



*Join us for a cup
of coffee every Sunday
morning in the kitchen
before Church School*

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Presbyterian Church (USA): www.pcusa.org
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STEEPLE VIEWS

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

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

April 2011

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

This past Sunday (March 20, 2011), we celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism as it was administered to Evan Ray Wilson and Emma Elizabeth Wilson, who are the children of Carrie and Darrell Wilson. In the context of their baptismal service, I said, “Let us remember and rejoice in our own baptism.”

Like most Presbyterians, who were baptized as infants, I really can’t remember my own baptism. I know that it took place because my parents told me about it, and I remember the importance of my baptism - God’s grace given to me and claiming me as a beloved child of the covenant, an heir with Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

As I reflected on Evan and Emma’s baptisms and recalled the significance of my own baptism, I also remembered an event that took place in my life in June of 1976. I had recently graduated from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, TX, and I was soon to be ordained and begin my pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church in Itasca, TX. After graduation, Monica and I took a two-week vacation and went back home to St. Louis, MO. While we were there I called up the pastor (who had married my parents, baptized their four children, and had served that church well for twenty-five years before retiring) and asked if I could come by for a visit.

As a child, I was somewhat afraid of this man. He was tall, stern, had a booming voice, and he pounded the pulpit when making a point. His name was Dr. Smylie, which was ironic because I don’t remember him smiling much. Anyway, time had gone by. I was almost twenty-six and I had matured in the faith. Dr. Smylie was in his early eighties and he had mellowed a great deal.

At the appointed time, I met with Dr. Smylie and, during our visit, I told him that I felt prepared to begin my ministry as a pastor. However, I was interested to hear what he thought was important for me to know. The one thing he really emphasized was the need to keep very good records. He told me to keep track of all my sermons and what scriptures I used, and to keep a record of the people that joined the church, couples that I married, baptisms, and funerals – and I have done precisely that for almost thirty-five years. Then, an idea popped into my head, and I asked Dr. Smylie if he had a record of my baptism; and, if so, could I see it.

He went to a bookshelf and pulled out a very old record book and flipped it open to the section on baptisms. I told him that I was born on July 14, 1950, and, since my parents were good Presbyterians, I was probably baptized about three months later. He flipped through the yellow-with-age pages and then he said, “Here it is: Randall C. Stevens, son of Clair and Connie Stevens, born July 14, 1950, and baptized October 15, 1950.” I remember getting goose bumps all over when I saw and heard that read aloud.

Long before I was ever conscious of God, God was actively loving me and caring for me through my parents, grandparents, and my church family. God was watching over me, protecting me, and nurturing me through the family of faith. And I am grateful that that congregation took seriously the responsibility to tell others and me the good news of Jesus Christ. That is what I remember when “I remember and rejoice in my own baptism.” Furthermore, that is what we promise to do for Evan and Emma and all other children (young or old) entrusted to our care. May we be faithful to that privileged task.

In Christ’s love,
Randy



Happy Birthday in April to:

- 3 Claude Young
- 4 Max Pinkston
- 5 Kate Judson
- 7 Kisean Adams, Bob Davis
- 8 Troy Lee Rakes, Mary Catherine Stegall,
Marty Davis
- 10 Bobby Wilson
- 11 Pansy Olson
- 12 Tom Unterbrink
- 14 Judy Garland
- 15 English Ford, Rhonda Casey,
Briana Tatum
- 16 Reed Moore
- 17 Barbara Tatum, Glenna Harmeyer
- 18 Mary Manning, Meredith Seamon
- 19 Mary Catherine Lawhon, Jean Linker
- 20 Manly Boyd
- 21 Tracey Lawhon, Patrick Edgerton
- 22 Matthew Price
- 23 Gene Stanley, Forrest Truitt
- 24 Ed Porter
- 25 Ethan Jessup
- 26 Patrice Newnam, Sarah Beeler, Doug
Walsh
- 27 Margaret Gunter, Doug Goldstein, Colin
Walsh
- 30 Lynn Pritchett

And in May to.....

