

September 10, 2020



# Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

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## Meditation for September 9, 2020

### Based on Psalm 147

Monica Stevens

Sometime last week I came across a cartoon that spoke to me. In the picture, a seated woman wearing a long dress and a wide-brimmed hat was posing for a painting. The artist, however, was a giraffe and due to his unique overhead vantage point, his portrait showed only two concentric circles—the circular crown of the hat surrounded by the circle of the brim of the hat. The gist of the cartoon was that perspective defines our view of reality.

I was reminded of this thought as I meditated on Psalm 147 this week. The psalm was most likely written during the period when Israel returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile. When the exiles returned, the Jerusalem they had known and loved was a pale shadow of what it had once been. The buildings, especially the Temple, were in ruins and the once fruitful fields around the city were an unkempt wasteland. It would have been easy and understandable for the psalmist to throw up his hands in despair, but instead of dwelling on the desolation and ugliness of what he saw around him, he altered his perspective and turned his gaze toward God.

Life is not easy for any of us right now. A viral pandemic restricts our movements and endangers our health, our lives, and our livelihoods. There is disagreement, anger, and violence in our land. There are natural disasters and problems on the world stage that negatively impact millions. Like the psalmist, it would be easy and understandable for us to throw up our hands and give in to despair and ugliness. However, if like the psalmist we change our perspective and direct our gaze toward God, we not only find hope, strength, and sustenance for life, we also discover joy in the midst of our pain. I invite you to read and meditate on Psalm 147 in the manner of the verses I have selected and amplified below so that as the psalmist speaks to Israel, you can hear God's word and comfort and hope for you across the millennia.

<sup>1</sup>"Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God: for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting." (*Our God is good, and singing God's praises adjusts our perspective.*)

<sup>2</sup>"The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcast of Israel." (*God gathers us up and holds us fast as a loving parent would.*)

<sup>3</sup>"He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds." (*God knows our wounds and brokenness, and God works to heal us.*)

<sup>5</sup>"Great is our Lord and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure." (*God's power and knowledge are beyond our comprehension, but God always cares for God's creation.*)

<sup>11</sup>"But the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love." (*God doesn't delight in our strength or power. God delights in hearts that honor him because they trust in God's unending love.*)

When we focus on the goodness and steadfast love of God poured out on all of creation and on each of us individually, we are better able to find our voices and proclaim with the psalmist, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

May we find our joy as we praise our gracious, loving God. Amen.

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

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Be sure to join the Facebook live worship service this Sunday at 10 AM. The info will be sent via text message and will include the link to the service. You may also join by navigating to our Facebook page, scrolling down to the "videos" section of the page and simply clicking on the video at 10 AM.

### **Staying Focused**

sermon by Monica Stevens

Based upon Romans 14:1–12 and Psalm 103:1–13

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*COVID is not stopping the pumpkins! :) They will be arriving on **September 25 at 4 pm** and we are so excited to bring the patch once again to our community.*



We will need help with the unloading of the pumpkins on the **25th** and 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@gracenetWORKmhc.org](mailto:tracy.hinchcliff@gracenetWORKmhc.org) if you are interested in helping out at the most cheerful place of the fall! :)

Happy Pumpkins!

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## Announcements

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

On Sunday, September 20 at 11:00 a.m. a virtual congregational meeting will be held on Zoom to present the names of the nominees for the class of 2023.

**Our first in-person worship is planned for October 4** at 10:00 a.m. We will not, however, offer Sunday school or youth programs. The nursery will not be open. All children must remain in the sanctuary with their families. Communion will be celebrated. Individual wafer and juice sets will be provided for each person and will be located in the pews.

**Opening Soon But We Need YOU!** We have set a tentative re-gathering date of Sunday, October 4, in person 2020 but we still need volunteers! As we prepare to reopen parts of the building, we are still in need of your help. If you are healthy and are not at-risk, please consider volunteering. Below you will see brief descriptions of some of the main responsibilities:

- 1. Building Team** - will prepare the building by posting signs, closing off open spaces and rooms; taping off some areas of the building; the sanctuary and restrooms will be marked for physical distancing
- 2. 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
- 3. 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 need
- 4. 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

More detailed descriptions will be provided with a checklist for each area. ***Please let Rita (632-3431, [ritaofficefpc@gmail.com](mailto:ritaofficefpc@gmail.com)) know which teams(s) you are willing to serve by Sunday, September 20.*** We will then schedule training sessions for each team using Zoom or telephone.

