

November 12, 2020



# Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

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## Devotional Meditation

Monica Stevens

November 11

### Psalm 146

This past week, our nation held one of the most hotly contested Presidential elections of my lifetime. As I write this three days later, ballots are still being counted and no winner has been declared. I hope that by the time you read this the results will all be in and we will know who has been elected to be the President for the next four years. With this in mind, it is very fitting that Psalm 146 is one of the daily lectionary readings for this week.

Our psalmist opens this Psalm with effusive and jubilant praise. **"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long."**

Having turned his thoughts and praise directly toward God, the psalmist cautions us with a warning. **"Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish."** The psalmist does not say that leaders aren't necessary, but he does remind us that leaders are simply human and their leadership is transient. Whatever power they wield cannot ultimately bring salvation to anyone.

Our true joy comes from putting our trust in God. **"Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever,..."** The God of all Creation does not change, and so our hope is anchored on a sure and lasting foundation.

God, by his very nature and enduring love, not only cares for and sustains Creation, but also provides us with a model for living our lives as God's glad and blessed children. **"... who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin."**

If these words sound familiar, you might remember that according to Luke, when Jesus began his ministry of preaching, teaching, feeding, and healing, he announced himself using these words from Isaiah 61: **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** God has always and will always be at work loving, tending, healing, and caring for creation and his human family—a family for whom our Lord Jesus gave his life.

Whether or not the candidate you favored won the election, our Psalm tells us whomever was chosen, he is human, fallible, and finite. I pray that God will bless and guide the President to follow in God's ways and to lead our nation wisely and compassionately, but we know that only God is completely reliable, faithful, and able to eternally save us. **"The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations."** Let us join our hearts, minds, souls, and voices with the psalmist and with one another as we proclaim, **"Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!"**

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### ***Church is Open!!!***

If you plan to attend, please be sure and familiarize yourself with our re-opening guidelines which have been mailed out to everyone. There will be no in-person offerings for children or youth at this time and we will be continuing **LIVE** streaming our church services, at **10:00 am** on Sundays on our church Facebook page.

***sermon by Monica Stevens***

**Use it, or Lose it**

Based upon Matthew 25:14–30 and Psalm 123

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### ***HELP is Needed!!!***

**We still need volunteers!** If you are healthy and are not at-risk, please consider volunteering for one of our Sunday morning teams.

**Screeners** - screen congregants as they enter the narthex; check temperature by using a digital thermometer; communicate health guidelines and best practices; facilitate use of hand sanitizer dispenser; provide masks and gloves as needed

**Ushers** - welcome congregants and work with screeners on Sunday morning to assist with safe distancing and seating; prepare collection plates, count offerings, deposit collection; take names of everyone in the service

**Cleaning Team** - clean and disinfect before and after services; work with staff to make sure all the commonly touched surfaces and furnishings are cleaned regularly

**Please let Rita (632-3431, [ritaofficefpc@gmail.com](mailto:ritaofficefpc@gmail.com)) know which teams(s) you are willing to serve.**

Training sessions are available for each team using Zoom or telephone.

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## **Email Communications**

If you think you are not getting regular emails from the church, make sure your contact information is up to date with the church office. Also, check your junk or spam mail folder, and add email from **Rita Bateman, Mark Hinchcliff**, from "[mail@icnsend.com](mailto:mail@icnsend.com)" (email domain) and, **Steepleviews** to your safe senders list. If you are unsure how to do this contact Denny Casey at [276-224-3906](tel:276-224-3906).

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## **Minute for Mission**

## **Dr. Denny Casey**

During the season of stewardship, your support helps to make Sunday school possible - a thriving community of disciples, seeking understanding, studying, and discerning the Word of God in Christian fellowship. As we learn from Paul's letter to Timothy: "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work in building a strong body of Christ through spiritual growth."

- Sunday School provides experiences to better understand and discern God's Word and Will. With a focus on Jesus Christ as Head of the Church, we regularly study the Word from the Old and New Testaments, and we also plan studies of current, topical spiritual issues relevant to the Christian faith, and Presbyterian tradition.
- Sunday school is important in the spiritual development of Christians because it provides a *forum for learning*. It encourages discussion and interaction between the participants, as well as providing an organized way to learn as a group. And for each course of study, participants can contribute in any way they feel comfortable including volunteering to teach a class. Preparing and teaching a class can lead to even greater understanding, as well as fostering spiritual leadership.
- Sunday School provides opportunities in the *fellowship for learning* where all are welcome. Participation provides an effective opportunity for personal spiritual exploration and growth. Class members are encouraged in a supportive and inclusive environment. Everyone has the opportunity to contribute - to ask questions and to express their viewpoints. And, we learn from each other and receive encouragement to live by God's Word.

I wanted to share a few reflections from participants who were asked "what does Sunday school mean to you? For the church?":

- One comment: "Sunday school provides an opportunity for learning scripture passages (and) I enjoy reading familiar ones (too). We are encouraged to read and keep our mind active at all ages. Our discussions help us examine current issues. Hearing others' thoughts and comments helps develop our thinking skills and better understanding."
- Another comment: "I enjoy the community...I learn a lot about the Lord thru others' lives and works."
- Another said: "I first started Sunday school because I wanted to learn more about the bible, but found the friendships kept me there. It's bible study, but its

intellectually stimulating to me. Sometimes I think we think only of the learning, but Sunday school is so much more than that.”

