

February 10, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder, Monica Stevens

February 9, 2022

Drawn Together

Matthew 18:20

Last month I mentioned that I have been feeding the birds on my kitchen window ledge. This past Monday morning when it was so wet, cold, and icy I seemed to have more birds than usual. I noticed that at any given moment I could have from four to ten birds from several different species sharing the space and happily pecking away at the seeds and nut pieces on the window ledge. The birds all looked different, had their own personalities, and their preferred way of eating. The titmice, chickadees, blue jays, and nuthatches seemed to prefer to land, select a morsel, and fly off to eat it in the trees. Goldfinches, house finches, juncos, and doves all liked to land on the ledge and feed until they were full or startled into flying into the safety of the trees. The cardinals, sparrows, wrens, and downy woodpeckers could go either way. Occasionally, one of the birds would get a little cranky with another bird, but it only lasted a second or two and then they all resumed eating. If the window ledge reached capacity, the waiting birds would perch in a nearby tree until a spot opened up. Even when the larger birds such as doves and the red-bellied woodpecker came looking for seeds or nuts, the other birds would either move over to give them space or fly off to the tree and wait until there was more room.

As I watched, I became aware that I was seeing a living metaphor for part of God's vision for humanity. Left to their own devices in the wild, most of these birds would not be eating in such close proximity to the others. Each species would do their own thing to survive as best as they could. However, all of these birds were drawn together by the availability of food at the window compared to the scarcity of food in the wild. This is where I recognized a metaphor applicable to humanity. Left to our own devices, most people would remain in their family groups or in their well-travelled daily paths without giving much notice to what others were doing unless they had a good reason to do so. God offers us a reason and the means to interact with others who are different from those in our close social circle by feeding us on God's word and nurturing us through Jesus' presence in the Holy Spirit. God gives us himself to draw us together.

Unlike the very temporary avian unity produced by bird seed at my bird feeder, the unity that God offers through the sustenance he provides has lasting value and effect. God's Word and presence empowers people from our own church and people from very different cultures, ethnicities, viewpoints, races, and economic and social backgrounds to join together to take part in God's vision of one human family united through the love of Jesus Christ. The closer we draw to God through prayer, praise, worship, study, and service, the more we find we have in common with others who once seemed impossibly foreign to us. As we grow stronger and deeper in Christ's love we are able to see beauty where we once sensed only strangeness, and we can replace our fear with the joy and comfort of recognizing the kindred spirits of our siblings in God's family. When we choose to feed on a diet of God's love and care, our awareness of the differences that once divided us starts to diminish, and our awareness of the differences that enrich us begins to increase. We begin to live out the words we say every Sunday when we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Living into God's vision for humanity isn't always easy, but the good news is that Jesus has promised wherever "two or three gather in my name, I am there among them." May the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit fill us and strengthen us each day as we commit ourselves to living and sharing God's vision of unity with all of God's people. Alleluia! 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 OMICRON 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 sixth Sunday after the Epiphany either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by
Elder Monica Stevens

A Matter of Trust
Based on Luke 6:17-26 and Jeremiah 17:5-10



Please welcome **Spencer Koger** as our Interim Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church. He was our guest organist in January and we are delighted he is willing to serve in an Interim capacity for the next several months.

Spencer is a native of Bassett and graduate of Christopher Newport University with a B.A. in Communication Studies and Leadership Studies.

He comes to us with extensive tutelage under Peter Ramsey, Organist of Pocahontas Baptist Church and Kevin Kwan, Choral Master and Principal Organist of Christ & St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Norfolk, VA and 11 years private piano instruction under Claudia Dean Switzer.

We have charged Spencer with bringing our music program back to pre Covid standards.

Also, he is overseeing long over due maintenance and cleaning of our organ, so we know he will be quite busy in the months ahead.

Please stay through his postlude on Sunday and give him a warm welcome to our church family!

From the Transition Team

When Pastor Mark retired on August 31, our church began the process of finding a new pastor. A Transition Team, made up of Monica Stevens, Denny Casey, and Joan Montgomery, was appointed by the Session's Administration Committee. In an effort to keep the congregation informed we want to tell you the work that has been done and the work to be done.

