



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

November 2015

Pastor's Corner

Knowing Where We're Headed but Not Knowing Where We're Going

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8)

I remember one of my most desirable traits as I was dating was a sense of spontaneity! I would pick up my date and we would get on the road and just start driving before we ever began to decide where we were going to go. Sometimes it would be where are we going to try for dinner tonight—someplace new that we had heard about or an old favorite? Other times the question was, "What do you want to do today out of the ordinary, new and exciting?" Or sometimes it was just driving while we enjoyed each other's company and the beautiful scenery around us. Regardless, we knew where we were headed: "out away from our day-to-day lives," but where exactly we were going was often the "mystery of the day."

In these days, I still enjoy letting things happen to enjoy life's experiences fresh and new with a sense of surprise of what we may see. Others around me don't always appreciate that feeling of *carpe diem*, living for today, and can only be at rest knowing exactly what happened yesterday, today, and what is expected to happen tomorrow and every day after. To be caught up in circumstances outside the planned agenda is to be consumed by utter chaos for these sensible life mappers. Don't get me wrong, every free spirit needs to be brought back to reality by someone who has planned for every circumstance, but every habitual planner could use a little freedom of surprise as well!

But when I think about it, knowing where I'm headed but not knowing where I'm going does remind me of the journey of a Christ follower. When we respond to Christ by faith, we begin a lifelong journey. We are called to respond to His precious gift of life and salvation with a grateful heart for what has already been given in Jesus Christ. But life's journey is always full of surprises, some wonderful and some are challenging! So, we face our journey one day at a time, trusting that we know where we are headed (Christ-likeness, eternal relationship, into God's loving embrace, etc.) even when we can't clearly see where we are going. Our faith makes this trip both possible and fulfilling.

Abraham's life story found in the Old Testament book of Genesis is comforting to me to me because he modeled this journey of faith that in some way or another



God is calling us to. God called Abraham to leave his home and go to someplace unfamiliar to him. Abraham knew where he was headed but knew nothing of where he was going until he got there. On the way, his journey was filled with unexpected turns, ups and downs. But in the end the Scripture states that, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him to be righteous."

Today each of us and maybe even this church may feel that we are wandering. We may feel we have no idea where we are going in our individual and community lives. But be faithful and keep responding out of your grateful heart for that precious gift of Christ in our lives. This year I challenge you to take every day as both a surprise gift and an expected destination, straight into the loving arms of God!

In God's Grace,
Pastor Mark

Mission

The Angel Tree Project Is Back!

Our church has a tradition of making Christmas brighter for several deserving families in our community through our Angel Tree Project. This year the Angel Trees, which were made by Clyde Hill, will be in the Narthex and the hallways outside the Chapel and Sanctuary **from November 16 through 30**. Please take one or more gift suggestions, buy, wrap and return your gifts to the church by **Sunday, December 6**. Families are color-coded, and children's age and sex are given, along with clothing sizes. Gifts, with the angel tags attached, should be left in the office or Session Room. Turn in monetary donations to the office.



How do we choose the families? Counselors and staff at Patrick Henry Elementary School and Albert Harris Elementary School select deserving students who may not be eligible to receive support from other agencies. Each school chooses three students, and we provide four gifts for each student and each of their siblings. In addition, a food basket is prepared for each family.

Baskets and gifts will be delivered December 15. Contact Nancy Baker (nbaker08@comcast.net) for more information. Thank you for your generous support of this project.

A Note from Paul Cannaday

October 7, 2015

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank each of you for your support during my brother Michael's illness and the outpouring of sympathy and love since his loss. While it has been a difficult time, your kindness and concern has touched our hearts. For the prayers, visits, food, and calls, we are truly grateful. You are a church family that is a great example of God's love.

The Cannadays
Evelyn, Ron, Paul and Mark

Gifts to the Church

In Memory of William B. Peterson

Charles H. Peterson, Jr., MD, and Mrs. Tallulah Peterson

In Memory of William F. Franck

Amy Joyce

In Memory of Judge English Ford

Amy Joyce

For Cooks Who Care

Frances Bledsoe

In Honor of Bill and Mary Manning

James H. Purks, III

In Honor of Mary Page

James H. Purks, III



Glenna J. Quinlan Harmeyer

April 17, 1925–October 20, 2015

Our dear friend Glenna Harmeyer had been a member of our church family since April 5, 1992. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her daughter and son-in-law, Mary Ann and David McConnell and the rest of her family.

Katharine Fraser Reid

December 12, 1919–October 26, 2015

Our dear friend Katharine Reid first joined our church family in 1951, moved away and returned in 2002. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her family.

