



Presbyterian Web Sites:

Presbytery of the Peaks: www.peakspresbytery.org

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic: www.synatlantic.org

Presbyterian Church (USA): www.pcusa.org

Pby. Disaster Assistance: www.pcusa.org/pda/

Presbyterian Today: www.pcusa.org/pcusa/today

Pby. News Service: www.pcusa.org/pcusa/brief.hem

First Presbyterian Church Staff:

Randall Stevens, Pastor rcstevensfpc@juno.com

Jenny Spivey, Associate Pastor pastorjennyfpc@yahoo.com

Rusty Reaser, Parish Associate

Robert Chapman, Director of Adult Music adultmusic@firstpresby

Betsy Haskins, Director of Children/Youth Music and Contemporary Music Leader iluvpiano.emh@gmail.com

Cynthia Dobrinski, Organist

Sarah P. Altizer, Office Manager office@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

Nancy Erikson, Bookkeeper fpc@kimbanet.com

Church Web Site <http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/>



*Join us for a cup
of coffee every Sunday
morning in the kitchen
before Church School*



Our Web Site: www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

Phone: 276-632-3431 Fax: 276-632- 3802

office@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

First Presbyterian Church
1901 Patrick Henry Avenue
Martinsville, VA 24112

Return Address Requested

STEEPLEVIEWS

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MARTINSVILLE, VA
PERMIT NO. 108



Our Mission is to:

Share God's love, embrace our neighbors, nurture each other.

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

December, 2011

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

I just finished writing my sermon for November 20th and I still have Jesus' words ringing in my ears: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). The next task on my "to do" list is to write my article for the December 2011 *Steepleviews* newsletter.

Jesus' words make me think of the lovely story (*The Other Wise Man*) that Henry Van Dyke wrote. He tells about a fourth Magi, Artaban, who intended to join the other wise men to travel to Bethlehem, following the star. He sold all of his possessions in order to purchase a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl to give to the newborn King. As Artaban hurried to meet up with the other wise men, he came across a man who was stranded and sick with fever. He could not abandon the stranger, so Artaban stopped and nursed the man until he was well.

However, that act of kindness cost him for he arrived to find that the other three Magi had left without him. Artaban was forced to sell his ruby to hire a caravan to carry him to Bethlehem. It grieved him to part with one of the gifts he wanted to give to the King, but he had no choice.

Artaban finally arrived in Bethlehem but, once again, he was too late for Joseph and Mary had fled to Egypt with the Holy Child. Herod's soldiers came that same night. To save the newborn child of the family with whom he was staying, Artaban bribed Herod's captain with the sapphire so that he would not enter their home. The child lived, but the sapphire was gone.

For more than thirty years Artaban wandered throughout the countryside seeking the King of kings, but he always arrived too late. Even so, Artaban never gave up hope. Nor did he ever cease to respond to others in need, often giving help he could scarcely afford. When his wealth gave out, he worked as a common laborer. Yet he never sold the pearl.

Artaban was in Jerusalem when he learned that the man Jesus, who was said to be the King of the Jews, was going to be crucified. Artaban hurried to Golgotha hoping to offer the pearl for the life of the King. On the way, he saw a woman, who begged for his help. Her father was deep in debt and she was to be sold into slavery to pay his creditors off. Artaban gave his last treasure to the creditors in order to set the woman free. Then, he sat down and wept bitterly for he had nothing left to give to the King.

Suddenly, the sky turned dark as night and a great earthquake shook the ground. A heavy tile fell from a rooftop and struck Artaban, and, as he lay dying, those nearby heard him say, "Oh my Lord, my Lord, how often have I failed Thee?" Then a bright radiance gathered around him and the people heard another Voice softly answer, "Oh, no, my good and faithful child. From the beginning you have given to the least of these, my beloved, and, in so doing, you have given to me."

As we give to others, we know the joy of giving to the Christ. In the month ahead, we have numerous opportunities to give to the least of these in the way of Christmas Cheer, the Angel Tree, the Joy Gift special offering, Christmas Share as well as giving of ourselves through our presence at the children's Christmas play on December 4 and the Chancel Choir's Christmas program on December 18. Since God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, in Jesus' name, let us gladly give of ourselves to each other and to all the others God will send our way during the Advent and Christmas season.

May you and yours have a blessed and joyous Christmas!

In Christ's love,
Randy



Happy Birthday in December to....

