

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

December 2013

Martinsville, Virginia

From the Bridge Pastor

The Good News of God-with-us

On the radio I hear the classic song ring out again, “it’s the most wonderful time of the year!” I frown a little that I have heard that song since the day after Halloween. As the commercial side of the season has crept earlier and earlier, it seems that the time leading up to Christmas is rather “the busiest time of the year!” Our family schedules, social schedules, and even church schedules are packed with events and trips and shopping.

Earlier in November, when Clint and I attended a week of continuing education at Union Seminary in Richmond, we had a conversation with other clergy colleagues about the “what, how and why” of ministry in churches today. Oftentimes, churches spend a lot of time and energy on the “what,” planning programs, having meetings, calculating budgets, counting attendance figures. But if churches get caught up in a focus on those things, sometimes the “why” can get lost. Our “why” is the heart of who we are, our purpose and mission as God’s people.

I connected this insight to the Advent and Christmas season. For me, the deep “why” of Christmas is expressed in John’s Gospel, “the Word became flesh and lived with us,” and in Matthew’s Gospel, “He shall be called Emmanuel, God with us.” I’ve seen some poetic and thoughtful writers express it this way “Christmas is not about presents, but God’s presence.”

I’ll admit right up front, I get as busy as the next person during the Christmas season. My prayer and hope for myself and for all of us is that we can focus less on the “what” (decorations, events, presents) and more on the “why” of Christmas. The way I think to do this is to take a lesson from God in Jesus—as Jesus was God-with-us, let’s be with-each-other in this season. Call up a friend or church member you haven’t seen in a while, come to worship with the church family each Sunday, make a point of giving your presence as the best gift this season!

Peace,
Jenny

Christian Education Committee

Please join us on Sunday, December 1, as we begin the Advent season with breakfast and a time for fellowship. Breakfast will begin at 9:30 and we have an exciting menu planned! Pancake lasagna, sausage, curried fruit, hot apple cider, assorted muffins, juice and coffee. Please bring your whole family and help us welcome in the Christmas Season!

Worship Committee

Your Worship Committee has been busy planning for the Season of Advent and Christmas.

Sunday, December 1, is the first Sunday of Advent. The Hanging of the Greens will be a part of both worship services that morning. This tradition, begun last year at First Presbyterian Martinsville, involves the bringing of the symbols of our faith that prepare us for Christmas and the coming of Christ into our lives. These symbols, the wreaths, the Chrismon Tree and Chrismons, the Advent Wreath and candles, will be placed in the sanctuary during the service. Members will be given Chrismon ornaments to hang on the Tree at the appropriate time.

Once again members of our church will light the candles on the Advent Wreath each Sunday during Advent at both services and on Christmas Eve.

The times for the Christmas Eve services have been changed this year. There will be a worship service at **6:00 p.m.** and another at **9:00 p.m.** Both services will include a brief message as well as an opportunity to bring an offering of mittens, hats, scarves, warm socks or a monetary offering. These will be given to the Salvation Army for distribution to those who can most benefit from them. There will be a celebration of **the Lord’s Supper** at the 9:00 service.

On Sunday afternoon, December 15, at 3pm, the Chancel Choir and Sanctuary Ringers along with Virginia King, violinist and Lynn Pritchett, flautist, will present their **annual Christmas music program** in the Sanctuary. Please invite your neighbors and friends to come and enjoy the music of the season. A reception and fellowship time will follow. Any members and friends from King’s Grant who would like to come and need transportation, please call Sarah in the church office 632-3431 by Thursday, Dec. 12.



Upcoming Worship in December

Sunday, December 1—**First Sunday of Advent**, Isaiah 2:1-5, Matthew 24:36-44. As we begin the season of preparation for the birth of the Christ child, we will explore the meaning of traditional Christian and Christmas symbols during the Hanging of the Greens service. We will light the Advent wreath with the candle of hope.

Sunday, December 8—**Second Sunday of Advent**, Isaiah 11:1-10, Matthew 3:1-12. We will light the Advent wreath with the candle of peace.

Sunday, December 15—**Third Sunday of Advent**, Isaiah 35:1-10, Matthew 11:2-11. We will light the Advent wreath with the candle of joy.

Sunday, December 22—**Fourth Sunday of Advent**, Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25. We will light the Advent wreath with the candle of love..

Tuesday, December 24—**Christmas Eve Worship**, 6pm and 9pm, read the accompanying article from the Worship Committee about these special services.

Sunday, December 29—First Sunday of Christmas

Congregational Care Committee

Student Addresses: FPC and Congregational Care need addresses for ALL college students and boarding school students. If you gave the address last year to FPC, please confirm the address. That means we need to hear from EVERYONE who wants their child to get an exam goody box in early December. Please call or e-mail Sarah (sarahfpcoffice@gmail.com) with your child's address. If you know when their exams are, that would be very helpful.

The Congregational Care Committee will **deliver poinsettias** to our shut-ins during the week of December 13.