- 1 Logan Esarey, Jr., Janet Fentress
- 3 Carson Nease, Jerry Bishop
- 5 Sonny Benfield, Amy Mason, Kellene
Wotring
- 8 Bill Manning, Olivia Jessup
- 10 Sandra Shank
- 11 Bonnie Price, Mandy Pritchett, Emily
Beard
- 12 Pearl Richardson, Monica Stevens
- 14 Jon Tatum, Farrell Pace
- 16 Kemp Newnam
- 17 Margaret Ann Irby, Heath Russell
- 19 Taylor Shank, Annie B. Boyd
- 20 Colleen Dallas
- 22 Elizabeth Pritchett, Joanna Wood

- 27 Margaret Smith, Kent Williams, Virginia
Seamon, Jacob Wingfield
- 29 Ed Linker



The Tempo **“Our Musical Pulse”**

The Chancel Choir

Christmas will be here before we can turn around three times and shout “Merry Christmas” and a “Happy New Year.” Well, it seems like that anyway. We sang our Christmas Music Service on December 19 and, by the time you read this, we will have sung our “Isaiah Speaks” Spring Worship Service.

This music has been a joy to prepare and I trust we had a crowd of worshippers who involved themselves in the service. Early in the preparation, I asked the choir to read through the book of Isaiah and note the context of the particular passages we are singing as texts of the hymns and anthems in the service. So many of Isaiah’s writings have great meaning for us, especially the ones which prophesy about Jesus’ birth.

I always appreciate the hard work of the choir members on a project like this one. Please express your thanks to them as well.

The Langley Winds

It is always a pleasure to have this ensemble of fine musicians perform in our church. They represent the United States Air Force in a very creditable manner. It is nice to have TSgt. Anne Epperly with us. I have known Anne since her birth. She grew up in the Music Ministry of First Baptist Church where she sang in the Graded Choir program from age four and up. We thank her mother, Judy Mattox, for entertaining them in her home for a late dinner.

The Sanctuary Ringers

What a fine group of musicians and a flexible one. This Handbell Choir for adults and youth altered their rehearsal schedule for several weeks so that, on Wednesday evenings, it would not conflict with the Lenten Services.

They also added fifteen minutes to their 55 minute rehearsal time. It makes a positive difference and I am glad that we have it.

Only a couple more months in their season. The choir rings on Palm Sunday and on May 15.

I have not heard of any vacancies in the choir, but we always need subs when our members have to be away. If you are a ringer and would like to be on our short sub list, please let Bob know. Cynthia Dobrinski, Sam Smith and Kimberly Seamon have helped us this year, and we thank them for their assistance.

The Congregational Choir

I am almost sure that each of you has a special hymn which has meaning for you. Only you know exactly why. Perhaps it was during a high spiritual experience, a hymn sung during a worship service when you were a youth, or one which spoke to your grief when a loved one passed away.

Hymn singing aids us in expressing our spiritual beliefs and ideas in worship. You might say that the hymn writer puts words in our mouths which are expressions of great saints of the past and present.

Hymn singing enables us to speak to God directly. We sing our praise, our faith, our confession and our dedication.

Hymn singing proclaims our faith to others. When we sing with feeling and enthusiasm, we can have a spiritual impact on other people. It is not difficult to be moved in a service of worship when a great hymn is sung. In fact, we trust it happens frequently in our worship. John and Charles Wesley were ordained Methodist Clergy who were on a ship to Savannah, Georgia. It had stormed all Sunday afternoon. At 7 o'clock, in the midst of a Moravian Vesper Service, the sea broke over the ship and split the mainsail and seemingly swallowed the ship. The English screamed but the Moravians calmly sang on. Perhaps this experience led directly to the Wesleys' later Aldersgate conversion experience where their "Hearts felt strangely warmed." From that experience their ministry transformed the heart of England.

We trust that our hymn singing has a similar effect on persons in our worship services.

expressing the faith from the depths of your being. It is one time you can have a voice in what your church is doing. Do it WELL!



Youth and Children's Music

WAMMERS ready for *The Three Trees*

Our WAM group is preparing for our April 10 presentation of *The Three Trees*. This music drama is a personal favorite of mine because of the music, the message and the meaning that is within it on many different levels. It will be presented during the 11:00 service and will stand as the message for that day. The rest of the music that day will be presented by the children and youth as well. It is a wonderful Sunday to worship together in such a meaningful way, with Easter so close at hand.

New Season of Music for *Music Together* Crew

The youngest musicians and their parents are preparing for our Spring music unit in Music Together. We are starting the "Maracas" unit which has some wonderful music and activities. At present, there are two openings for new families and I will be happy to explain the program to any and all! Just let me know. We meet on Tuesdays from 11:00 to 11:45!

***Kindermusik* Kindergartners Love the Organ**

As part of the Kindermusik program for our kindergarten crew, we study the life and music of J. S. Bach. In concert with that, I always take them into the sanctuary for a demonstration and then let each child experience the joy of choosing their sound and playing. They are always thrilled. Hopefully, we will have some new organists in a few years.