- And another said: “Sunday school has been a huge part of my faith journey. It has been a place where I feel comfortable sharing my faith, sharing some of my questions and fears, and learning so much from others. We study a wide range of subjects and that has been a great help to me in my growth as a Christian. through the pandemic and using Zoom, we’ve had strong participation and have seen people we haven’t seen in a long time. Sunday school is an essential part of the worship in our church.”Even

Adult Sunday school meets each Sunday at 8:30 AM by Zoom and Youth Sunday School is resuming next Sunday (November 15) at 3 PM by Zoom. Pandemic notwithstanding, Sunday school has been a valuable conduit to keep members connected in heart, soul, and mind. Let’s take this day to appreciate just how important Sunday school is for the life and future of our congregation, and in building the body of Christ.

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## Prayer Shawl Ministry Update



Imagine being sick, grieving, lonely, or just anxious. Imagine wrapping someone in a warm shawl that was knit or crocheted with prayer in every stitch. That is how the Prayer Shawl Ministry works.

On October 18, during the in-person 10:00 church service, 20 new shawls were dedicated with prayer by the congregation of **First Presbyterian Church**. These shawls represent the love we have for our neighbors and the hope they offer. We ask that the persons receiving the shawl wrap it around themselves as a symbol of God’s love and the love of our church.

The shawls are ready to be delivered and the recipient does not need to be a

member of our church. To have a Prayer Shawl delivered or mailed, contact one of the Prayer Shawl knitters: *Pat Bauman (634-1341)*, *Sandra Ford (634-1157)*, *Helen Flythe (632-3315)*, or *Joan Montgomery (634-1349)* or call the church office.

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## **We are excited at FPC to reopen the sanctuary for worship!**

Please park in the lot near this entrance and maintain a parking space between each car. The elevator will not be used unless there is an emergency. Only the bathrooms across from the office will be open.

### **Guidelines for Reopening Our Worship Facility**

(FPC COVID-19 Response Team approved 6/9; session approved 7/6/20)

Plan to arrive early - by 9:45 for screening by an usher/screener.

Below are the guidelines that we will follow as we begin our in-person services. Please read over them so you will know what to expect the first time you attend.

### **Everyone will enter and exit through the narthex doors (main entrance only) where they will be screened before entering the sanctuary.**

1. Any person not feeling well, sick or has been exposed to the COVID 19 virus within the past 14 days should not come inside the church.
2. A thorough cleaning with CDC approved disinfectant of frequently contacted surfaces will be conducted prior to and following each worship service.
3. Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance/exit and must be used upon entering and exiting the building.
4. Congregants are to use the main front doors of the sanctuary to enter and exit through the narthex. All other doors will be locked. Upon entering the sanctuary, congregants should move to the designated pews filling in the pews at the front (nearest the chancel area) of the sanctuary first. After the service has concluded, congregants should exit from the rear first.
5. Services in the sanctuary require everyone to wear a face covering (over your nose and mouth) at all times and be screened with a digital, infrared thermometer before entering the building. Bring your own mask. A limited number of disposable masks will be available.
6. The elevator will not be available. Avoid using the bathroom. However, the bathroom across from the church office will be available in emergencies. Services will be shorter.

7. Disposable gloves are available for congregants upon request and for those counting money or handling bulletins. Washing hands (for at least 20 seconds) is recommended after touching anything.
8. Social distancing guidelines (Executive Order 61) require a minimum of 6 feet between individuals at all times, with the exception of family members. Seating will be marked (on the pews) to maintain physical distancing.
9. No item, (collection, plate, communion elements, etc.) are to be passed between attendees. Offerings may be placed in one of the marked containers immediately outside sanctuary doors in narthex. Offerings are encouraged to be made by electronic means - online and through automatic bank transfer.
10. Congregants are asked to follow along or read softly as the responses, prayers, and statements are led by the worship leaders.
11. Hymnals and bibles have been removed; however, congregants may bring their own personal or electronic bible.
12. Congregants are to bring an electronic file or hard copy of the bulletin with them to the service. Hard copies of the bulletin must be removed upon exiting.
13. While the sanctuary congregation may enjoy live musical accompaniment, those viewing from home are encouraged to sing along.
14. Greet each other with a nod or wave instead of handshakes, or hugs.
15. Live and recorded services will continue to be available via Facebook and by DVD.
16. The nursery will not be available. Children will not come forward for children's worship until further notice. Children should remain with parents at all times.

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### Youth Ministry

The Youth will resume meeting on **Sunday afternoons from 3-4pm** still on **Zoom** beginning **Sunday, Nov 15.**

For the first couple of weeks we will be catching up with one another and discussing what we will do for our advent study beginning **Sunday, Nov 29.**

**More information will follow via text message.**

If your middle or high school child would like to join, now would be a great time to, please contact **Sam Smith**, [sam@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:sam@peakspresbytery.org), for an invite link to the Zoom meeting.

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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%20Peaks%20Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf)

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## Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

### PRAYER CONCERNS

Doc Altizer, Carl and Georgette Bishop, Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Mallory Hall-DeSantis (B. Tatum), Daniel Handy, Helen Hawkes, Anne Holland (sister of Pearl Minter), Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Regenia Noel (M. Stevens), Anne Peterson, Gene Stanley, Charlotte Walker (JoAnne Sanders' mother), 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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*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!***

**NOVEMBER** Bath Soap, Toilet Paper, Toothpaste

**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

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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](http://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/)

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

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**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

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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