Needed are members of the congregation to help with this delightful task. Please call Carrie Buffkin at 276-734-2697 and volunteer to help! It is a very rewarding job!



The Parents of Young Children (POYC) group is planning a Christmas party and celebration to be in the Fellowship Hall on the **afternoon of December 14th**. Stay tuned for more details!

Mission Committee

Angel Tree Project

Thank you for your continued support of the Angel Tree Project.

This year, seventeen children who were selected by their school counselors and teachers will receive gifts and food baskets from our congregation. The need in our community is great and we had one family to ask for food rather than toys. These gifts will be delivered Tuesday, December 17, between 4:00 and 5:00. Call Nancy Baker, 638-7923 if you would be able to help with the deliveries.



Two Cents a Meal Program Grant

We are pleased to report that our church received a local portion of the Two Cents a Meal program in our presbytery. This grant was awarded to us to continue our efforts to alleviate hunger in our area. Our thanks go to Heidi Pinkston for completing the successful application for this grant.

Community Breakfasts

The Community Breakfast continues the third Saturday of each month. In November, 72 people enjoyed food and fellowship. There were many new visitors and all seemed to enjoy a time together. There were questions about our programs with specific questions about what Christmas programs will be offered. It is important that we offer a warm welcome to our guests and enter into conversations with them. Contact any member of the Mission Committee or Nancy Baker if you can help in any way.



Cottage Place

Recently, the residents of Cottage Place enjoyed a dinner and their usual Bingo games led by Nancy Moore. The next gathering with them will be **December 16** from 5:30-7:30. Volunteers are preparing the dinner followed by music and the usual Bingo!!

From the Music Department



The Sanctuary Ringers still have two vacancies. We can teach you how to read music and play, and no prior experience is required. It is fun and does not take a long time to learn. It is not as hard as learning a band or keyboard instrument as the player is not responsible for many notes. People who do not read music or have never played before will be given private instruction for beginners for several weeks before integrating into the bell choir. Anyone interested in learning to play handbells starting in January please notify Cynthia Dobrinski or the church office. Please come and join us. We have been practicing on Wednesdays at 5:45 but usually move to Tuesdays in the spring because of the Lenten services.

Upcoming Youth Group Events

December 7th- Youth and any other interested church members will participate in Christmas Cheer. It will held at 211 Doyle Street (previous location). We will pack boxes starting at 9 am and continue until all boxes have been packed. Afterwards, the youth will go out to breakfast or lunch.



December 15th- Youth will meet at the church for dinner, and then make and decorate Christmas cookies.

December 20 & 21- LOCK IN. The youth will meet at the church around 8pm, and then head to Danville, to the movies. After the movie, we will return to the church, to be "locked-in". Friends are always welcome! More details will be determined closer to the date. Contact Laura Stevens with any questions or for more information.

Pastor Nominating Committee Update

The PNC has reduced the applicant field down to 14 candidates. We are currently checking references and viewing sermons where available. This process will further reduce the field.

Evangelism and Outreach Committee

Over the past couple of months we have started to tell our faith stories, as individuals and as a church family. This is the heart of what "evangelism" means, to tell the good news of what God has done, is doing, and will do in our lives—and to share that good news with those around us.

As a part of this ongoing project, "Why I am a Presbyterian" cards were passed out at the October Committee supper, and they will be available for others to fill out and displayed in the Church building. We had a delicious luncheon at the end of November on the theme of "Our Faith Story and Journey" during which people were invited to map their faith journeys.

This conversation will be ongoing, so please plan to join in as we join our faith stories with the familiar story of the Christmas season. Sunday, December 8, in the afternoon from 3-5 p.m., several committees will sponsor a Family Workshop with hands-on activities involving "Sharing Our Journey."

For more info contact chairperson Nancy Moore, nbmoore@comcast.net, 276-638-7777 (home), 276-732-3400 (mobile).

Sympathy of the congregation is extended to:

... Betty Hudson on the death of her mother, in Tennessee.

...Dot Bryson on the death of her son, David Irby Bryson, November 10, 2013 in Greensboro, NC.



SAVE

THE

DATE

Vacation Bible School 2014

July 7-11



- ...in December to:
- 1 Anne Vipperman
 - 3 Dru Rothrock,
 - 4 Ashby Pritchett
 - 5 Mary Mac Knighton
 - 6 Ken Wilson, Keith Sanders

- 8 Lyn Davis
- 9 Joan Montgomery, Chris Wingfield, Jack Adkins
- 10 Marion Miller
- 11 John Kuhn
- 14 Merv King
- 15 Kim Boyd
- 17 Matthew Mason
- 18 Bill Kirby, Eleanor Spivey
- 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 Marie Thompson
- 5 Katherine Earles
- 6 Iliene Hite
- 7 Buck Flythe, Rob King, King
- 9 Jennifer Nease
- 10 Jim Beard
- 11 Cathy Martin
- 16 Wendy Luther, Billy Kirby
- 17 Carolyn Franck, Jake Sanders, Grace Anne Edgerton
- 19 Helen Flythe
- 21 Mark Mason, Bonny Pace
- 24 Greg Darnell
- 26 Bud Buffkin
- 28 David Garland
- 29 Rusty Reaser, Alan Ferguson, Jack Kirby
- 31 Mattie Wingfield

