

May 12, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder, Monica Stevens

May 11, 2022

The Difference Between “the Other” and “One Another”

John 13:34-35

If you have raised young children or been around young children, you may have noticed that at first infants are not too choosy about who holds them and comforts them, but as they near six months of age, they begin to show a definite preference for certain people and positively wail if an unfamiliar person comes near them. This is because the child is developing a sense of self. They are learning what is “me” and what is “not me.”

Another important skill that children begin developing at an early age is the ability to sort objects into recognizable groups and categories. That’s one reason there are so many infant and toddler toys that encourage children to manipulate objects and sort them by size, shape, and/or color. As children grow, they learn to differentiate things into different groupings by their characteristics. For example types of animals could be identified by their shape, size, body covering, color and markings, means of movement, habitat, diet, and so on. As they grow, information is sorted into subjects such as science, math, history, English and they learn how to use the various components of each subject to create meaning or solve problems. The highest levels of learning and thought involve taking the disparate elements of what we have learned across all disciplines and integrating them into new concepts and materials that add to our understanding or quality of life.

The ability to sort and categorize new data helps us make sense of the world around us, but as we continue to receive more data, we also learn to revise the way we think about, categorize, and use older information in the light of the new. This is especially true in the way we learn to think about people. Babies go from sorting people into me and not me, to grouping people around them into familiar people like close family members, and people outside of that circle who are unfamiliar. People in the inner circle generally create a sense of security and safety while unfamiliar people cause anxiety and unease. As we grow, we modify and expand who fits into the familiar and unfamiliar groups, and our response to each group is based on what our life experiences have been. If people around us have been loving, reliable, and trustworthy we tend to be more open to unfamiliar people and experiences. Lack of

security and care from the familiar group breeds fear and suspicion of the unfamiliar. This is how we are made. It is part of our nature that is intended to help us grow and live safely.

Unfortunately, there are those who would manipulate our basic instincts and create suspicion and fear toward certain groups of people for their own ends. This practice has become known as “othering.” This is not anything new. Creating an “us” and “them” scenario, whether justified or not, is as old as humanity itself. However, in this day and age of instant news and social media it has become a well-used tool to sway public opinion and create division useful to people with an agenda. Want to start a war? Convince your people that the people you intend to attack are somehow evil or dangerous, even if it isn’t true. Want to keep power in the hands of those who have been in power? Convince people that those outside the present power structure are evil or dangerous, whether it is true or not. Amplify and demonize differences to create fear, mistrust, and enmity between people. Separate people into “like me” and “not like me”, us and them, safe and unsafe. This is what “othering” does. It is a useful strategy for pushing an agenda, but it is unhealthy and ultimately destructive to the society where it is being used.

Jesus had a different way to think about people. He said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

This was how Jesus lived his earthly life. Jesus gathered people from all walks of life around him. He taught them, ministered to them, healed them, ate with them, and most of all, loved them. Even when he scolded people, it was to instruct them in a better way to live, not to ostracize them and demean them. Jesus recognized differences among people, but underlying any differences, Jesus recognized that we all had things in common. 1) We are all beloved children of God even if some people don’t know, understand, or accept that. 2) God loved the world so much that God sent Jesus into the world to model God’s love that seeks to gather all people to himself. 3) The way to include people was through love, not by “othering” and shaming.

God loves because it God’s nature to do so. Jesus brought that love to humankind in the flesh and he instructed his disciples (then and now) to share that love. It is easy to remember that there are people who are different from us, but we must also remember that Christ Jesus came to reconcile all people to God because they are all God’s beloved children. We love because God first loved us and Jesus tells us that we are to love one another with that same love. God’s love is inclusive, not exclusive. It is the difference between excluding others and including one another.

Through the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit may we all learn to love inclusively as Jesus commanded us to do. 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.

COVID-19 transmission rates are low in our area so you may wear a mask based on your personal preference, however, those who are not vaccinated should wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth while anywhere inside the church and sanctuary. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19, should remain at home.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Friday 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

If you are not fully vaccinated, please wear a mask. If you have symptoms, test positive, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 please remain at home.



Please join us for worship this **Fifth Sunday in Easter** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Kym Wiederholt

Everything Old and Everything New

Based on Revelation 21:1-6 and Acts 11:1-18

Help Needed!

We will return to passing the communion and offering plates on June 5. Help is needed for communion set up and clean up. Contact Liz Ferrell ([276-734-6376](tel:276-734-6376)) if you are interested in helping.

Worship Service Update

Due to a tied voting from both the congregation and the session, the time of worship **will remain at 10:00 a.m.** until an interim pastor is hired. At that time another vote will be taken.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **Briana Tatum** will be performing in Puffs at Magna Vista High School May 20 & 21 at 7pm. Tickets are available for purchase on their website.
 - **Church Workday** - May 21 beginning at 8 am
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SPECIAL OFFERINGS PENTECOST

The Pentecost Offering, which benefits youth and young adult ministries of the PC(USA), **will be collected now through June 5.** A portion of the offering also stays in our own congregation to benefit our own youth ministry. Designated envelopes can be found in the pew racks.

back2school

It is time to celebrate the 16th year of the back2school outreach event that has served over 32,000 kids with the efforts of over 19+ churches across our communities and beyond!

Won't you join us in serving these students and making a difference in their lives?

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

There are many opportunities to let your gifts shine during this great event.

Registration

- Saturday, July 9 (9:00-noon) at The Uptown Ministry Center
- Tuesday, July 19 (6-8 pm) at The Uptown Ministry Center

Pack the Bus

- At Walmart, Martinsville July 15-17. Shifts TBD

Filling Backpacks

- At the Future Home of Community Fellowship 700 Commerce Court, Martinsville
Tuesday, August 2 (6:00 pm)

The Big Event

- At The Uptown Ministry Center (Behind Rania's) Saturday, August 6 (7:30 am)
Shifts will be determined

If you can help, please email: Tracy Hinchcliff tracy.hinchcliff@gracenetorkmhc.org
or call [409-330-0847](tel:409-330-0847)

*Jesus said "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them!
For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children"*

Matthew 19:14

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Hollis Edward Crowe II Family (L. Pritchett's brother), Pat Baumann, Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Meryln Bremner, Mike Boswell, Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb, Daniel Handy, Melanie Hardy, Iliene Hite, Leonard Kelley (M Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Lauren Prince, Susan Rosser, Troy Spencer (P Rakes' father), Scott Stevens, Bruce Thomas, Carl Utley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski, persecuted Christians and all refugees and immigrants forced to flee their countries due to violence and tyranny.



Please submit prayer requests to Rita in the church office, [\(276\) 632-3431](tel: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 Pearl Minter at [276 340-3476](tel:276-340-3476).

Grace Network Donations

The 2nd quarter 2022 food donation item is **Saltine Crackers**



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

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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Doug Talbot, Worship Technology

Coordinator, worshiptechnology@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

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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