Contemporary Worship

We bid adieu to two of our wonderful members. Betty and Gene Stanley have given so much time and talent to our Contemporary service. We will miss their wonderful gifts and the joy they bring to all as they retire from actively singing in the service. Betty, along with Gene, led the group through the preparation for the first service and through the first nine months with joy, grace, and love. They are dear friends and we will all miss them so much! Please thank them for all they have done when you see them!

Mattie Wingfield will be joining us again with her wonderful voice and demeanor. We can't wait. I am happy to talk with any of you who would like to know more about being part of this group who has wonderful fellowship together as we prepare music on Tuesday evenings and Sunday morning. It is a Christ-centered group that is welcoming and very loyal. Interested?? Please give me the opportunity to discuss the great possibilities with you; whether you like to sing, play an instrument, would like to be part of the tech team or would like to pray for us. We welcome all Comers!!

Joy and Peace to you as we walk toward the Empty Tomb together.

Betsy

All-Church Clean-Up on Saturday, April 16, from 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon. The Facilities Committee will have an all-church cleanup day. An all-church cleanup means all the members and visitors of the church are invited to help spruce up our building. We have stand-up jobs, sit-down jobs, move-around jobs and boss jobs. Please join your friends here at 1901 Patrick Henry Avenue on April 16 and find out how much fun it is to join in for a few hours to make our facilities shine! Lunch will be served afterwards

Continuing Ecumenical Lenten Series

Our ecumenical Lenten Series, which began in March, will have its final meetings on April 6 and 13, hosted at Christ Episcopal Church. The theme for the series is *Christian Discipleship: Instruments of Peace, Channels of Grace*, inspired by the Prayer attributed to St. Francis. Christian discipleship is a call to become instruments of peace and channels of grace, reconciliation and renewal. As members of the faith community in Martinsville and Henry County, we are called to exercise discipleship together to promote the welfare and renewal of our community and congregations. Each Wednesday we will focus on a section of that prayer through devotional time, a presentation from a community speaker, and by conversation around table during supper.

The schedule each Wednesday will be:

5:30-6:15p.m. Devotion and

Community Speaker

6:15-7:00p.m. Soup supper and conversation

The remaining locations and speakers will be:

April 6-Christ Episcopal Church, speakers, Sammy Redd, Tom Salyer

April 13 – Christ Episcopal Church, speakers, Anna Bowe Wells, Brian Williams

One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering

On Palm Sunday, April 17, and Easter Sunday, April 24, we will receive the annual *One Great Hour of Sharing Offering*. The purpose of this offering is to meet human needs and is administered through three programs of the Presbyterian Church (USA): the *Presbyterian Hunger program*, *Presbyterian World Service*, and the *Self Development of People*. This offering is an opportunity to help us all realize the material blessings we have and reminds us to share our abundance with those in need. Please give generously to this offering and give witness to the unity to which Christ calls us!

The Good Friday Worship Service will be held at noon, on April 22, in our sanctuary. Once again, the service will focus on the “Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross.” Various hymns and prayers will be interspersed throughout the service. Preaching at this service will be Randy, Jenny, Bob Button, Clint Spivey, and Rusty Reaser. This service is very meaningful and everyone is urged to attend.



The *First Presbyterian Women's Birthday* will be celebrated in the Fellowship Hall on May 2 at 7:00 p.m. complete with birthday cake. All women in the church are invited to attend!!

Easter/Resurrection of the Lord is celebrated on Sunday, April 24. We will begin with a 9:30 a.m. Easter breakfast in the fellowship hall. The children will participate in an Easter Egg Hunt following the breakfast. Sunday School will begin at 10:00 a.m. and conclude at 10:40 a.m. Then, we will gather in the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m. amidst the beautiful and fragrant Easter lilies, and “pull out all the stops” as we worship the risen Lord and proclaim his resurrection victory over death! There will be only one worship service this day.

Please join with your church family and friends for as many of these worship and fellowship events as possible. Your presence and involvement will make **Holy Week** that much more meaningful!

Session Highlights for March 28, 2011:

- Laura Buffkin opened the meeting with prayer
- The Session's minutes for the stated meeting on February 28, 2011 were approved
- The treasurer's report was reviewed
- There was a discussion about how the Presbyterian churches in this area could work together and accomplish more
- Two members of the Presbytery of the Peaks' Stewardship Workgroup will meet with the Session during the stated meeting in April
- Agreed to do necessary work on the church's playgrounds to make them safer for the children to play on the equipment
- Heard the various reports from the clerk, the Sessional committees, and the pastor
- Shared joys and concerns about members and friends and the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Randy Stevens

or old toys to donate! We will organize and price the items the week before, and hold the sale Saturday morning.

