

September 9, 2021



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional

Elder Monica Stevens

September 8, 2021

Be Prepared!

Matthew 25:1-13

Be Prepared! That's the motto of the Boy Scouts and it is generally good advice for daily living. I fill my car's gas tank before I start a trip. I buy groceries ahead of when I'll need them and I also keep certain items on my shelves just in case I need a backup plan for a meal. I try to keep spare batteries on hand for electronic devices and flashlights. Our society has developed aphorisms such as "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," "Plan your work and work your plan," and "Better to have and not need than to need and not have" that all tell us to be prepared.

Jesus believed in being prepared as well. Jesus came preaching, teaching, and embodying the good news of God's redeeming, reconciling love so that disciples and believers through the ages would be prepared to continue the work of his ministry until he comes again. Those who bear the name of Christ Jesus, who call themselves Christians, are to be actively involved in the work of the Church—the Body of Christ.

Consider the parable of the ten bridesmaids. They were waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom. All ten of the bridesmaids brought lamps, but only five of them were wise enough, prepared enough, to bring extra oil. For whatever reason, the bridegroom was delayed in arriving. It got late and all ten bridesmaids dozed off. Finally at midnight, someone spotted the bridegroom and woke the bridesmaids. The unprepared bridesmaids' lamps were going out, so those bridesmaids had to run to get more oil. Unfortunately, the bridegroom arrived while they were gone and they were left behind. Those who were prepared went to the wedding with the bridegroom. When the five who were left behind finally arrived at the wedding, they were shut out. The last line of the parable reads: "Therefore, keep alert, because you don't know the day or the hour."

This judgement seems harsh to our ears, but Jesus wanted to make sure he got his point across. Jesus would be going away, and in the time before he returned, he expected those who were called by his name to be prepared. In Matthew 5, Jesus said that his followers were "the light of the world" and he told them to "let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do, and praise your Father who is in heaven."(Mt5:18-19 CEB) Those who allowed their lights to go out were not prepared and therefore, not able to fulfill their role.

So what does this say to us today? First, being called by Jesus the Christ's name means being called to continue the work of Jesus our Savior. Jesus, the Light of the World, has infused his followers with his light and given us the task of letting that light shine into the darkness of the world. Second, while it is possible for a single candle to illumine the darkness, more candles shining together reach farther into the dark and are more effective. Imagine a church set on a hilltop in the night. A single person with a glowing candle comes to the church. Anyone outside of the church might see a faint glow in the window. Now picture row upon row of the faithful streaming to the church, each with a lighted candle. Soon light is pouring from every window and door in the church, making the hilltop a beacon of warmth and light into the surrounding area.

We are called to be Christ's Church and our mission is to spread Jesus' love and light into the world. Just like the bridesmaids, we need to make sure we are prepared. If your light has faltered and your faith is running low, come to church. Be refreshed and refilled by the love of Jesus and the power of the Spirit found there in worship and service. Add your light and fulfill your role as an active, shining part of Christ's Body. Be prepared and live as a Christ bearer.

Alleluia! Amen!

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The Church is Open for In-Person Worship Service!

If you **have not** been fully vaccinated please wear a mask and continue to practice social distancing.

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.

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



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

“Healed to be Healers”

Based upon Matthew 25:31-46 and Ezekiel 37:1-14

Sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

**Please come to church on September 12th
for Worship and Fellowship.**

A catered luncheon will be served after church.

You are invited to join us as we explore ways
to deepen our discipleship and live out our faith
as a Matthew 25 Congregation!

A brief question and answer period will follow the luncheon.



Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage
in the world around us, so our faith comes alive
and we wake up to new possibilities.

Seating will be placed to allow for social distancing.
Please wear a face mask whether or not you are vaccinated.



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Come join our in-person circle meeting on **Monday, September 13 at 10:30 a.m.** at the church. Masks are not required but recommended. There will be social distance spacing.

