



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



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

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S T E E P L E V I E W S



STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

April, 2008

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

You have probably seen the banner outside in front of the sanctuary. The banner says, "It's coming May 4!" The banner is an eye-catcher and the message on the banner is a "teaser." It's intended to get your interest up and make you wonder, "What is coming May 4th?" If you haven't figured it out yet, here's the answer: the Contemporary Worship Service is scheduled to begin on Sunday, May 4, at 8:45 a.m. (with Gathering Music to begin at 8:35 a.m.), in the sanctuary here at First Presbyterian Church!

Yes, it is finally going to happen. The idea of a contemporary worship service, which is a more streamlined and informal worship service with a different musical feel to it, has been discussed for over two years. A subcommittee of the Session's Worship Committee was formed in March of 2006 and immediately went to work. Slowly and carefully, a vision began to emerge and a plan was developed. The Alternative Worship Subcommittee took a proposal to the Worship Committee recommending that the church add another service of worship to the Sunday morning schedule, and that it take place in the sanctuary since it is a worship service. The Worship Committee agreed with the request and took it to the Session as an action item. The Session carefully studied the motion, asked a lot of questions, weighed various options, and approved the matter. In other words, great care has been taken to proceed slowly with much deliberation and careful, methodical planning. Or, to use good "Presbyterian parlance," we have done everything "decently and in order!"

Some might be wondering why we need a second worship service each

Sunday, especially since the sanctuary is not full during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. While the very traditional and formal style of our Reformed worship appeals to many, it does not speak to all. A number of our youth, young adults, middle-aged, and even some older adults prefer a more contemporary style of Christian music, which isn't based solely on the organ or piano for accompaniment; rather, the music is expressed through a rich variety of instruments such as an electronic keyboard, guitars, drums or conga, flute, clarinet, saxophone, and so on. Also, the Worship Band will include 5-10 singers, and the music will be more modern and lively while, at the same time, its focus will be to give praise and honor to the Lord our God. I should also note three other considerations: some members have wanted an earlier worship service on Sundays in order to free up a larger portion of the day; we hope that some non-church people will find their way to our church because of this different (yet still Reformed!) style of worship; this earlier service will not change or affect the traditional 11:00 a.m. worship service at all.

I would like to ask you to do three things with regard to the Contemporary Worship Service. First, please trust the pastors, the elders, and other church members, who have been involved in the decision-making and the plans for this different style of worship for quite some time. We are not going to do something that is wild or crazy; it's just different than the traditional 11:00 a.m. worship service. It's not an either/or but a both/and. Second, please do not be fearful of something new, especially since we believe God has been involved with this idea from the start.

Third, please pray for this contemporary worship service that it will give further glory to God, reach out to the unchurched, and feed the spirits of those who attend and worship in an alternative manner. If you have questions or concerns, please share them with me.
In Christ's love,
Randy

Word from the Associate Pastor:

Those of you who know me well have learned that I am a passionate advocate for the value of Christian Education. We, as Christians, are called to grow in our faith throughout our lives and it is so much easier to grow when we gather with friends who ask us good questions and who care for us. Sunday School, at its best, involves lively discussion with fellow Christians, as we try to work out together what it means to follow Christ.

I appreciate all of our Sunday School groups, but the class I know best is the Margaret Irby Class. It is a joy for me to be able to meet with and occasionally teach the Margaret Irby Class because the members of the class are open to sharing their viewpoints and it is just a fun group of people. With the creative minds in that class, a question can lead us to insights we never imagined.

The Margaret Irby Class has been reading and discussing a particularly good book over the last few weeks. It is called *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*; the book is written by Tom Long, a well-respected preacher and teacher. Many people, including me, just love this book. To give you a taste of the book, here is one story Tom Long shares in *Testimony* about our call as Christians to love all people.

On January 10, 1966, Sam Bowers and several other members of the KKK, doused Vernon Dahmer's home in Hattiesburg, MS with gasoline & set it on

fire while he and his family were sleeping. One of his three children was injured and Dahmer himself died. What did Dahmer do to bother the KKK? He allowed black people to pay their pole taxes in his store.

Sam Bowers was finally convicted, after 3 mistrials, of the vicious crime he committed three decades before, the firebombing murder of Dahmer. The Reverend Will Campbell was present in the courthouse for the trial of Bowers. Campbell was the only white person present when the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was established and an outspoken advocate for civil rights; Campbell had known Vernon Dahmer.

