

March 17, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation
Elder, Monica Stevens
March 16, 2022

Out of the Depths Psalm 130

One of the reasons I love the Psalms and turn to them so often is because they help me express those things I feel deeply, but have trouble adequately putting into words. Psalms express the highs and lows of the human condition in the context of God's righteousness, presence, and love. Psalm 130 is no exception.

"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" The psalmist is in such dire distress that he uses the metaphor of the watery depths of the earth to describe those troubles that threaten to overwhelm him. The psalmist feels as if he is drowning in his distress and being drawn irredeemably away from all that is good and life-giving. There are times in our lives when it seems that everything is stacked against us and we have nowhere to turn except to God, so we cry out, begging the Lord to see our difficulty and act on our behalf.

"If you, O Lord, should mark our iniquities, Lord, who could stand?" The psalmist recognizes that sin—separation from God either through things we do or we don't do—is the force that creates alienation between us and God and between us and other people. The psalmist also recognizes that if God were to keep track of our sinfulness, we would be lost beyond any hope of God's help.

"But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered." The psalmist has acknowledged that on his own, he is unworthy of God's intervention, but the great, good news, and there is always great, good news with God, is that it is God's nature to forgive so that we can approach God with reverence and awe. God's forgiveness is unmerited. We can't earn it because it is given as a gift of grace. We can only accept it with humility and thanksgiving. This is the theme of the Biblical narrative and the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for

the Lord more than those who wait for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.” Think of a night when violent storms descended on the area where you were. Perhaps the power went out and you could hear torrential rain, see the wind whipping the trees about in the flashes of lightning, and you could hear the crash of thunder and the crack and groan of trees being broken and uprooted. From your vantage point in the dark you were helpless and frightened. You longed for the relative safety of daybreak so you could at least see what was going on. This gives us some sense of what the psalmist meant by waiting on the Lord. When we call out to God, we have hope even in the midst of turmoil that our prayers are heard, and we anticipate God’s answer.

“O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.” We are able to have hope in God’s power and willingness to redeem and rescue us due to the very nature of God. When the psalmist says “For with the Lord there is steadfast love” he is using the Hebrew word *hesed*. I am not a Hebrew scholar by any stretch of the imagination, but I have learned this word because it is one of those small words that means so very much as it describes the nature of God. Steadfast love is usually how *hesed* is translated in English Bibles, but it also carries with it the meaning of everlasting trustworthiness, loyalty, mercy, generosity, compassion, grace, and faithful love even when the object of that love is faithless. God’s *hesed* is made manifest in the life, death, resurrection, and reign of Jesus Christ. God’s great love is our hope in the midst of all our troubles, whatever they may be.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that you are always there to hear us and help us. Teach us to trust you more completely so that we can live our lives more completely for you and give honor to your holy name. In Jesus name we pray. 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 **Third Sunday in Lent** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Denny Casey

Undeterred

Based on Luke 13:31-35 and Psalm 27

Children of Ukraine



This youngster lives in one of the children's homes in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine's seventh largest city and the largest in the Dnipropetrovska Oblast. The Dnipropetrovska Oblast borders the two Russian-leaning regions, Donetsk and Luhansk. As of today, March 1, the fighting is 3 hours away. They were hit on Thursday night by rockets from the Russian forces but it's been quiet since.

Many wonder what they can could do in this tragic situation. Here's one option. We still have a funding channel open to the children's homes in Kryvyi Rih. The urgent funding needs are generators and food and medical supplies and can still be purchased locally, though they are in short supply. Donations

may be made at the following Facebook link and will be sent immediately. Alternatively, grants and donations may be sent to "Peacework" at 620 N. Main St., Suite 306, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Peacework is a volunteer program affiliated with Community College Ministries in Blacksburg. There are no fees. 100% of the donation will go to the orphanages in Ukraine and donations are tax-deductible.

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/650310939581953/>

Steve Darr, Community College Ministries
[540-230-8581](tel:540-230-8581), steve@peacework.org

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Choir rehearsal and handbell rehearsal started Wednesday, March 16.

Handbells - 6-7:00 p.m.

Choir 7-8:00 p.m.

Easter lilies can be ordered now through Sunday, March 27. Order forms are located in the pews. Put them in with the offering or drop them off at the office.

The Community Breakfast is Saturday, March 19 lead by Brooke and Chuck Cundiff and will be served in a drive thru format. Volunteers are needed to cook and prepare from 7-8:30 a.m. and to serve and clean up from 8:30-10:00 a.m. Contact Brooke if you are available to help ([276-340-6124](tel:276-340-6124) or bchnfamily@gmail.com).

Congregational luncheon March 20 following worship hosted by Missions and Facilities. Committees will meet afterwards.

Mystery Mission Madness: A mission event for middle & high school youth will be taking place on **Saturday, March 19** from 1-5pm at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roanoke. Registration forms can be found here: peakspresbytery.org/winter-retreat Please return forms to Sam or the church office by Monday March, 14. For more info, contact Sam: sam@peakspresbytery.org

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!

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Ruth Aaron (Pinkards), Pat Baumann, 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, 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 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

Presbytery of the Peaks

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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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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