphany of his own, that instead of leading him into God's presence, led him to decide he could use these unsuspecting magi to locate and then eliminate the potential usurper. Following the directions and the star, the magi completed their mission, and enlightened by a dream, left by another way without reporting back to Herod.

Many times we think of the arrival of the magi as the end of the end of the Nativity play acted out on Christmas Eve, but it is so much more. God placed a heavenly invitation in the night sky that prompted and guided three outsiders (non-Jewish folk) to seek the newborn king of the Jews.

By calling and including the magi as witnesses to the birth of Jesus, God revealed himself and proclaimed that his salvation was meant for the entire world. This newborn baby, God's own incarnation, would provide the means for all people in all times and places to experience God's saving grace and become one as God's beloved children. I think we have lived in the knowledge of God's grace extended to all humankind for so long that we take it for granted, but there was a time in history when anyone outside of the Jewish faith was largely ignorant of the one true

God. The star in the sky and the presence of the magi at the manger were the beginning of humankind's great epiphany, our "Aha!" moment spread out for eternity, that welcomed us into the presence and family of God through Jesus, the Christ.

You may have noticed that I cited Isaiah 60:1-6 as one of the scriptures for today. The first three verses say:

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ...
For darkness shall cover the earth,
And thick darkness the peoples;
But the Lord will arise upon you,
And his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your dawn.

This well-known scripture helps us to understand that while the Epiphany with the star and the magi happened at a particular point in history, the light of God's gift of "Aha" moments when we encounter God's presence and enlightenment are still occurring. God reaches out to us on a daily basis, and as the scripture says in verse 4, we need to "lift up our eyes and look around" to see what God is doing.

May this verse from a hymn we sang on Sunday be our prayer:

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to Thee. 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, **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.

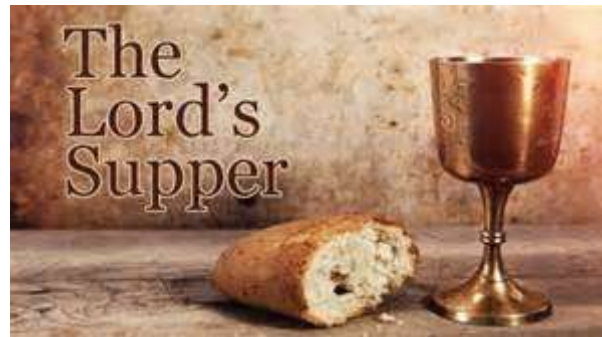


Please join us for the first Sunday after the Epiphany either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

"But now..."

Based upon Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 and Isaiah 43:1-7



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.

Remember "Once an Elder always an Elder"



New Officer Installation and Ordination for the Class of 2024 is Sunday, January 9 during the 10:00 a.m. service. Elected elders to be ordained and/or installed are Liz Ferrell, Pearl Minter and Neil Tatum. Duke Ferrell and Milt Davis will be installed as Trustees

The Community Breakfast is Saturday, January 15. Volunteers are needed to cook and prepare from 7-8:30 a.m. and to serve and clean up from 8:30-10:00 a.m. The breakfast will remain in a drive-thru format until further notice. Contact Brooke Cundiff if you are available to help ([276-340-6124](tel:276-340-6124) or bchnfamily@gmail.com).

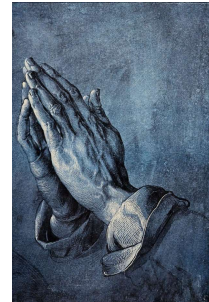
Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Jean Hill, 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 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:276-632-3431), 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:276-252-6068).

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*



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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Deborah Burgess, Contemporary Music Director,

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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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