

April 22, 2021



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder Monica Stevens

April 21, 2021

Psalms 22 and 23

Randy used to talk about Scripture being in conversation with itself with a question or problem expressed in one place and God's answer or solution in another. Our Psalms for today are a prime example of the human condition crying out for help in Psalm 22 and God's answer expressed in Psalm 23.

Psalm 22 is a lament. The psalmist is in deep distress, feels utterly forsaken and alone, and cries out to God for relief.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. ...I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in in the dust of death." Ps. 22:1-2, 14-15

During this past year of pandemic and illness, economic uncertainty, and social turmoil I know that I have had times when I felt worn down, worn out, disheartened, unwell, and depleted emotionally. In the midst of the suffering and evidence of humankind's darkest thoughts and actions, I, like the psalmist, have called out to God for relief. I strongly suspect that many of you have felt the same way at some time in the past year.

The good news is that we have Psalms of lament in our Bible to let us know that God invites and encourages us to share whatever difficulties we face. God will hear us, listen to us, and act for us. Verse 24 affirms, "For (God) did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me but heard when I cried to him."

The very familiar Psalm 23 elaborates on the ways God acts on our behalf. The first part of the Psalm compares God to a shepherd. The sheep are helpless and defenseless on their own, so the shepherd takes care of their needs so they want for nothing. The shepherd provides food, water, and rest for the sheep, but he does so much more. This shepherd revives the soul of the sheep when they are frightened,

worn down, worn out, dispirited, and unwell.

Our shepherd also works to keep us close to him and strengthen our relationship with him by leading us along the right paths. Our God instructs us in the ways of right living so that the whole flock can live in peace and safety. When our path takes us through places of darkness, doubt, illness, and even death, we are surrounded and comforted by the assurance of the strong presence of our loving shepherd. Our shepherd will walk with us through all things and keep us safe at his side in this world and the next.

The last part of Psalm 23 compares our God to a host. Even in the presence of our enemies, whether those enemies are people or circumstances, our host provides us with a sumptuous banquet that nourishes us, covers us with his love as anointing oil covers the head of an honored guest, and fills our cup to overflowing with the joy of the Lord. The best news is that these blessings are not a one-time occurrence—God's blessings will seek after and pursue us for the rest of our lives.

God hears our cries, acts to draw us close, and showers us with blessings. In the face of such love, mercy, goodness, and grace, the only fitting response is to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever" by offering our undying thanksgiving, praise, and worship to our loving Shepherd and our gracious Host.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen. May it be so.

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Church Reopening!

The sanctuary has reopened for in-person worship and will continue with restrictions as before (wear a mask, enter at narthex, social distance) unless otherwise notified.

Virtual services will still be available on Facebook for those that wish to remain at home until they feel safe to return. Sign-ups will continue each week by emailing office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org or by phone, 276-632-3431. **Please call by NOON each Friday.**



Please join us on the **Fourth Sunday of Easter** either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10 am.

sermon by Elder Monica Stevens

What's Your Sign?

Based upon 1 John 3:16–24 and Acts 4:5–12

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Dru on being awarded the **"Hugh Gerlach Determination Award"** at the YMCA Martinsville Henry County.

The Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA has partnered with the Elster Foundation to offer the The Hugh Gerlach Determination Award! This award is given to an individual that has overcome tremendous obstacles. If you know Dru, you know how passionate he is about supporting and uplifting

our community. He can be seen volunteering his time at many local events, including but not limited to, the YMCA sponsored races. Despite having had several major health concerns, Dru is never without a smile, a positive attitude and his "we can do anything together" spirit. The next time you see Dru, please be sure and thank him for all he does for our beautiful community and its residents.



"Reading the Bible with New Eyes: Finding a Life-Giving Faith in Guatemala"

Without travel to Guatemala to connect us, our mission partner CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) is offering a "Virtual Journey." For years, Protestants in Guatemala have been taught a narrow Fundamentalism, and now are making new discoveries as they read the Bible.

