

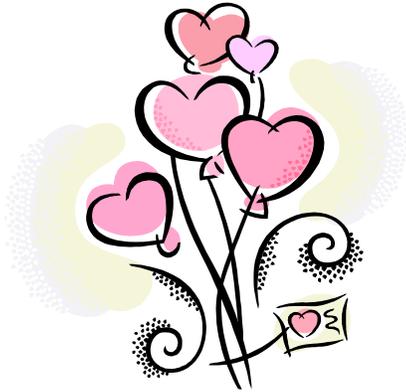


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*Join us for a cup  
of coffee every Sunday  
morning in the kitchen  
before Church School*



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# STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

February, 2007

Martinsville, Virginia

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## FROM MY PERSPECTIVE WITHIN THE KINGDOM

As I'm writing this article (the day after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday observance), I recall an incident that took place in the Fall of 1974 during my internship at the First Presbyterian Church in Fulton, MO. I received a phone call from a church member (Miss Jane) and she asked me to visit her at the Presbyterian retirement home.

The next day I stopped in to see her and she gave me a book and on the cover was a picture of Dr. King preaching in a pulpit (I can't remember the title of the book or the author). I told her that I would look forward to reading and then discussing the book with her. That evening I picked up the book and began reading the Preface. I had not gotten very far maybe the first paragraph when I realized that this book was not what I was expecting. I thought the book would contain biographical information on Dr. King and perhaps some copies of his speeches and sermons. Instead, the author's premise was that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a communist, who only used the pulpit to espouse his socialistic viewpoints rather than to proclaim the gospel. I tried to read the first chapter but, after several pages, I had read more than enough. I tried to keep an open mind but as I have often said, "If I am narrow-minded about anything at all, it's narrow-minded people!" I quickly put the book aside.

Several days later, I returned the book to Miss Jane, who said to me, "Are you finished with that book already? You sure are a fast reader." I replied, "Well, Miss Jane, I read as much of the book as I could." She asked, "Did you like the book?" I side-stepped her question and

asked one of my own: "I assume that you wanted me to read this book because you agree with this author's perspective, is that right?" Miss Jane eagerly responded, "Oh, yes, I certainly did!" Then I said, "Well, I totally disagreed with what the author wrote. I think Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a modern-day prophet, who was called by God to help our nation see where we have strayed from God's will and to help us get back on track. I truly believe that he is a Christian minister called by God to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not a communist!" Miss Jane was both shocked and disappointed in what I said, and her only response was, "Oh." Then I said to her, "Miss Jane, I still want to be your friend. I guess we will just have to agree to disagree on this one important subject to both of us. Is that okay with you?" She replied, "Yes, I would like that very much."

I left Miss Jane's room that day and I took with me a very valuable lesson. It's important to know who we are and where we stand on various issues. The temptation is that we want to be liked at all costs so we will give in to meet someone else's expectations; but, in the process, we compromise our own thoughts and feelings. I felt good about my conversation with Miss Jane. We agreed to disagree while still remaining friends and, even more, a brother and sister in Christ Jesus.

I think this is why we stand each Sunday and affirm our faith after hearing God's Word spoken through scripture and sermon. It's important for us to know who we are, whose we are, and where we stand when it comes to our priorities and beliefs. And, through it

all, may we strive to live as peacemakers (“for they will be called children of God” see Matthew 5:9).

In Christ’s love,  
Randy

### **A Word from the Associate**

#### **Pastor:**

February is the month that Valentine’s Day is celebrated. While this holiday focuses on romantic love, it made me think about how we understand love as Christians. Love can mean so many things to so many different people. You may have heard before that in Greek (the language of the New Testament), there are four completely different words for love. When we say that God loves us, it is different from the love we as humans have for each other. The Greek word for divine love is agape, which refers to an unconditional, deep love. God’s love is not dependent on our response; even when we are unfaithful, God loves us still. God longs to be in relationship with us, to connect with us.

Thinking about God’s love reminded me of the story of Mamie. She made frequent trips to the branch post office. One day she confronted a long line of people who were waiting for service from the postal clerks. Mamie only needed stamps, so a helpful observer asked, "Why don't you use the stamp machine? You can get all the stamps you need and you won't have to stand in line." Mamie said, "I know, but the machine can't ask me about my arthritis."

In our society, we have become increasingly efficient where we can email, shop online, and solve many of our problems without talking to a person. But I believe that the church and our faith keep us connected, because we are not meant to be alone. We are meant to ask each other about our arthritis, about our joys, our fears, and our hopes. We are

not always perfect as a community, but I invite you individually and us together as a congregation to find ways to nurture and support one another.

