

**November 4, 2021**



# Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

---

## **Devotional Meditation**

**Elder Monica Stevens**

**November 3, 2021**

### **Impossible Math**

**John 6:1-13**

One of the wonderfully astonishing things about Scripture is that even passages we have known since our childhood can surprise us again and again with new truths and insights throughout our lives. Today's passage is no different.

Jesus and the disciples sat down on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. As soon as people got word that Jesus was in their area, they began to flock to him because they had seen and heard about the signs he had been doing healing the sick. When Jesus looked up and saw the large crowd of people coming their way, he decided to test the disciples by asking them how they were going to feed all those people. Philip was apparently the pragmatic math whiz of the group because he immediately started running the numbers—thousands of people x the cost of bread = more than we could earn in six months. The numbers added up to a lot of hungry people. Jesus already had a plan, but he wanted to see what the disciples would do. Would the seeming impossibility of feeding the people paralyze the disciples into helplessness, or would they have faith that Jesus would find a way? The impasse was broken when a young boy tugged on Andrew's robes and offered to donate his meager meal—five barley loaves and two dried, salted fish—to the cause. Even though Andrew had no idea how this small meal would help, he brought the boy and his food to Jesus.

Anyone could look at the lad's meal and instantly recognize that it was barely enough to satisfy the boy let alone thousands of adults as well as children, but Jesus smiled and calmly told the disciples to have the people sit down. We are not told what the disciples were thinking, but their actions indicate that they had at least enough faith to follow Jesus' instructions. Taking the loaves and fishes in his hands, Jesus raised them up and gave thanks to God so that all could hear and see as Jesus acknowledged God to be the ultimate source of their meal. Then Jesus began breaking and distributing the food so that all were fed until they

were satisfied with twelve baskets of fragments left over. Exactly how that took place is not the issue. I personally have no trouble believing that Jesus miraculously multiplied the food, but I also believe that it would have been no less of a miracle if Jesus' acceptance of the boy's meal inspired people who were hoarding their own hidden food to suddenly share what they had for the good of all. In a situation that appeared hopeless, God's grace was more than enough.

I don't know if it is the effect of modern life or if it is just a trait inherent in humans, but we tend to live our lives out of a sense of scarcity. All too often we are held back by a recitation of what we don't have whether it is a lack of time, money, skill, or other resources. How often do we as individuals or groups say, "I would love to do X, Y, or Z, but I just don't have \_\_\_\_\_."

I sometimes think we are so good at totaling up what we don't have that we forget to take stock of what we do have. We are so discouraged by our perceived deficits that we refuse to look for alternative ways to accomplish our goals.

This simple story of Jesus feeding the five thousand is a reminder that God is, has been, and always will be the God of abundant grace and goodness. In Jesus' hands, a young boy's meal fed thousands.

Will we, as disciples of Christ, present what we have—ourselves and our resources—in the faith that Jesus can create miracles out of our gifts, or will we be paralyzed by the mindset of scarcity and impotence? In God's impossible math, our offerings in Jesus' name + our service x God's grace = more than enough to meet the needs of God's people.

May the God of Abundant Grace drive out our fear of scarcity and fill us with the joy of sharing what we have to minister to others in Jesus' holy name. Alleluia! Amen.

[View this email in your browser](#) • [Forward to a friend](#)

---

## ***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.

---



Please join us for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Rev. Dr. Rusty Reaser

***"A Table In The Wilderness"***

Based upon Psalm 78:9–20 and Philippians 4:10–14



*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

---



**Commitment Sunday is November 14** when we will offer our financial and discipleship gifts to God for the upcoming year.

---



## Earth Care

### Did you know that you CAN recycle your pizza boxes?

[From the dominoes website:](#)

#### **MARTINSVILLE, VA**

#### **IMPLICITLY ACCEPTS PIZZA BOXES**

Recycling guidelines in your area suggest that corrugated pizza boxes are accepted. Please empty your corrugated pizza box and recycle it as you would any other corrugated box. Empty corrugated pizza box acceptability in your area is implied since corrugated boxes are accepted and there's no mention of pizza boxes being prohibited.

SUGGESTION: To help clear the confusion, please contact your local recycling program and suggest they update the guideline to say, "Empty, corrugated pizza boxes are accepted, even if they have food residue on them. Please empty your corrugated pizza box and recycle it as you would any other corrugated box."



#### **Vera Jane Kuhn**



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Vera Jane Kuhn on her passing this morning.

The funeral services will be private.

---

## Doc Altizer's Memorial Hike and Picnic



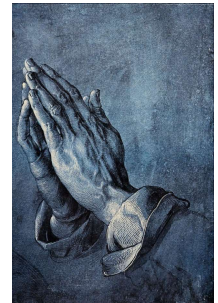
---

### Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

#### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

Family of Vera Jane Kuhn, 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).

---

### 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).

---

*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*

---

### 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)

---

### 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](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)

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

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

---

*Copyright © 2021 First Presbyterian Church, Martinsville, VA, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