The Session 2013-2014

Moderator, Jenny Spivey
Clerk, Joan Montgomery

Mission: Nancy Baker
Administration: Chris Beeler
Fellowship: Pearl Minter
Christian Education: JoAnne Sanders
Stewardship: Lang Mauck
Worship: Cathy Stone
Congregational Care: Virginia Truitt

Evangelism and Outreach: Nancy Moore
Jennifer's Adventures in North Africa

Jennifer Stanley, daughter of Patsy Stanley and a second-year medical student in Charleston, SC, will be speaking about her participation in a medical mission program in North Africa last summer. She will be sharing information about her experience with this program Sunday, December 22, at 9:40 a.m. in the Reed Classroom.

As a medical student, she worked alongside the physicians on her team where she interviewed and performed basic physical exams. In two weeks her team saw, treated, and prayed for almost 1200 patients.

She reported that, while the team was selective in overtly sharing the Gospel and their faith with patients for security reasons, by being Americans it was assumed that they were Christians, which was used to the team's advantage. They were able to share Christ's love with the patients simply by treating them with love and respect which sharply contrasted with the way they were treated by most North African doctors. Come and meet Jennifer and learn about her Medical Mission experience!

Stewardship Committee

On Commitment Sunday, November 10, church members brought their financial pledges to support the ministry of First Presbyterian in 2014. We

celebrated and rejoiced in the generous response of a large number of folks! But, as we anticipate continuing the exciting programs which are currently part of our church mission, we would like to hear from others.

Perhaps you failed to receive a pledge card in the mail, or perhaps one was inadvertently misplaced. If that is the case, please call the Church Office at 632-3431 or call Lang Mauck at 632-1486, and a pledge card will be mailed to you promptly.

As grateful recipients of God's many blessings, returning a portion of our gifts is an important ingredient of responsible church membership. Thank you for helping prepare our 2014 church budget by submitting your pledge of giving.



Use this space to tell your readers about your business, product, service, or event. This text should tell the reader what your offer can do for them.

List your hours or the time and date of your event.

Describe your location by landmark or area of town.

Organization Name
Tel: 555 555 5555

Organization

First Presbyterian Church
1901 Patrick Henry Ave.
Martinsville, VA 24112

Address Service Requested

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MARTINSVILLE, VA
PERMIT NO. 108

*Our Mission is to:
Share God's love, embrace our neighbors, nurture each other*



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:

Jenny Spivey, Bridge Pastor pastorjennyfpc@yahoo.com
Cynthia Dobrinski, Music Director and Organist CDMartinsville@aol.com
Sarah P. Altizer, Office Manager sarahfpcoffice@gmail.com
Sandra Brooks, Bookkeeper, fpc@kimbanet.com

Our Web Site: www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org
Phone: 276-632-3431 *Fax:* 276-632- 3802
sarahfpcoffice@gmail.com

Our Sunday Schedule:

8:30 Contemporary Worship (Chapel)
9:30 Fellowship Reception
(join us for coffee in the Fellowship Hall)
9:45 Sunday School
11:00 Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

December 2013

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>1 COMMUNION 8:30a Early Service 9:30a Advent Breakfast 11:00a Trad. Worship 6:00p Bible Study</p>	<p>2 3:00p GPS</p>	<p>3 10a Cooks Who Care 5:30 Cooks Who Care 7:00p Worship Band</p>	<p>4 5:45p Sanc. Rngrs 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 9:00 a Youth Group at Christmas Cheer</p>
<p>8 8:30a Early Service 9:30a Fellowship Reception 9:45a Sunday School 11:00a Trad. Worship 3:00p Advent Faith Story Workshop 6:00p Bible Study</p>	<p>9 6:00p Supper 7:00p Committee Night</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 5:45p Sanc. Rngrs 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 POYC Christmas Party</p>
<p>15 8:30a Early Service 9:30a Fellowship Reception 9:45a Sunday School 11:00a Trad. Worship 3:00p Chancel Choir Concert 5:30p Youth Group</p>	<p>16 Steeple Views Deadline 5:30p Cottage Place Dinner</p>	<p>17 7:00p Worship Band</p>	<p>18 5:45p Sanc. Rngrs 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 Youth Group LOCK-IN</p>	<p>21 8:00a Community Breakfast</p>
<p>22 8:30a Early Service 9:30a Fellowship Reception 9:45a Sunday School 11:00a Trad. Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 6:00p Christmas Eve Worship 9:00p Christmas Eve Worship w/ Communion</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day! Church Office Closed</p>	<p>26 Church Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 8:30a Early Service 9:30a Fellowship Reception 9:45a Sunday School 11:00a Trad. Worship</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>January 2014 1 Church Office Closed</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>