Let me remind you of one way this congregation can support and help this community. On the first Sunday of the month, February 4, we will be collecting the Souper Bowl of Caring Offering, which coincides with Super Bowl Sunday. This is at least the fourth consecutive year our church has participated in this nationwide program that has raised more than \$33 million dollars in the fight against hunger. Youth will stand at the doors of the narthex following worship holding pots and pans. Any funds that you place in those pots and pans will stay right here in this community and will support the food ministry at Grace Network. So please remember to place a few dollars in the pots and pans on February 4. It will go to a good cause and strengthen Christ’s work here on this earth!

Peace in Christ,  
Jody



### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY in February to:**

- 1 Carolyn Lackey
- 2 David Seamon
- 3 Andy DeVault, Harold Lamm, Jenny Pinkard, Lillie Willis, Doris Renno
- 5 Michael Mason
- 6 Caitlin Mahoney, Charlie Miller
- 7 Emily Goldstein
- 8 Frances Leavitt, Guy Stanley, Milton Mitchell
- 9 Marshall Chaney, Hannah Fraser
- 11 Jo Dykes
- 13 Connie Anderson, Amy Fraser, Linda Mitchell
- 15 Bob McLachlan
- 18 Dana Mahoney

- 19 Sandra Ford, Zack Sanders
- 20 Mary Layton Truitt

**and in MARCH to**

- 1 Dan Stevens
- 3 Ruth Thompson
- 4 Duke Easley, Margaret Hurt
- 5 Carter Ferrell, Dee Moore
- 6 Allison Knighton, Myrtis Lester
- 8 Harriet Mattox, Bill Garrett
- 9 Tyler Price
- 10 Frances Morton
- 11 Carol Darnell, Don Richman, Nicholas Young

**SYMPATHY** of the congregation is extended to Myrtis Lester and family on the death of her husband, William Jackson "Jack" Lester in Martinsville. Jack, a member of First Presbyterian since October 3, 1948, joined the Church Triumphant on January 8, 2007.

**IN MEMORIAM** William Jackson "Jack" Lester  
November 22, 1925 - January 8, 2007

**SYMPATHY** of the congregation is extended

- to Monty and Joan Montgomery on the death of Joan's father, William Coleman, January 10, 2007, in Martinsville.
- to John and Susan Bowles and family on the death of John's mother, Fannie Bowles, January 10, 2007, in Stanleytown.
- to Jim and Nancy Baker on the death of Nancy's brother, Dr. James Joel Leonard, on January 2, 2007, in Lexington, North Carolina.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

-to Anne and Matt Podowitz on the birth of their son, Max Aaron Podowitz, January 7, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. Fred and Adelia Isenhower are the proud

grandparents!  
- to Todd and Mary Nellis on the birth of their daughter, Mary Grace Nellis, January 17, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. Bill and Mary Manning are the proud grandparents and Mary Page is the proud great grandmother!

**The 2007 Confirmation Class** has begun! The class started on January 21 and will run for nine weeks. Then, on Monday, March 26, the confirmands will have supper with the Session followed by the stated meeting at which time the confirmands will be given the opportunity to profess their faith. On Palm Sunday, April 1, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, the confirmands will be officially received as members of the First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville, VA. Please be sure to keep the 2007 Confirmation Class members in your prayers. They are: Emily Beard, Alanna Ferguson, Libby Goldstein, Katherine Lester, Matthew Price, and Kimberly Seamon.



**Library Corner. . .**

Two new books are in the library that I recommend. Both books deal with the lives of two very remarkable men. Both men overcame obstacles and struggles, each in their own way. If you enjoy reading about people who succeed in life under insurmountable odds, you will enjoy reading these two books.

**GIFTED HANDS: THE BEN CARSON STORY** is an autobiographical account of Dr. Ben Carson who was one of the doctors who performed the first operation at Johns Hopkins to separate Siamese twins joined at the head. The surgery took place September 5, 1987. The book is the inspiring story of a

young man's journey from the inner-city of Detroit to becoming the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital at age 33. He dedicates the book to his mother Sonya who was a remarkable person in her own right. Working as a domestic for wealthy folks after her husband left the family, and not knowing how to read, did not stop her from being a strong positive influence for her two sons.

90 MINUTES IN HEAVEN is minister Don Piper's account of his whereabouts for the ninety minutes he had no pulse and was pronounced dead after a car wreck on a bridge in Texas on January 18, 1989. He was headed home after attending a Baptist conference at Trinity Pines which is a large conference center. It is a day that changed his life forever. The book is not only his account of what he experienced in the ninety minutes he was covered with a tarp while the paramedics attended to the injuries of others, it describes the physical and emotional pain he endured as a result of the accident caused by an inexperienced driver. Through the many months in the hospital, Don wanted to die and questioned God's reason for bringing him back.

