

November 19, 2020



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Reflection week of 11/15/20

Dr. Denny Casey

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

Over the last eight months, these verses have sustained me like no other.

A natural response to the reality of the pandemic are feelings of anxiety, isolation, remorse, and depression. And overexposure to bad news on TV and negative social media can further aggravate our emotions. But a crisis can also create opportunity. Opportunity to focus on other, more constructive things, resisting the clickbait of fear; opportunity to step outside ourselves to be a blessing to someone else; opportunity to come out of this crisis to a better reality; and, opportunity to grow closer to God.

From there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and soul. Deuteronomy 4:29

Some of the most remarkable things are happening around us. It's truly inspiring to see so many instances of folks stepping up to respond where the need is...many times instinctively, without hesitation...many times because it simply needs to be done. Where does that come from? God created us with the desire to contribute to something greater than ourselves. We are called to work together, neighbor and stranger alike, for each other and for the common good.

I think about the woman who donates a life-saving kidney to a total stranger.

I think of the man who checks on a severely disabled neighbor and picks up medications and groceries.

I think of all the volunteers working at the community food bank providing much-needed provisions for those in need.

I think of all the healthcare workers who are working tirelessly in COVID-19 wards with the stricken and dying sometimes providing the last touch of a caring hand.

I think about the institutions including nursing homes, hospitals, businesses, schools, and civic organizations that are basically having to reinvent themselves as they go.

We have such a great capacity for care, creativity, and perseverance. And in many cases, it's happening from the ground up because it simply needs to be done.

I think we will look back at these strange times with all sorts of emotions and stories, but also with lasting impressions of how we witnessed life-renewing acts of care, compassion, selflessness, and ultimately grew closer to the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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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 Dr. Denny Casey

The Least of These

Based upon Matthew 25:31-46 and Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24



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) know which teams(s) you are willing to serve.

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

Minute for Mission

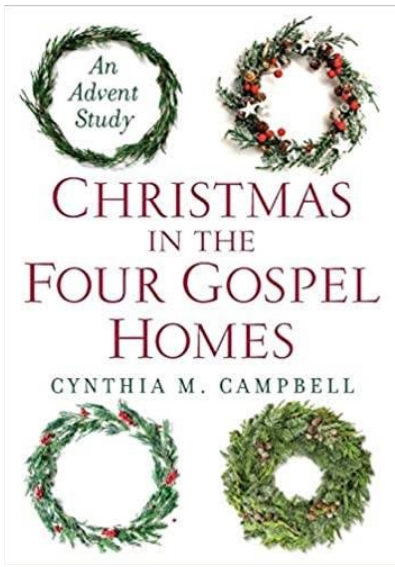
Dr. Joe DeVault

Today is Commitment Sunday, the high point of Stewardship Season. It's the service at which Presbyterians traditionally have presented their pledges in support of the Christian programs of their church. The Pandemic this year has created many barriers to our normal church life and our individual participation in the many church activities has been severely restricted. The loss of so many of our normal face to face fellowship opportunities at these activities can cause us to forget that the church is still alive and needs our support and ongoing prayers to maintain the many demands needed in our Christian community.

I often stop to think, there is not just a Stewardship Season, stewardship is year-long in the Presbyterian Church. I hope and trust we don't just make a financial pledge in November and then neglect the other parts of stewardship for the remainder of the church year. I think most of you have received the annual stewardship letter by now. In addition to a financial pledge card, it also included a card for you to pledge some area of active service in our church for the coming year. I hope you have already, or will enter into prayer about what commitment you plan to make for the 2021 year. These commitments may take the form of time, talent, attendance, outreach service, and of course the financial support, which make all of our church programs possible. Pastor Mark often reminds us that the church is not just a building, it is a community of believers who join together in faith to give thanks to Jesus Christ for giving us the gift of life, made possible by his sacrifice. We are then to give back to him through the lives we live, and we can do this through lives of faith, commitment to his teachings, and Christian service and fellowship. Please remember, stewardship is both FAITHFUL GIVING and FAITHFUL LIVING.

You have heard in recent weeks several of our members outlining just a few of the programs and activities that make up our church. Each of these and many others, offer opportunities for your support and involvement. All of these are successful only with the service commitment and financial support of our members. I hope each of you will find an area that strikes your heart and make that covenant to participate.

Adult Sunday School



Please join us for the next adult Sunday school course, by Zoom, beginning November 29 at 8:30 AM.

The PCUSA bookstore offers this description:

“How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it? In *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes*, beautiful illustrations from architect Kevin Burns reimagine each of the four Gospels as a “house,” which the church visits at Christmas. In each section, Cynthia M. Campbell reflects on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus or the incarnation offered by each Gospel. Suitable for individual or group study, *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* creatively reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent.”

Email d.a.casey@comcast.net or call **Denny Casey (276) 224-3906** to sign up or to get your copy. Make a check for \$9.25 payable to “First Presbyterian Church” with “Adult Sunday School book” on the memo line

Earth Care

From the Dec/Jan 2021 *Mother Earth News*: The worst thing to throw into the recycling bin: lithium-ion batteries. They can explode and catch fire when broken or crushed by machinery (one recycling company's transfer station burned down. The culprit: one such battery). Visit www.Call2Recycle.org to find a battery drop-off center in or near your zip code.



Have you an appliance or heavy object you'd like to allow the church to recycle? Call Victoria Esarey 276 732 9110 to see if Earth Care can lighten your load.

Youth Ministry

The Youth will be meeting on **Sunday afternoons at 12pm.** Grab a snack or lunch & join us on **Zoom!** If your middle or high school child would like to join us, please contact Sam at sam@peaksprebytery.org for an invite link to the Zoom meeting.

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" (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).

Guidelines for In-Person Worship (please read prior to attending service)

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.

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)

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.



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

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/

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

stepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Church Office Phone: 276-632-3431

Our mailing address is:

First Presbyterian Church

1901 Patrick Henry Ave.

Martinsville, VA 24112

STAFF

Rev. Mark Hinchcliff, Pastor, pastor@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Sam Smith, Youth and Family Ministries Director, sam@peakspresbytery.org

Cynthia Dobrinski, Music Director & Organist, 276-734-0212

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

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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