Sunday, April 10 – 5:00 p.m. at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church: “Extreme Egg Hunt.”

We will join together with the youth at Forest Hills for some extreme egg hunting, and as we open our eggs we will eat candy (of course) and find scriptures that tell the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Sunday, April 17 – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Dinner and Youth Sunday Planning

Sunday, April 24 – No youth group in evening
Happy Easter!

Upcoming in May – Our annual **Youth Sunday** will be May 8, and we will lead the 11:00

Worship service (there will be no contemporary service this day). Also, May 15, at 5:30 p.m., we will host a fundraising dinner for our Mission Trip. We will cook and serve food to those who attend.

Youth Mission Trip – June 26 – July 1

This year, we will be traveling to Charlotte, NC to participate in the Avondale Presbyterian Church Urban Work Camp Program. Projects include home repairs, serving meals to the homeless and mentoring children. The goal of this program is “to be inspired, and inspire others as you meet Jesus Christ face to face in our city.” This trip is for youth in grades 6-12, and we are also looking for adult chaperones (especially someone to serve as our cook!).

Registration forms are available in the church office and on the youth bulletin board near the Youth Room. The registration form should be returned to the church office with a \$50 deposit. All deposits are due by Sunday April 3, and a meeting will be held that evening at 5:30 p.m. for all who have registered as well as parents. If you have any questions, please talk to Pastor Jenny, 632-3431, or pastorjennyfpc@yahoo.com

LILIES

The church invites families and individuals in the congregation to place a potted Easter lily in the sanctuary for **Easter Sunday, April 24**. All who wish to place a lily in memory of, or in honor of a loved one or friend may do so by contacting the Church Office or by filling out the form below and mailing to the church or placing in the offering plate with your payment. These names will be included on a special insert in the bulletin on Easter. Each plant is \$15 payable to the Church Office in advance. The last date for ordering and making payment to the Church will be **April 17**.

Please place my order for an Easter lily:

Name: _____

Telephone _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

YOUTH Group Events in April

Sunday, April 3 – 5:30-7:00pm Mission Trip Informational Meeting for youth and parents.

Saturday, April 9 – 8:00a-12:00 noon

Youth Garage Sale proceeds to benefit our summer Mission Trip. We will collect donations for a garage sale in the Fellowship Hall. So start saving those clothes you’ve outgrown,

Congratulations to Ryan and Jana Jennings on the birth of their daughter, Grace Caroline Jennings, March 12, 2011, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Lee Eden is the proud grandmother!

The Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated on Sunday, March 20, 2011, for Emma Elizabeth Wilson and Evan Ray Wilson, children of Carrie and Darrell Wilson.

Montreat Youth Conference 2011

All youth from rising 9th graders through graduated seniors are invited to come along with our group to the Montreat Youth Conference from July 24-30. The theme for this year's conference is *Searching for the Signal*. A Youth Conference is a unique gathering of young people from all over the country for a week of study, worship, and recreation. Activities include morning energizers, music, keynote, small group meetings where the conference then is explored, afternoon recreation activities, and evening worship. Our group will be staying together in the Trevor's Retreat cottage, as in years past. Information forms have been sent out by mail, and are available on the bulletin board downstairs near the youth room. The total cost for church members is \$200, and for non-church members is \$250. A deposit of \$50 is due by April 30. The remainder of the cost is due on June 15. If you need financial assistance, please speak to Pastor Jenny.

Sympathy of the congregation is extended to Lyn Davis and family on the death of her sister, Jean Shemming Johnson, March 28, in Ithaca, New York.

The Butterflies are Fluttering.....

It's spring and once again the BUTTERFLIES are making their way to First Presbyterian Church in Martinsville!

Just as the angel trees at Christmas reflected the giving spirit of our church family, the spring multicolored butterflies, which will appear on **Sunday, April 3rd, and remain until the 10th**, represent the gifts of clothes, shoes, games, and money to purchase food. The gifts will be distributed by the Mission Committee to needy families.

Once again we will share our blessings with others within the community. The Butterfly Trees will bloom on Sunday, **April 3rd**. Wrapped gifts with butterfly tags attached will be due in the Session Room on April 17, and delivery will be April 20th.

We rejoice that our church family can share with the less fortunate of our community. The Mission Committee looks forward to a generous response to the Butterfly Tree project once again.

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