Debbie

**What is Lent?** Lent is a period of prayer and reflection that begins on Ash Wednesday, February 21, and ends on Easter Sunday, April 8th. Lent is a holy season of preparation for the church. During Lent, we follow Jesus on the road towards Jerusalem and his death on the cross for our sake.

According to Laurence Stookey, in his book *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*, Lent is a "single entity with a double focus. The forty days are (a) a time for probing consideration of our human condition, including sin and its deadly consequences both for individu-

als and society, and (b) a time for an equally intense consideration of the new possibilities offered to us in Jesus Christ and their implications for practical living." Lent recognizes that life is full of temptations and that we too often succumb to sin and distance ourselves from God's will. In Lent, God calls us to a time of simplicity where we focus our attention on God's voice. Jesus himself spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and praying so that he could more clearly discern God's direction for his life.

As we have done before, during the season of Lent, we will have six weeks of **Kirk night suppers**, followed by worship in the sanctuary. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (February 21), and that will be the beginning of our Kirk night suppers and worship services. The suppers will be served at 5:45 p.m. and then the worship services will run from 6:25-6:55 p.m. Here is the schedule of Lenten speakers:

February 21	Jody Moore
February 28	Ken Hughes (pastor of Forest Hills P.C.)
March 7	Bill Plonk
March 14	Hank Baumann
March 21	Randy Stevens
March 28	Rusty Reaser

Please plan to attend the Kirk night suppers and worship services to enrich your spiritual journey through the church's season of Lent.

### **CHANCEL CHOIR**

January is a time to regroup, to count your blessings, to reflect on gains and losses, and to extend the ministry of music vision toward the horizon. Even though it is a new year, some things will not change. Sunday worship will still

come Around regularly every seven days as well as Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter. Then there is the Music-Worship Service which is scheduled for Sunday morning, April 22, at 10:45.

The Chancel Choir members already have three months of Sunday morning anthems in their notebooks and the Music-Worship Service material is there as well. All of this music is crying out to be prepared and presented. Choir members are rolling up their sleeves and preparing to spend two hours each Wednesday evening charging through the menu they find on the dry erase board from week to week.

We (Director and Members) always look for other talented singers to join with us in our charge. When you are involved in a worthwhile ministry, you want others to know the same satisfaction you have experienced in your journey. The rehearsal room door is open and the welcome mat is out.

#### SANCTUARY RINGERS

By the time you read this material this choir will have rung in worship on January 28 for the first time in the new year. In February they will ring on the 25th.

We are always looking for talented ringers to join with us in our ministry. Most of the time we need persons who are willing to step in and fill a position for an absent ringer in rehearsal or at a service. If you fit that description, please let Mr. Chapman hear from you.

#### WORSHIP PLANNING

Perhaps you are not aware that once each month there is a staff planning meeting when the Pastors and Musicians come together to talk about the sermon topics and to fit congregational hymns into those themes. These meetings are highly productive, enlightening, and enjoyable. Please rest assured that every effort is made to select hymns that will

enhance and deepen our Sunday morning worship experiences.

Most of the time upcoming events and the calendar get additional attention. If you have a suggestion you would like heard at this meeting, please write it down and give it to a staff member, drop it in the offering plate on Sunday, or put it in a staff person's mailbox in the Church Office.



## Children's and Youth Music

Music groups are off to a very good start in 2007! We have new friends, new music and new experiences to enrich our lives within our church.

Music Together groups are growing, literally. When the children came back after our break, they looked so much older. Part of the joy in my work is seeing these young musicians mature, grow and enjoy their musical experiences. They take in absolutely everything and love their group. It is wonderful to see a toddler take another mother's hand as easily as they do their own for a "hand's on" activity. There is much fellowship within our groups. We are starting a new collection of music this month and we are all excited at the possibilities of new songs, dances and activities.

Kindermusik I and II have just completed their first semester folders. These two groups are very special and extremely focused for such young musicians. Their families are very supportive and that makes a world of difference in their learning. We will have new folders and materials next week to enjoy as well. The younger group is working diligently on their glockenspiels and the older ones will be learning to play the recorder. By the time the children complete the two-year course, they will have had a percussion experience (glocken-

spiel), a string experience (dulcimer), and a woodwind experience (recorder). With all the singing we do as well, the children are set up for a lifetime of music.