- The Transition Team met with Carl Utley, our General Presbyter, on 9/16/21 for training.
- Responsibilities of the Transition Team are:
 1. Identify and recommend to the Session a candidate for Interim Pastor;
 2. Identify Transitional Priorities for Interim start up;
 3. Consult staff and elders about needs from Interim Pastor;
 4. Complete the Presbytery's Ministry Information Form (MIF) and seek appropriate approvals. The MIF describes our church in location, membership, mission statement, narrative questions, and top 10 Leadership Competencies, salary range, and basically what we are looking for in an Interim Pastor;
 5. Work with the Interim during transition as requested by Interim; and
 6. Communicate to congregation about transitional process.
- We were charged with interviewing staff and session members for what they wanted professionally and personally in an Interim Pastor. That has been completed.
- The Transition team met several times to consolidate the interview responses and to complete the MIF.
- The Ministry Information Form was approved by the Session at its November meeting and was approved by the Presbytery.
- Candidates were identified based on matching our needs with candidate applications.
- The Transition Team had its second training on interviewing candidates for the Interim Pastor position by the Presbytery in January.
- Thirty-eight matches were considered and the Transition Team watched sermons from the top 6 candidates.
- An email was sent to the six candidates to determine their interest in our church and to request an initial Zoom meeting as a first contact.
- The next steps involve Zoom interviews, vetting by the Presbytery office, and possible in-person interviews. From that we are hopeful the person God has chosen for us will be evident and his/her name can be brought to the Session for approval.

Although the process seems slow, even to us, we want the congregation to know that the process is moving forward. The Transition Team welcomes input from the

congregation by contacting Monica Stevens at mlkstev@hotmail.com, Denny Casey at d.a.casey@comcast.net, or Joan Montgomery at joanmontgo@gmail.com. We also ask for your prayers during this process.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLE MEETING Monday, February 14
at **10:30** am at 1 Starling Ave. in Martinsville. The meeting will be hosted by Patsy Stanley. Pearl Minter will be teaching **lesson 6**.

The next Presbytery of the Peaks Meeting is Thursday, February 17 at 9:00 am on Zoom.

Confirmation Class

Plans are underway for confirmation class to take place this Spring. If your child (8th grade or older) has not been through confirmation and would like to take part, please contact Sam (sam@peakspresbytery.org). For those already signed up, more details will be coming soon!



Anne Trower Wyatt Peterson

August 1, 1940 - February 6, 2022



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Anne Peterson.
Anne passed away on Sunday, February 6.

The full obituary can be found
at: <https://www.moodyfuneralservices.com/obituaries/anne-peterson>

The service will be held at First Presbyterian Church on **Saturday, Feb 19th
at 2 PM** with Rev. Mark Hinchcliff officiating.

A reception will be held immediately following the service.



Shea Williams Francisco

1981 - 2022

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Shanna Francisco-King on the passing of Shanna's brother, Shea. Shea passed away on Sunday, February 6. Services will be held Friday, February 18 at 3:00 pm. at Simpson Funeral Home Peters Creek Road Chapel. The family will receive friends 1 hour prior to service time.

The full obituary can be found
at: <https://simpsonfuneral.com/tribute/details/3083/Shea-Francisco/obituary.html>

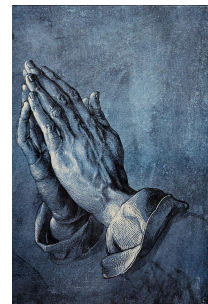
Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Anne Peterson Family, Shea Francisco Family (Shanna Francisco-King's brother), Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Mike Boswell, Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Judy Epperly (Nancy Baker), Daniel Handy, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Troy Spencer (Pam Rakes' father), Scott Stevens (M. Stevens), Bruce Thomas (M. Stevens), Carl Utley, 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](tel:2766323431), 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 Pearl Minter at [276 340-3476](tel:2763403476).

Grace Network Donations

The 1st quarter 2022 food donation item is **Baking Mix (small) or Flour**



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*



Steeple Views Reminder

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Steeple Views is published weekly on Thursdays. **DEADLINE** for submission of articles is Tuesday evening.

If you have information you want included in Steeple Views, **PLEASE SEND TO: fpcsteepleviews@gmail.com**. If you send to another email address, the information may get lost and subsequently not included in the newsletter.

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Sharon Kirby, Editor



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/

Church Office Phone: [276-632-3431](tel:276-632-3431)

Our mailing address is:

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Drema Austin, Bookkeeper, bookkeeper@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Carol Carter, Weekday School Director, wds@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

Spencer Koger, Interim Director of Music, srk86879@gmail.com

THE SESSION

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Stewardship and Communication

Betty Hudson: Christian Education

Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

Class of 2024

Pearl Minter: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Neil Tatum: Facilities

Liz Ferrell: Worship

TRUSTEES

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

2024: Duke Ferrell, Milt Davis

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