Courtroom reporters were shocked, though, to see Campbell being embraced as an old friend not only by Ellie Dahmer, Vernon's widow, but also by the defendant, Sam Bowers. During recesses in the trial, Campbell was observed talking with equal warmth to both Ellie Dahmer and Sam Bowers. One of the reporters covering the trial asked Campbell how he could possibly be so kind to both the victim's family and the monster who had committed murder. Campbell replied, "Because I'm a Christian, (darn it)!"

Campbell further explained that he realized during the Civil Rights movement that God calls us to spend time both with our friends and our enemies. So he met Sam Bowers and spent time with him. During one of their meetings, he was riding in a car with Bowers; they passed by a local cemetery where Bowers decided to stop to pay his respects to a friend. When he came back to the car, Campbell remembered, he was crying. "Animals don't cry," Campbell said, "Human beings cry at the foot of a friend's grave." That story reminds us all to seek connections both with those who agree with us and those who disagree because we are

all God's children. What a powerful story!

Many good things are going on in our Sunday School program for children, youth, and adults. If you have not been attending Sunday School for a while, please come and join us. All of our classes are always looking for new members to participate. With the start of the early worship service in May, we hope that many people who attend either the contemporary service or the 11:00 a.m. traditional service will make an effort to attend Sunday School, a time when all our church family can gather together. Please contact Doc Altizer, Sunday School Superintendent, or me, if you have any questions about Sunday School.

Peace in Christ,
Jody



The Butterfly Trees

are back! We have adopted five needy families from the community this spring. Please take an angel, purchase and wrap the

gift, attach angel, and return it to the church office by Tuesday, April 15. The Butterfly Tree gifts will be delivered on Monday afternoon, April 21 at 4:00 p.m. Please see Jody Moore if you are able to assist with the deliveries.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Gary and Cathy Nelson on the death of Gary's brother, Frank Leon Nelson, February 22, 2008, in Augusta, Georgia.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Bill and Cindy Nease and family on the death of Bill's father, George Nease, February 24, 2008, in Martins-

ville. Mr. Nease was also the grandfather of Carson Nease.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Bill and Mary Manning and family on the death of Bill's mother, Lois Manning, February 26, 2008, in Princeton, West Virginia.

The 2008 Confirmation Class is halfway through their class schedule. The class consists of the following seventh graders: Claire Adkins, Caroline Harris, Michael Mason, Ben Pinkston, Jacob Wingfield, and Virginia Zentmeyer. They have met with Jody and Randy five times and will meet with them four more times. They have studied the Bible, focused on Jesus Christ as fully God and fully human, and talked about the Church, worship and the sacraments. There has been memorization work involving the Lord's Prayer, the Doxology, the Apostles' Creed, Mark 12:28b-31 and one other scripture passage of their choice.

The last class will occur on Tuesday, April 22 with a thorough review of all the material that was covered. Then, for those young persons who so desire, they will meet with the Session on Monday, April 28, for dinner, after which they will be given the opportunity to profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Then, on Sunday, May 18, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, the young people will be confirmed and commissioned as disciples of Jesus Christ. Please keep Claire, Caroline, Michael, Ben, Jacob, and Virginia in your prayers as they prepare to take this very important step in their lives.

The Tempo

“Our Musical Pulse”
Chancel Choir

March is a most busy month for choir singers. On March 9 we joined with the Cantabile Singers and the Orff I and II Singers and Ringers in a service of worship. The central theme of the service was Jesus' Passion Week. According to those who commented, the service was meaningful and well received. Of course Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter came early this year along with a change of time on March 9.

This worship-music service was the first one which combined all of our singing choirs as well as the Orff II Handbells. It was good to have the Youth, who usually ring bells, sing one of the anthems. Certainly we look forward to hearing them again. They are a most talented group.

We look forward to hearing two soloists in our service on March 30 and April 6. Betty Stanley will sing and then K. Byron Corcoran will sing. Most know that K. Byron retired this past summer after 20 plus years as Minister of Music at the First United Methodist Church.

We (Director and Members) always look for other talented singers to join with us in our Ministry of Music. When you are involved in a worthwhile ministry, you want others to know the same fulfillment you have experienced. The rehearsal room door is open and the welcome mat is out. If you have an interest in singing with us, please make that interest known to Mr. Chapman. It is not too long before our Summer Stretch begins.

