

October 8, 2020



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Pastor's Corner

Rev. Mark Hinchcliff
October 7, 2020

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of any kind because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking in anything." James 1:2-4

I heard a couple of stories from friends that seemed to be speaking to me when I read this Scripture. The first one is a lawyer friend of mine that no matter how bad a case or just his life in-general was treating him when you ran into him and asked, "Hey, how are you doing?" his response was always "Great, fantastic, you don't know how good I am!" Now you might think that was just a line to divert the attention away from how life was really, but it wasn't. He really felt that way and often would follow his response with, "I'd be embarrassed to respond any other way with all that God has blessed me with. Now I don't know about you but I'm not sure I could always respond that way!"

The second story came to me from a friend who was moving his blind and ill health mother into a nursing home. When the nurse wheeled his mother into her new room for the first time her response was, "I love it!". The nurse questioned the woman by saying, "How can you say that? You can't even see it!" My friend told me he was astonished at his mother's response when she said, "Seeing the room doesn't have anything to do with it. I have made the choice to be happy, not to choose to live the life God gave me miserable!"

Life will always have its share of unpleasant circumstances. Yet so much of the quality of our lives depends not on the circumstance itself, but rather the way we respond to it. I found the woman in the nursing home's response to be an incredible demonstration of pure grace or pure joy as the Scripture said. How would any of us respond to a similar situation? I'm amazed when I hear stories like these when people choose joy, even happiness, in the face of life's trials.

As Christians, we can look past the now. God sent His Son, Jesus, as the Servant who, by

His death and resurrection, makes all the difference for believers giving us hope of life, health, justice, and mercy. Through our trust and devotion to God life has meaning through whatever life may bring. So next time someone asks you about your life, be slow and deliberate in your answer. How are you, really?

Blessed be your days,

Pastor Mark

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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 Pastor Mark Hinchcliff

The Worship of Things vs. the Worship of God

based upon Exodus 32:1-14 and Matthew 22:1-14

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.



Congratulations to **Sam Smith**, our Director of Youth and Family Ministry! Sam has accepted a part-time position at the Presbytery Office as their Discipleship Program Director. He will continue to serve at FPC along with his new responsibilities and we wish him all the best. Sam's new email is sam@peaksprebytery.org.



Help Needed at Pumpkin Patch

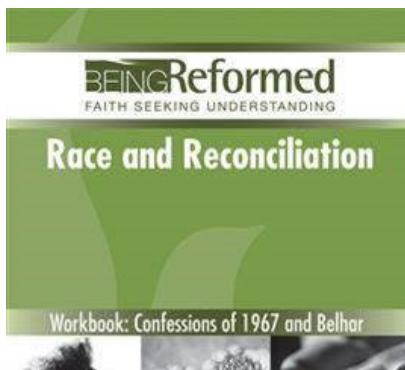
*We will need help to man the patch on the First Presbyterian Church Day which is **October 17th** from 9-5. You can work a 2-hour interval. Please contact Tracy at 409-330-0847 or tracy.hinchcliff@gracenetorkmhc.org if you are interested in helping out at the most cheerful place of the fall! :)*

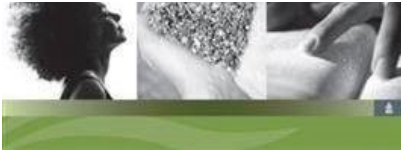
Happy Pumpkins!

Adult Sunday School

This is the workbook we are going to be using for our next adult Sunday school course, by Zoom, beginning October 4 at our **new meeting time, 8:30 AM**.

The PCUSA bookstore offers this description of **Race and Reconciliation**:





“Claim the ministry of reconciliation in a world and a church deeply divided by race, nation, gender, economic status, and religion.”

From the Confession of 1967 and the Confession of Belhar as confessional standards for the Church, former stated clerk of the PC(USA) Cliff Kirkpatrick reflects on the themes of reconciliation, unity, and justice in a hurting world.

Sessions are:

- A Providential Coincidence
- A Confession of 1967
- A Call for Reconciliation in Society
- The Confession of Belhar
- Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice
- Two Sides of the Same Coin

Being Reformed: Faith Seeking Understanding is a series of biblically based studies that provide adults with a foundational understanding of the Reformed faith. Each six-session study—written by well-known and respected scholars—features Scripture, in-depth commentary, and questions for reflection.”

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 \$13 payable to “First Presbyterian Church” with “Adult Sunday School book” on the memo line.

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 Deepest Sympathy

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Chuck Cundiff and family on the passing of Chuck's uncle, Paul Cundiff.

Prayer Requests



These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:



PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Paul Cundiff (Chuck's uncle, Doc Altizer, Carl and Georgette Bishop, Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Sandra Bryson Cox, Mallory Hall-DeSantis (B. Tatum), Daniel Handy, Helen Hawkes, Anne Holland (sister of Pearl Minter), Mervyn King, Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Regenia Noel (M. Stevens), Anne Peterson, Gavin Russell, 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.



"Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do to you." Wendell Berry

Grace Network

Hi, Friends

As the Director of Grace Network, I wanted to give you an update what we are doing for our community. There are so many of you that support Grace in many ways and we are grateful. Each month this summer from the time we had to close down due to ofCovid in March, we have been phasing in our services gradually to create the safest environment we could possibly have in order to protect our clients and our volunteers. We are now open 5 days a week serving clients by appointment and as of this week, we have reopened our food pantry. During the summer, we were part of the food box distribution program sponsored by the Harvest Foundation and the Henry County Food Bank, but for September, we decided it was safe enough and we had enough volunteers willing to come back that we were able to open our food pantry back up with our regular service there. We are also working with the City of Martinsville to help those facing cutoffs or evictions due to the pandemic with funds granted to us by the Cares Act from the state. We have been able to help over 300 households with over \$44,000 in assistance either from the Cares Act or our funds from the community through Grace Network just this

summer. We will continue to work with our community partners to help our clients find resources as we move to better times. The unemployment rate for Martinsville is back up to over 15% which is worse than the rest of Virginia at about 9%. So we continue to struggle in our community, but I for one am very proud of the resources that are available in helping those in need.

Your contributions to our pantry will be most important as we move forward and we continue to be grateful for the monetary support from First Presbyterian Church. I wanted to let you know that your donations are being used well and wisely and are changing the lives of those suffering. The assigned item for FPC moving into October will be Peanut Butter. We appreciate your donations. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate in contacting me.

Blessings, Tracy.

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!

SEPTEMBER Dish Detergent, Deodorant, Laundry Detergent

OCTOBER Toilet Paper, Feminine Products, Deodorant

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

A Note from the the Editor

Although regular church services have been cancelled and we are no longer meeting in person, I hope we all try to stay in touch with one another using any possible medium. Phone calls, face time, emails, etc. It is important that we look after one another during

these difficult times and it's good to know we are not alone. While there are no regular happenings to report on, I would like to send out Steeple Views on a weekly basis so please feel free to share any news or updates with me and I will do my best to include them in the newsletter. skirbycwj@gmail.com or 276 806-9709.

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/

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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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