Lunch will be provided by Darla Main-Schneider, owner of Rising Sun Breads. **If you wish to stay for lunch, please let Betty Hudson (276-638-0467 or bchmudson@gmail.com) know by Thursday evening so the correct amount can be purchased.**

Workbooks are available at the back entrance of the church for "What My Grandmothers Taught Me".



- **Youth and Children:** Be sure to join us for worship on **September 12 at 10:00 a.m.** with your backpacks! You'll receive a special blessing and backpack tag during the service. (Are you doing school virtually this year? If so, you can choose to receive stickers to bless your electronic device instead.)
- **Matthew 25** luncheon, **September 12** following the 10 am service.
- Circle meeting on **Monday, September 13 at 10:30 a.m.** at the church.
- **Congregational meeting Sunday, September 19** following the worship service. This meeting is to elect the class of 2024 elders and trustees.

Earth Care



Flowers or Plants Make Much Appreciated Gifts

With a little advance planning you can grow your own gifts. Unique floral varieties can be raised in your small home plot, which make appealing gifts which anyone can appreciate. A fresh bouquet from your garden is always a beautiful, personal gift. Potted plants also make great gifts, or give bulbs or starter plants of your favorite garden crops – spare asparagus crowns can be the beginning of a perennial bed!

Or you can harvest and dry flowers, using a press or a dehydrator, to use for homemade gift cards or dried floral arrangements.

If you prefer to buy flowers as gifts, choose from 'in season' locally grown varieties. The maintenance of greenhouses and long-distance transportation can involve significant expenditures of energy coming from fossil fuels.

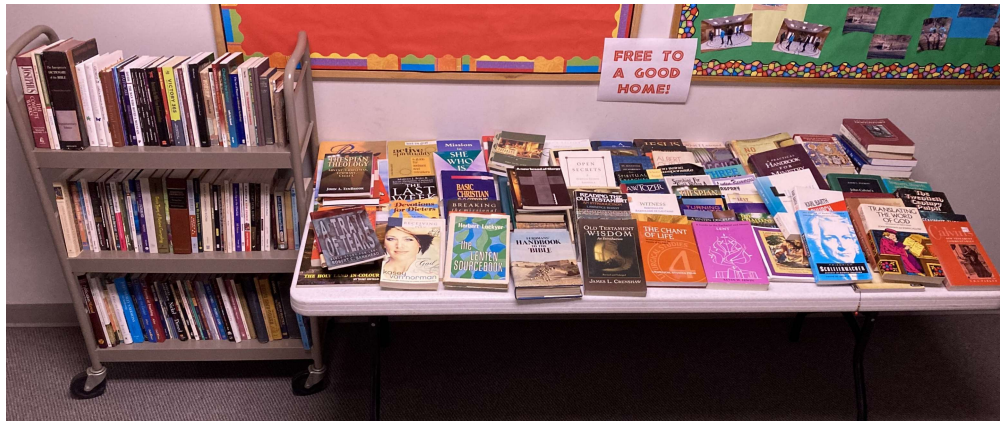
Did you know you can bring these plastic items to Kroger for recycling:

- Plastic shopping bags
- Resealable zipper bags
- Outer plastic packaging
- Cereal bags
- Shopping materials & bubble wrap

What can we pick up for you? Contact **Victoria Esarey** **276 732-9110** or email vesarey@gmail.com. These items will be broken down into parts, making them more valuable as recyclables.

From the library of Pastor Mark

Pastor Mark has left behind several of his personal books that are free to a good home. They are located in the hallway between the sanctuary and church office. Please take some time before or after a church service to peruse through the titles and help yourself to any you might enjoy. (You can also call the church office & schedule a time to come by and look through them during the week).



Laura Wingfield Buffkin



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the Buffkin family on the passing of our dear friend Laura, this afternoon. Arrangements are being made and details are forthcoming.

The family is welcoming visitors to their home at 1403 Askin Street from 3 - 7pm today (Thursday, September 9).

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Laura Buffkin, 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

Potato Products



The 3rd quarter food donation item is **Potato Products (mashed, scalloped)**

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

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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