### **Presbytery of the Peaks**

The Presbytery's full-time position of **Communications Director** is now open! Letters of interest with resumes and references will be received through September 17. For more information, please contact Nancy Baker.

Applications for the **Stated Clerk for Presbytery of the Peaks** are being accepted through September 29, 2020. The Stated Clerk is elected for a four-year term and is expected to work up to ten hours per week at an annual stipend of \$12,100, plus professional expenses. See Nancy Baker if you are interested in seeing the Position Description for the Stated Clerk, Qualifications for the Stated Clerk, and the Stated Clerk Application Form. This information will also be shared through the ***Peaks Postings***.

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# **Service Saturday September 19 9 am -Noon**

(following the Free Community Breakfast)

We will be focusing our recycling efforts that day and will be accepting your donations of aluminum, copper and steel that is completely clean.



We'll also do some mulching and weeding on the playgrounds.

**Contact Rob King for more information**


276-340-2263 or [rking@piedmontmechanical.biz](mailto:rking@piedmontmechanical.biz)



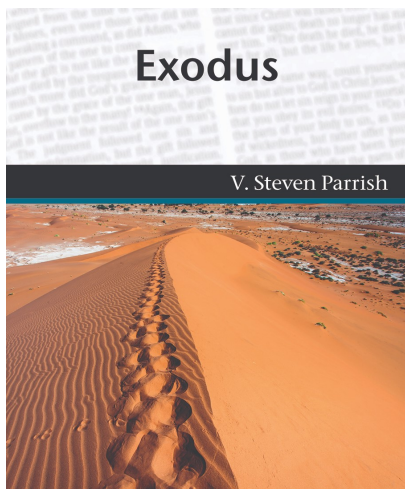
Come with us as First Presbyterian's Earth Care group strikes out into new ventures, learning as we go new ways to steward an environment entrusted to us as far back as Genesis. Matters of environmental theology (what does God expect of us?) will show up in various forms during worship. Practical matters will come to us through Steepleviews, Facebook, or --who knows, Zoom?-- on for example, how to use less plastic and why that might be important.

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## **Adult Sunday School**

 Six Themes  
Everyone Should Know

Join us for the next adult Sunday school class



beginning **August 23.**

***(excerpt from the PCUSA bookstore webpage)***

"The story of the Exodus has emboldened oppressed people for centuries. In it, God empowers human striving for freedom. Steven Parrish introduces six themes that reveal the character of God. God listened to the captives' suffering and responded. Through the wilderness, God sustained the people with food, water, and law. God promised to be present to the people. And God is merciful and gracious, as demonstrated in the golden calf episode. This volume includes material for participants and guides for leading all six sessions."

The class meets Sundays at 9:00 AM by Zoom. Contact Denny Casey [d.a.casey@comcast.net](mailto:d.a.casey@comcast.net) for a book and to get your Zoom invite.

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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:



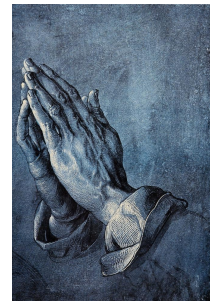
[https://www.peakspresbytery.org/images/2020\\_Peaks\\_Postings/PP\\_Aug18\\_2020.pdf](https://www.peakspresbytery.org/images/2020_Peaks_Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf)

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## Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

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), 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](mailto:office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org).

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***Please remember***

## **Assorted Canned Veggies (Veg-all)**

Please stay safe, stay healthy

The new food item for First Presbyterian Church for the 3rd quarter is **canned assorted veggies**. 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!***

**JULY** Toilet Paper, Feminine Products, Deodorant

**AUGUST** Toilet Paper, Bath Soap, Toothpaste

**SEPTEMBER** 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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### **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](mailto:skirbycwj@gmail.com) or 276 806-9709.

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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

[stepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org](mailto: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](mailto:pastor@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org)

Sam Smith, Youth and Family Ministries Director, [sfsmith@mail.roanoke.edu](mailto:sfsmith@mail.roanoke.edu)

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**

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

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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