

September 23, 2021



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional

Elder Monica Stevens

September 23, 2021

Tending the Soil

Luke 8:4-15

Most of us know Jesus' parable of the sower and the seeds. A farmer goes out to sow his seeds. Some of the seed fell along the path and was crushed underfoot and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell among the rocks where it sprouted and then withered away because it could not take root. Still other seed fell among the thorns and weeds where it was choked out and kept from growing. Finally, some seed fell into good soil where it grew well and produced a hundred times the amount of grain that was scattered.

When Jesus explained this parable to his disciples he said, "The seed is God's word. The soil on the path is like those who hear, but God's word is taken away from their hearts so they will not believe and be saved. The rocky soil is like those who hear God's word and receive it with joy, but don't allow it to take root in their lives and it withers away. The soil in the thorns and weeds is like those who believe for a while, but then become so caught up in the concerns and pleasures of their lives that they have no room for God's word. The good soil is like those who, hearing God's word, take it to heart and commit themselves to it. They are the ones who bear much fruit for God.

This is a parable that should cause each of us to take an honest look at ourselves to see where we fit into this parable. The usual question we ask is "What kind of soil am I?" Am I the soil that is so beaten down that God's word can't penetrate so that the seed gets carried away and never gets a chance to grow? Am I like the rocky soil that allows God's word to initially start to sprout, but is so shallow that the sprout can't take root and thrive? Am I the soil where God's word has to compete with so many worldly distractions that it gets choked out before it can bear fruit? Or, am I the fertile soil where God's word can take root and bear a large harvest?

Becoming the good soil does not happen on its own. In farming, the farmer plows the field, removes the rocks and thorns, fertilizers the soil, and makes sure it is protected from pests who would devour the seeds/plants, and provides water when rain is insufficient. Producing a good crop takes work. The same applies to reaping the harvest of God's word. We need to tend the soil of our lives so that God's word can take root, grow, and bear a bountiful harvest. Our tools for priming the soil for growth are prayer, studying the Scriptures, worship, fellowship, and service. We know that we can and should engage in prayer, Bible study, and service individually. Quiet time spent with God in prayer and study is essential, and often overlooked in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. We participate in service whenever we aid another person in any endeavor large or small and we have opportunities to do so daily. However, preparing the good soil is not a completely solitary endeavor. Beyond the metaphor of the soil, people grow and thrive best in community. Even though there is much we can do on our own, we draw strength and encouragement from the presence and work of others. We are nurtured and enriched by the love, prayers, and ideas of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus has promised that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be there in the midst of them. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, our church family becomes the incubator for our faith and the vehicle for us to accomplish God's work in the world. Come to church, be the church, and be the good soil. All to the glory of God, Amen.

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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 eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

“The Marvelous Properties of Salt”

Based upon Mark 9:38-50 and Psalm 19:7-14

Sermon by Elder Kym Wiederholt



- **The Session will meet Monday, September 27**, at 7:00 p.m. in the session room. The Peaks Presbytery Committee on Ministry will be attending the meeting.
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Earth Care

Attention Gardeners! We have learned from an occasional congregational visitor, that Lowe's will recycle the plastic pots you use to bring home your new plants.

What can we pick up for you?

Contact **Victoria Esarey: 276 732-9110** or vesarey@gmail.com. These items will be broken down into parts, making them more valuable as recyclables.

Celebration of Life

Laura Buffkin

Please join the Buffkin family in the celebration of Laura's life on **Saturday, October 2 from 1 - 6 PM** at the Sports Complex Amphitheater. The address is 1000 Irisburg Rd, Axton, VA.

The event will be catered but please feel free to bring a side dish or dessert so that there is enough for everyone to enjoy.

Laura loved music, so please bring your instruments and jam with us as Laura would have wanted.

Please join the Buffkin family in honoring Laura.

[Laura Wingfield Buffkin Obituary - Visitation & Funeral Information](http://wrightfuneralservices.net)
(wrightfuneralservices.net)



Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Carl and Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Kimberly Bryson, Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Sandra and Mark Dobrinski (brother and sister in-law of Cynthia), Judy Epperly (Nancy Baker), Daniel Handy, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens'



brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Regenia Noel (M. Stevens), Anne Peterson, Gene and Betty Stanley, 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.

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:2762526068).

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%20Peaks%20Postings/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

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

steepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

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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

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