On this Virtual Journey, learn how a theology based in the love and justice of Jesus Christ is transforming the lives and communities of people in Central America. You will hear testimonies from pastors and laypeople in CEDEPCA's Biblical and Theological Formation program and be led through an eye-opening study of scripture by Dr. Paulo Ueti, Anglican theologian, New Testament scholar, and friend of CEDEPCA.

Wednesday, May 19, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvfu-orTwiE9yIIYNql_a-H6F9WfGGbwX2

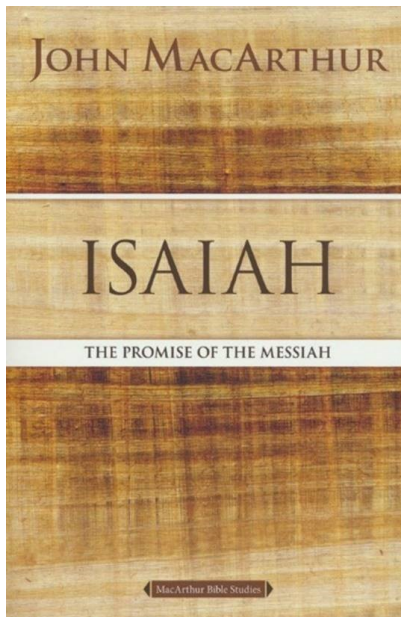
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Suggested donation \$11.

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).

MacArthur Bible Studies: Study of Isaiah



Begins: April 11 at 8:30 AM - June 13 by Zoom

The *MacArthur Bible Studies* provide intriguing examinations of the whole of Scripture and continues to be one of the bestselling study guide series on the market today. In this study, Dr. MacArthur examines the words of the prophet Isaiah, showing how God proved to be faithful to his people (and us) by promising to send Messiah who would save them from sin. These latest all-new studies join the ranks of the previously released study guides, now offering readers a comprehensive selection of Old Testament Bible studies by bestselling author and theologian John MacArthur.

Each lesson includes:

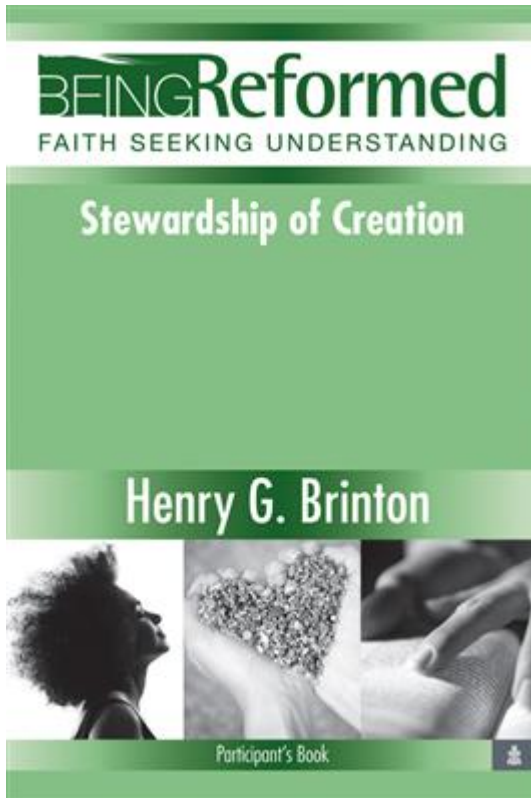
- **Drawing Near:** An opening question based on the key theme or topic of the lesson
- **The Context:** Background information on the passage of Scripture being studied
- **Keys to the Text:** Detailed commentary on the passage being studied
- **Unleashing the Text:** Application questions on the passage highlighted in the lesson
- **Exploring the Meaning:** Three key takeaways from the passage
- **Reflecting on the Text:** Reflection questions on the passage highlighted in the lesson
- **Personal Response:** A journaling section to help readers apply the principles

Each study includes an introduction that provides background information to each book of the Bible being studied and a closing "Reviewing Key Principles" lesson to help cement the main themes of the study.

To sign up or for more information, contact Denny Casey (d.a.casey@comcast.net).

Bible Study: Stewardship of Creation

Begins: April 21 at 7 PM by Zoom for six weeks



This is being organized by the FPC Earth Care team

Description from the publisher:

“Explore the biblical bases for our care of creation along with sessions on being environmentally friendly at home, at church, and in the world.”