*Session Actions***Vehicle Use and Communion Table**

At its stated meeting on September 28, the Session took the following actions:

- Passed a motion to include in the Manual of Operations a policy for driving the church van and the use of personal vehicles. Ask any member of the Session for details.
- Approved a motion from the Worship Committee to place a moveable communion table on the pew level of the Sanctuary for serving communion. The existing communion table will remain where it is.
- The meeting opened and closed with prayer, a devotional was read, and reports were received from Treasurer Milt Davis, Pastor Mark Hinchcliff, and the Christian Education Committee.

From the Moderator of the General Assembly, PC(USA)

The time is now—Join the Conversation!

Dear members and friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

Recently I issued a call to our denomination about issues that have been raised with me since my election as Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) in June of 2014. There is widespread concern, shared by many places in our church, that our denomination is in significant need of refinement. A number of people believe that we have been trying to operate as we did in the past when our membership was many times greater and our resources reflected those numbers. But even more importantly, I hear and believe that God's Spirit is calling us to be a new church in the 21st century.

So what do we do? How do we proceed as faithful servants?

We need you to share your thinking and discernment with the broader church. My Call to the Church has been received by many as a catalyst to help us move forward. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) has been engaged in a conversation for a long time about what is needed to make a difference, and they are taking the unprecedented step of developing a system to gather, assimilate, and convey to the church a process for listening to your call for a new day. They are also seriously considering committing part of next June's assembly in Portland to help us make some decisions. The NEXT Church and the Presbyterian Mission Agency also are doing survey work to determine future directions. Accompanying this letter is the COGA initiative to hear from the denomination.

In order to emerge as a healthy, vital denomination we need to hear from you concerning your own hopes, visions, and concerns about the PC(USA). Each congregation, each organization, each presbytery, each advocacy group, each individual member is critical to providing the kind of input that can help us deal with the realities we are facing in ways that might enable us to restore trust, be transparent, and most of all be faithful to the Lord and Savior we all adore and whom we wish to serve.

Do not respond just one time. If you are on a session, or a committee, or in a group that is different from your local church, fill out one of these forms there too. As an individual, do the same while also participating in your presbytery's response or some other group. Because we will be coordinating the information rather than merely quantifying it, it does not skew the responses if you have input in a number of different ways. In fact, the more our voices are heard the better will be our understanding of reality as we offer information so commissioners can make responsible decisions.

Please trust the process one more time. Please participate. If you don't, we may not hear some very important facts or opinions that need to be placed on the table. Many people feel that God is giving us a *Kairos* moment. But it is up to us to accept it and do something with it.

My Call to the Church is on video and in print (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Gtw_-Xrn8) (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/news/moderator_call_to_church.pdf). Our moment in time is now. We do not have the luxury to discern and debate these matters for years. Our membership and our world are saying we need to get our act together in new and important ways right now.

I have more hope and faith than I ever have that God is leading our church. God is calling the church to be a community formed, shaped, and led by the Risen Christ. You are key in helping us decide how that can happen. With God's help we have the opportunity to be a witness and force for Jesus Christ in ways beyond our imagination.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for participating, and please join me in intentional prayer as we seek God's will and guidance through these critical endeavors.

With gratitude for your love of the church,

Heath

Heath K. Rada

Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014)

<http://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/10/23/time-now-join-conversation/>



Betty Carol Lamm enjoys the prayer shawl that was made by one of the members of our Prayer Shawl Ministry. This group meets on the last Wednesday of each month for fellowship, prayer, and refreshments. Please join us!



Children enjoyed whacking at a piñata at the annual church picnic on Oct. 18.

Pastor Mark reading to children at the Grace Network Pumpkin Patch.



For more photos of church events, visit our website:
<http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org>



- 3 Liz Ferrell, Bill Hensley
- 5 Neil Tatum
- 6 Brooke Cundiff
- 7 Christy Kropp
- 9 Donna Lawhon
- 10 Kathy Washburn
- 11 Leon Gunter, Elizabeth Wotring
- 15 Steve Minter
- 18 Donna King
- 21 Henry Moore
- 23 Sue Benfield
- 24 Judy Ware
- 25 Jean Hill, Ed Pace
- 27 Leanna Blevins, Joe DeVault, Margaret Knight, Analisa O'Toole
- 28 Norah Cundiff

Our Mission: Share God's Love, Embrace Our Neighbors, Nurture Each Other

Steeple Views is published by First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville, VA. Email articles to fpcsteepleviews@gmail.com (Gael Chaney, Editor) or turn in a paper copy to the church office. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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2015 SESSION

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Clerk: Joan Montgomery

Christian Education: Victoria Esarey

Evangelism & Outreach: Nancy Moore

Fellowship: Pearl Minter

Stewardship: Janet Fentress

2015 TRUSTEES

Moderator: Dru Rothrock, Members: David Garland, Billy Kirby, Ed Linker, Bill Manning, Kent Williams