

March 30, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder, Monica Stevens

March 30, 2022

Remembrance, Not Hindrance

Isaiah 43:16-21

"Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings our chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished like a wick."

God is the God of history. That is, God has been active in the history of the world and humankind since the beginning of creation. The Scriptures relate the story of that relationship and so much of our faith is based on the remembrance of God's mighty acts throughout history. The opening verses of today's reading calls to mind God opening the sea for the Israelites and God closing it over the Egyptian army that was pursuing them. God was creating a nation under divine rule when he rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. The Hebrew Scriptures are full of references to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the God who brought his people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Remembrance was built into the very fabric of the Jewish faith which makes the next verse seem oddly out of place.

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old."

Today's passage was written for the Judean exiles in Babylon. They had been there for over a generation and it seemed as if they would never return to Jerusalem. They had acclimated themselves to living in a foreign land and culture and many were doing well there. When they remembered their old life, they were filled with hopelessness and despair, so they invested themselves in their current life. Their longing for and romanticizing the way things used to be in "the good old days" prevented them from having any hope for a different future. That is why God tells them not to dwell on the past—it is keeping them from looking ahead and trusting God with their future.

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

Cyrus, ruler of the Medes and Persians, was conquering the Babylonian territory and he was willing to allow the Jewish exiles to return and rebuild Jerusalem. God was using the most unlikely of agents to redeem and restore his people to Judea, but many just couldn't, wouldn't understand or believe what God was doing. If things weren't going to go back to the way they used to be in their "glory days," what was the point of leaving the relative comfort and security of the life they had now? Why risk doing something out of their comfort zone? In the exodus from Egypt the people had to trust and rely on God for everything, and God brought them through the wilderness into the Promised Land. Now God was proposing a second exodus—from a life in exile into life in the land that God had promised. God was offering them a new beginning.

"I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I will give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they may declare my praise."

What God was proposing was a journey. There would be risk, there would be toil and travel. There would be the work of rebuilding once they got to Jerusalem, but through it all God promised to provide what they needed. Isaiah uses the metaphor of water to say that in the barren wilderness of the journey God would provide abundantly—not just enough to keep them going, but rivers of water in the desert. There would be such abundant provision that even the wild animals of the desert would praise God. God wanted to draw his people to himself so that they would live in his grace and be a beacon of his love to the world.

I chose this scripture from this week's lectionary for the devotional message because I believe it speaks clearly to us today. In the last twenty years our congregation and our community have gone through a number of painful changes. It is very tempting to remember the way things used to be and get locked in the hazy trap of nostalgia that tells us things will never again be the way they were. This kind of nostalgia tells us we have no future and the best is behind us. This kind of nostalgia is a death sentence. In the midst of our living in the past, God breaks in and says, "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" We are emerging from the exile of Covid restrictions and God promises that he will abundantly provide for us as we journey toward the future he has already prepared for us. There will be risks and changes and toil and rebuilding, but God will be there with us, drawing us to himself so that we may be a beacon of love to the world. Thanks be to God that he invites us to join him in the new thing he is doing in our midst. All glory be to God now and forevermore!

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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 **Fifth Sunday in Lent** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Rev. John Wiederholt

What Do You Believe About the Resurrection?

Based upon Philippians 3:4b-14 and Isaiah 43:16-21

Martinsville-Henry County Ministerial Association



Sunday, April 10, 2022 at 2 PM

***Smith River Sports Complex Amphitheater
1000 Irisburg Rd. Axton, VA***

Open air facility, bring your lawn chairs
ALL ARE WELCOME

ALL CHURCHES, ALL DENOMINATIONS Join in a tradition of over 40 years.

Bring your palm branches to wave as we begin Holy Week together in community

Live Stream also available
[https://www.facebook.com/
FBCEmartinsville](https://www.facebook.com/FBCEmartinsville)

Rain Location:

First Baptist Church, Martinsville
23 Starling Ave. Martinsville VA



An email was sent out Tuesday, March 29 requesting your input on what time you prefer Sunday morning worship. If you have not already cast your vote, please do so by selecting a time below:

Service is currently at 10:00 a.m.

Please let Rita know by Sunday, May 1st. The Session will tally votes at the May 2nd session meeting and, if a new time is voted in, it will begin June 1st.

Check one:

10:00 a.m. _____

10:30 a.m. _____

11:00 a.m. _____

Announcements

Women of the Church Circle Meeting, Monday, April 4 at 10:30 am at 1 Starling Ave. Janet Fentress will serve as hostess and Gael Chaney will lead the lesson.

Maundy Thursday Service April 14 at 7 pm with Rev. Paul Johnson.
Communion will be served.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation,

education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People — all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (PDA) • Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees • Receives 32% of funds raised

PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM (PHP) • Takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed • Receives 36% of funds raised

SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE (SDOP) • Invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues • Receives 32% of funds raised

Please consider giving generously. Collection date is April 17, 2022

Virtual Journey to Guatemala: "Confronting Climate Change with Actions of Hope" Wednesday, April 20.7:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Virtual Journey to Guatemala

CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH ACTIONS OF HOPE

April 20, 2022

4:30 pm Pacific
5:30 pm Mountain/GMT
6:30 pm Central
7:30 pm Eastern

Suggested donation: \$11

CEDEPCA INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

During Earth Week, take a Virtual Journey to Guatemala to see how Central Americans are "Confronting Climate Change with Actions of Hope." You will be challenged by the Rev. Dr. Karla Koll, Professor of Mission at the Latin American Biblical University in Costa Rica, who will speak about what it means to live holy lives in the midst of the threat of destruction. And you'll be inspired by the stories of ordinary people in Central America whose actions in relationship with creation reflect extraordinary hope.

This virtual travel opportunity is designed for an English-speaking audience and will include breakout room discussions. Pre-registration is required.

Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqceChqT0iHdKIiyDaxHtukyx7FKuvdgu>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



4 Max Pinkston

5 Kathryn Judson, Mark Hinchcliff

7 Bob Davis

14 Judy Garland

15 Briana Tatum

17 Barbara Tatum

20 Manly Boyd

22 Matthew Price

30 Lynn Pritchett, Will Kirby

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:



PRAYER CONCERNS

Ruth Aaron (Pinkards), Pat Baumann, Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Merilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Mike Boswell, Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Judy Epperly (Nancy Baker), Daniel Handy, Iliene Hite, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Dru Rothrock, Troy Spencer (Pam Rakes' father), Scott Stevens (M. Stevens), Bruce Thomas (M. Stevens), Carl Utley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski (Susan Pilson), 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:2763403476).

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:

First Presbyterian Church

1901 Patrick Henry Ave.

Martinsville, VA 24112

STAFF

Sam Smith, Youth and Family Ministries Director, sam@peakspresbytery.org

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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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