Being Reformed: Faith Seeking Understanding is a series of biblically based mini-courses that provides adults with a foundational understanding of the Reformed faith. Each six-session study--written by well-known and respected scholars--features Scripture, prayer, in-depth commentary, and questions for reflection. Each study addresses its subject from a Reformed theological perspective. Lessons are enhanced

through the Leader's Guide, which offers helpful suggestions and direction for group study. The main structure for these guides is the rubric Head, Heart, and Hands.

We have borrowed a few books from the presbytery office that will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Sam Smith, sam@peakspresbytery.org, to borrow a copy or you may purchase a copy from the PCUSA bookstore.

Here's a link to the book (with a link if you'd like to order a copy):
<https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/680720/stewardship-of-creation-participants-book.aspx>

To sign up and get the Zoom link, contact Denny Casey d.a.casey@comcast.net

April is Earth Month April 22 is Earth Day

The Presbyterian Hunger Program works ecumenically with other organizations and ministries to assist all in efforts to best steward the Earth. April is a great month to take action and/or consider actions for the coming months. The following "Action Recommendations" are taken from Creation Justice Ministries Earth Day Sunday resource:

Action Recommendations

Personal:

1. Get your soil & water tested for lead.
2. Advocate for better public transit in your municipality. Also do your part to try to bike, walk, or carpool.
3. Visit The Native Land App to learn about the indigenous people from the land you occupy.

Community:

1. Get involved in gardening and/or food access justice.
2. Learn how your church can become a hub of climate resilience at creationjustice.org/resilience.
3. Find ways to reduce your own waste through reducing consumption, composting, and refusing to acquire products that will end up in landfills.

Legislative:

1. Bookmark creationjustice.org/action to participate in timely monthly action opportunities.
2. Mark your calendar for Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2021 & participate in the day of action. This year is free of charge and online. The theme is "Imagine! God's Earth & People Restored". Creation Justice Ministries will be hosting six excellent workshops.
3. Learn about the bodies of water near you, the watershed you live in, and the pollutants your water faces.



Earth Day

Saturday, April 24

As part of Earth Day week; FPC will be celebrating our care for God's creation by enjoying nature, going on an easy hike, and picking up trash along the way.

Meet at the church at **10 am** and plan for a hike along the Dick and Willie trail.

Come out and enjoy the fellowship and being outdoors together! Pack a lunch and bring a water bottle.

Earth Care Congregation Certification



To become an Earth Care Congregation, this congregation affirmed an Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into their worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that make the commitment to take seriously God's charge to "till and keep" the garden.

Started in 2010 by the PC(USA), the goal of this program is to inspire churches to care for God's earth in a holistic way, through integrating earth care into all aspects of their church life. The Earth Care Congregation certification honors churches that make that commitment and encourages others to follow their example.

"It is exciting that **First Presbyterian Church is one of the 276 churches that chose to dedicate themselves to intentional care of God's earth this year.** Particularly in a time of much uncertainty and worry about the future, this congregation's activities and commitment even in the midst of navigating limitations brought about by COVID-19 brings hope to their community. We believe that First Presbyterian Church will inspire others to respond intentionally to God's call to care for the earth," says Jessica Maudlin, Associate for Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For more information about First Presbyterian Church's earth care program contact Denny Casey at d.a.casey@comcast.net or (276) 224-3906.

To learn more about Earth Care at First Presbyterian Church, visit <http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/page.cfm?topic=Earth>
For more information on the Earth Care Congregations program visit www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

Saturday, April 24, 2021, 9:00 am-12:00 Noon (Will be held rain or shine)

Location: Bassett Service Center 2285 Fairystone Park Highway, Bassett,

Virginia (Across from Bassett Office Supply)

Residents of Martinsville and Henry County will be able to dispose of household hazardous waste from 9 a.m. to noon April 24 at Bassett Service Center, 2285 Fairystone Park Highway in Bassett.

The event is free to individuals but not available to commercial businesses.