Sanctuary Ringers

The Sanctuary Ringers will be ringing on April 20 in the morning worship service. We appreciate the ministry of this fine choir of ringers and invite

others who are interested in ringing handbells to make that interest known.

Children and Youth Music



March 9th program wrap up
One of the best highlights of the musical year occurred on March 9th in our sanctuary. The program that the combined choirs of our church produced was a very moving experience for all who participated. The children and youth were deeply honored to be included in a program of such magnitude. The atmosphere was extremely worshipful for all who journeyed together toward the cross that day.

I want to thank Bob and the Chancel Choir for providing the children and youth such a wonderful opportunity to experience something so amazing. After the service, I asked Bob if he would change anything about the service. His response was that it went so well that he would not change anything. I agree wholeheartedly. I hope this will be the beginning of many such programs.

Spring Classes March is a rather different month for our children and youth classes. Half of the children are on break one week and another half the next. It has worked well to continue to meet since it affords me an opportunity to meet with fewer children at a time.

I will be away from March 28th through April 2nd at the National Music Teachers Association meeting. It is a great opportunity for personal growth for me as a musician and a teacher and I am looking forward to the opportunities. Orff will meet on Monday, March 31st, with Amy Mason, Wendy Seamon and Betty Stanley in charge!! My classes will not meet on Tuesday, April 1st, however.

Cantabile Ringers/Singers

Our six very talented teens have made some wonderful music this month. Their debut into singing in worship went very well on March 9th, a capella no less.

They rang flawlessly on Palm Sunday. I am very proud of them. We always invite new friends to join us. Just let me know if your high schooler is interested! We will be reconvening after April 1st.

Orff -Kodaly Plans

The Orff singers will be singing in morning worship on April 20th. We are also working on music for Youth Sunday which will be celebrated on May 11th, which is also Mother's Day!!

I hope and pray that this spring is filled with God's richest blessings for each of you.

Betsy



The **All Church retreat** will take place on April 5-6 (Saturday and Sunday) at our Presbytery of the Peaks? Camp Hat Creek. Even though Randy and Jody will attend the retreat, things will still go on as

usual here at the church. On Sunday, April 6, the Sunday School classes will meet at 9:45 a.m. and worship will be at 11:00 a.m. with the Rev. Rusty Reaser leading worship and preaching (also, there will be communion by intinction, which is the way we do communion on Maundy Thursday). We hope you will attend church one place or the other!

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Beach Bound for God: A fundraising dinner to support our youth April 13 at 6:00 p.m. Ready for a fun evening out? Some good food? A trip to the beach without having to leave Martinsville? Then please attend our Fundraising Dinner for the Youth Summer Mission Trip to Morehead City, NC, which is entitled "Beach Bound for God." The menu will include Seafood, corn, skewers with chicken, salad, and dessert. Please RSVP to the church office by Tuesday, April 8.

The JOY Fellowship will have another one of its Mystery Outings on Tuesday, April 15 (Tax Day) for lunch. JOY Fellowship, which stands for Just Older Youth, includes older adults from our congregation. We will be leaving after the Tuesday morning Bible Study Class at 11:45. We hope that you will be able to join us for the Bible Study class, which begins at 10:30 and the class will be studying Mark 9:1-32 that day. We will be going to lunch together to an unknown, mystery location. Transportation will be provided in the church bus. Please RSVP to the church office by Sunday, April 13, if you can attend.

Yes, it's coming...

Sunday, May 4

The Worship Band is rehearsing, the order of service has been finalized, and equipment is on the way for our long-awaited early service in a contemporary style. Sunday, May 4, is the starting date for a new worship service for First Presbyterian Church. Informal singing will begin at 8:35 a.m., and the service itself will be held from 8:45 to 9:30 in the Sanctuary.

The new service is designed to be upbeat and casual but still will include all

the elements of worship according to Reformed tradition, including Communion on the first Sunday of each month. The 11 o'clock service will continue in the traditional format as usual. We hope that those of you who attend the early service will stick around for coffee and Sunday School afterward. Invite your friends and join us on May 4!

Note: The second early service will be on May 18. One service for Youth Sunday will be held at 11:00 on May 11, Mother's Day.

Gael Chaney