- 1 Anne Vipperman
- 2 Margaret Hotchkiss, Erik Stegall
- 3 Dru Rothrock
- 4 Ashby Pritchett
- 6 Keith Sanders, Katherine Lester
- 8 Lyn Davis
- 9 Joan Montgomery, Chris Wingfield, Jack Adkins
- 10 Betsy Haskins, Marion Miller
- 11 John Kuhn
- 14 Merv King
- 15 Kim Boyd
- 17 Matthew Mason
- 18 Bill Kirby
- 19 Beth Chapman
- 20 Claire Adkins
- 22 Vera Jane Kuhn, Grayson Russell
- 24 Jackie McLachlan
- 26 Smith Chaney
- 27 Nancy Moore, Cathy Stone, Gael Chaney
- 28 Doc Altizer, Brenda Williams
- 29 Ken Smith, Denise Unterbrink, Lucy Wilson
- 30 Gwendolyn Spivey

....and in January to

- 4 Melissa Seamon, Marie Thompson
- 5 Katherine Earles
- 6 Iliene Hite
- 7 Buck Flythe, Elena King, Rob King
- 8 Stan Cobb
- 9 Jennifer Nease
- 10 Jim Beard
- 11 Debbie Youngman
- 16 Billy Kirby, Wendy Seamon
- 17 Grace Anne Edgerton, Carolyn Franck, Jake Sanders, Carrie Wilson
- 18 Mary Pilson
- 21 Mark Mason, Bonny Pace
- 23 Milt Davis, Natalie Shoebridge
- 24 Greg Darnell
- 26 Chester Buffkin
- 28 David Garland
- 29 Alan Ferguson, Jack Kirby
- 30 Lanie Walsh

31 Jim Haskins, Mattie Wingfield

Any staff member, committee chair or church member who wishes to have input into the 2012 budget may do so either in writing and/or in person by contacting Sarah in the church office not later than December 15.

The Tempo

"Our Musical Pulse"

The Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir will present a *Service of Lessons and Carols* on Sunday evening, December 18, at 7 o'clock. Carols will be sung in reference to the scripture they follow. The scriptures will be read by Judy Mattox, Mike Ware, John Bowles, Lang Mauck, Rusty Reaser, and Ed Linker. Randy Stevens, Pastor, and Jenny Spivey, Associate Pastor, will offer the prayers and transitions within the service. The congregation will participate with the choir in the hymn singing which is sprinkled throughout the service.

I am sure that people in our community want to be a part of this. They are awaiting an invitation from you to join us. The choir will sing to 20, 200, or 400. Guess which number would excite them the most. Do your best this season to come and bring a carload of friends with you. We will appreciate your efforts.

Aloha, Jim!

Jim Beard has signed on to leave home and friends to take up a two-year residence in DC. Of course we will miss him. On the back row of the rehearsal room he leaves three guys to sing for themselves and for him. Usually when someone leaves our family, we ask them to recruit at least a couple of singers to replace them. When I put this to Jim, his reply was that he was working on an Alto. Hope she sings bass.

If you are a Bass or Tenor, you have a special invitation to join us in January when we will begin lots of new music for

the 11 o'clock service as well as for the Spring Music-Worship Service on March 25. Come to think of it, we can use some Altos and Sopranos as well. If you want, you can join us from 8-9 and sing only the Spring Music-Worship Service on March 25, or jump in the pool all the way and sing in the Morning Service Choir too.

The Sanctuary Ringers

The Sanctuary Ringers rang in worship on November 13. They employed a new technique in the Prelude: the Singing Bell Technique. Take a glass of water, at home, wet a finger and circle the rim. You should hear a hum from the glass. That is it.

We are grateful for our "even dozen" ringers. They are working hard and I trust they are ministering in music to those who assemble in worship. Tell a member "thank you" when you see him or her.

Friends Day and Advent Breakfast, Sunday, December 4

Invite your friends to learn about and share in our congregation's life and mission by bringing them to church with you on December 4 for our 8:35 or 11:00 a.m. worship and our annual Advent breakfast from 9:30-10:40 a.m. During the breakfast, everyone will be invited to make and write messages on Christmas cards for friends and shut-ins. We will also decorate our Christmas tree with family ornaments.

Share God's love, embrace our neighbors, nurture each other is our church's mission – let's show that by filling our church with friends and neighbors on our first *Friends Sunday!*

Joy Gift Offering

The annual **Joy Gift Offering** will be received on Sunday, December 12, and Sunday, December 19. Those who benefit from the offering are retired church workers and students of our Presbyterian-related

ethnic schools. Envelopes may be found in the pew racks.