The site will accept:

- Solvents, such as mineral spirits, paint thinner, turpentine, and acetone.
- Paints, including oil-based, polyurethane, tung oil, deck, or oil-based stains.
- Fuels, such as gasoline, #2 fuel oil, kerosene, diesel fuel, small engine fuel, and heating oil.
- Automobile fluids, such as motor oil, transmission fluids, and antifreeze.
- Lead-acid batteries.
- Computer equipment.
- Cell phones.
- Printer cartridges.
- Up to four boxes of paper per car to be shredded, but only sizes up to 8.5 by 11 inches.

Items that cannot be handled include smoke detectors, compressed gas cylinders, explosives, radioactive materials, household cleaners, pesticides, herbicides, drain cleaners, tires, light bulbs, and televisions.

The event is sponsored by Environmental Options Inc., EMI, Henry County, the City of Martinsville, and Bassett Fire and Rescue.

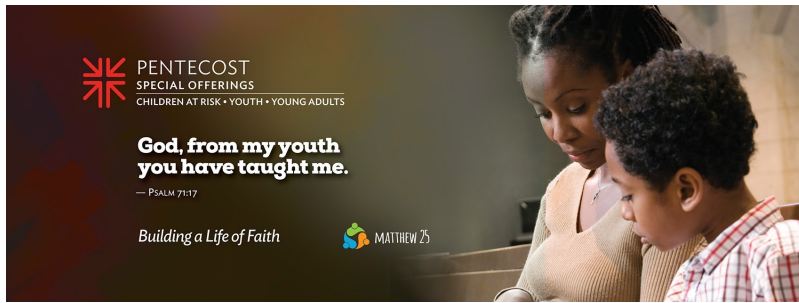
Youth Ministry

April Schedule

Saturday, April 24 – Earth Care Event: we'll be going for a hike & will pick up trash along the way to help beautify our Earth while also enjoying nature! (plan to pack a lunch & more details to follow)

Sundays April 18 & 25 – No Zoom Gathering on these days but please join us for our Saturday events those weekends instead!

Pentecost At Home Faith Formation



Pentecost is the day when we celebrate God’s gift of the Holy Spirit, which unites us together as one and helps us to see God at work in our world. The Pentecost Offering also “unites us in a church-wide effort to support young people and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.”

Beginning the week of April 25, and each week leading up to Pentecost Sunday, families, of any size and all ages, are encouraged to utilize the at home faith formation resources linked below as a devotional. Each week you will read the guiding scripture passage, Psalm 71:17 as well as a story of how the Pentecost Offering impacts ministries for children, youth, and young adults. You’re also encouraged to work on coloring the Pentecost Mandela and much like with the prayer doves last year, please send pictures of your completed creation to me!

Collect a weekly gift to the Pentecost Offering in your faith formation space and then bring or mail to the church your offering on or before Pentecost Sunday. Your gift not only supports ministries within the PC(USA), but also ministries for children and youth within our own congregation.

Blessings,
Sam

[Pentecost 2021 Intro](#)

[Pentecost 2021 At Home Faith Formation](#)

[Pentecost 2021 Mandela](#)

Our Deepest Sympathy

Colleen Grogan Dallas
May 20, 1929 - April 17, 2021



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Colleen Dallas.
Colleen passed away on Saturday, April 17 at King's Grant.

A private memorial service has been planned to honor Colleen's life for
immediate family.

The full obituary can be found

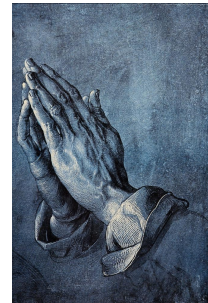
at: [https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/colleen-dallas-obituary?
pid=198389816](https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/colleen-dallas-obituary?pid=198389816)

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our
prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Colleen Dallas, Family of Bill Plonk, Sarah Altizer, Carl
and Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford),
Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Laura Buffkin, Tommy Cobb (M.
Dunn), Sandra and Mark Dobrinski (brother and sister-in-law of Cynthia), Daniel
Handy, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi,
Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Jim Murray (Judy King), 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.

Please remember

Cornbread Mix



The 2nd quarter food donation item is **Cornbread Mix (i.e.: Jiffy)**.

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

Moderator: Rev. Mark Hinchcliff

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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