Don't miss *Christ-Myth Busters*, the annual Christmas play to be presented by the Children's Music Program. It will begin at **7:00 p.m., Sunday, December 4**, in the Fellowship Hall. This is a "must-see" for beginning the Advent season. Furthermore, you are sure to leave with a smile and joy in your heart. Guaranteed!! A nursery will be provided.



Calling all Angels! Once again, it is time to call on the Angels in our church family to help spread the joy of Christmas to needy families in our community. The familiar Angel Trees are in the narthex and the Sunday school hallway with gift suggestions for boys and girls. Please take an angel(s), purchase the gifts(s), and **return wrapped gifts by December 12, for delivery on December 11.** Always generous, the members of First Presbyterian Church will take the angels,



purchase the gifts, and return them wrapped for delivery on December 12. There will also be angels on the trees designating gifts of money which will be used to purchase and deliver boxes of food to each family. This is a favorite project of the Mission/Evangelism Committee and we appeal to our church members once again to help make our 2011 Christmas Angel Tree even more successful!

Thanks to those members who assembled and decorated the Chrismon Tree: Randy Stevens, Bill Peterson, Monty Montgomery, Smith Chaney, David Price, Bonnie Price, Tyler Price, Matthew Price, and Sarah Altizer.

This Christmas Eve there will be one special worship service at 5:00

p.m. This single service will allow us to gather with our families, church members, and friends to offer God our worship in gratitude for the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This worship service, which is based around the beloved lessons



and carols of the Christmas season, will include special music by guest musicians as well as the Chancel Choir; the nativity scene will be acted out by the children; and we will light candles and sing with joy to the world. Babysitting will be provided in the nursery, which is located under the sanctuary, across from the ELI room.

On Christmas Day,

we will have the opportunity to gather in the sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. to sing all of the familiar and well-loved Christmas carols and hymns until 10:30 a.m. Then, the worship service will follow at 11:00 a.m. (there will not be an early worship service or Sunday School on Christmas Day.). Please feel free to bring your favorite Christmas goodies to share with one another before and after the Christmas caroling time.



On Sunday, January 1, 2012, we will return to our usual schedule. We will have the early worship service with gathering music at 8:35 a.m., Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., and the later worship service at 11:00 a.m.

Please note: we are invited to join with other Presbyterians from the Presbytery of the Peaks in a joint worship service on **Sunday, January 1, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. in the Salem Civic Center.** The Rev. Dr. Brian Blount, the president of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, will be preaching, and there will be joyful music led by choirs open to all. If you are interested in attending this New Year's Day special worship service, please let Randy or Sarah Altizer in the church office know. It would be great if we can fill our church bus and bring in the New Year by participating in this special worship event.

Christmas Cheer: Saturday, December 3, 2011, at 8:30 a.m., we will meet at the warehouse at 211 Doyle Street (behind the former Martinsville/Henry county Rescue Squad building). Want to help needy families in our community? The Youth Group and members of the entire congregation are encouraged to join in a community-wide endeavor to pack 1,000 boxes of food for hungry families in our community.

Beginning January 21, 2012, the Mission/Evangelism Committee will begin serving breakfast to Patrick Henry Elementary students and their parents on one Saturday each month. Of course, a project like this cannot happen without volunteers as cooks, servers, set-up, and clean up. Please help us with this new endeavor.

I would like to participate as a
_____ Cook
_____ Server
_____ Set Up
_____ Clean-Up.

Signed: _____

Questions? Call Bill Kirby 638-2587 or Heidi Pinkston 638-3757.

Donations to Various Funds

General Memorial Fund

Edna Campbell – IMO Ann Crouch
The Crouch Family Nieces and Nephews –
IMO Ann Crouch

Music Memorial Fund

Lucy Wilson

Pastors Discretionary Fund

Mrs. Linda Pickett

Columbarium Fund

Doris Byrd – IMO Harris Byrd

Grace Network advertises for Executive Director

The position is responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County, Inc. including service programs, fundraising, and agency operations. Areas of responsibility include planning and evaluation of programs; implementation of policies as developed and approved by the board of Directors; management and evaluation of personnel, both paid and volunteers; fiscal management and accountability; fundraising and public relations. This is a full-time position, hired by and directly accountable to the Board through its elected chair. Further details may be found on the bulletin board beside the Church Office.

<p>STEEPLEVIEWS is published 12 times per year. Editor: Patrice Newnam, Publisher: Sarah Altizer; Mailing Staff: volunteers</p>