Orff I and II are working on spirituals as we usually do in preparation for Black History month. The older children are ringing a beautiful song from the Sacred Harp entitled "Grace." The sermon that Randy preached a few weeks ago and this tune definitely go together. This group of 28 children in grades 1 through 5 is lively in the extreme. With different school system schedules, and so many children, it takes all 3 of us to make this work. I am so indebted to Amy Mason and Laura Stevens as are the children. If any of you would like to come and help from time to time, that would be great. As the song goes, "All God's children (and adults) have a place in the choir."

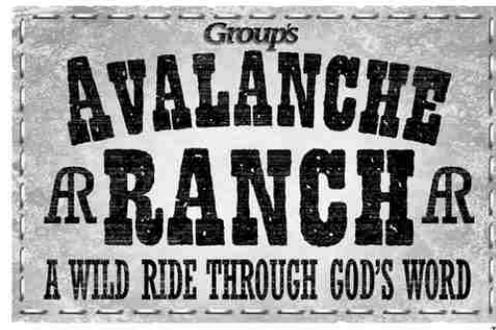
We could surely use you.

Expect great things from your Handbell Quintet again this year. We are getting organized for a great winter and spring. These young people are so talented and it is a joy to see that they are so devoted to their church. What a great example!

I hope that you are healthy and are enjoying the relative quiet of these winter months.

Betsy

SINGLES of the Church are invited to a Sweetheart Luncheon sponsored by the youth of the Sunday School Class for Middle and High School students. The luncheon is Sunday, February 11, in the Fellowship Hall following the 11:00 A.M. worship. The luncheon is free and entertainment is planned for your enjoyment.



Saddle up your pony, polish your boots, dust off that cowboy hat – VBS 2007 is on the way! We will be visiting Avalanche Ranch this year for a "wild ride through God's Word". The date is July 9 – 13 so mark your calendar now. Be watching in future Steeple Views for information on this year's buddies, Bible Point, Bible story, and Treasure Verse. Anyone with theme related paraphernalia lying around the house (or barn), please contact Janet Fentress or Laura Stevens if you are willing to loan it during that week in July. It's never too early to sign up to help as it's the volunteers which make the week a success.

### C.A.R.E.

(Compassionate Answers Resourceful Experiences)

C.A.R.E. is a bereavement support group for those who have lost someone near and dear to them, be it a spouse, child, grandchild, brother, sister, mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, friend, etc. The group meets every 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. in the hospital meeting room that is located on the first floor. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 27.

STEEPLEVIEWS is published 12 times per year.  
Editor: Patrice Newnam, Publisher: Sarah Altizer;  
Mailing Staff: volunteers

## **PALS Program**

### **Meeting New Challenges**

With the re-organization of the city's elementary schools, our PALS program has changed this school year to meet new needs. We are now volunteering at both elementary schools, Patrick Henry and Albert Harris. It is good to have our neighbor school across the street open and bustling with activity once again. Many of the faculty and students from our years at Clearview are assigned to Albert Harris this year, and loyalty to them has led many of our PALS to work there. Because AH has a larger student body and a smaller percentage of parental involvement, the need is especially great there.

I am so grateful to Cindy Franck, who with Cathy Stone's help got the PAL program up and running last fall. Just as it was time to begin, I was called out of town, and Cindy, who had recently returned to Martinsville and had never even been a PAL before, took over to recruit volunteers and coordinate with counselors at both schools to get the program under way. She is even volunteering at both schools weekly, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Thank you Cindy for your enthusiasm and excellent work!

If you have ever considered being a PAL, now is the time to volunteer. We are working mainly with kindergarten through second graders, as the need for one-on-one help is greatest when the children are learning the basics of reading and math. We also still need teacher's helpers to make copies, and do other simple but time consuming chores as needed. If you would be willing to volunteer regularly, usually but not necessarily once a week, there are more students at both schools who could use your help. Regularly scheduled volunteers receive an orientation at the school includ-

ing the simple basics of working with students before beginning their service. Also, a new requirement this year is a quick trip to the Martinsville City Schools Central Office to apply for a background check. This is a simple process, and not as intimidating as it sounds.

Our own Pam Mason is the librarian at Albert Harris, and she could use help any time school is open to process books and other materials. This can be on a very sporadic basis, whenever you would have the time. Please call her at the school library, **403-5746**, to schedule an initial visit, so as to not arrive when she is conducting a class. I would also like to know if you are doing this, just so we can keep count of all our PALS, but you don't need to schedule with me for this. Also, it is not necessary to have the background check if not working one-on-one with students.

We will soon be working with both schools to implement an approach to other churches to start their own PAL program. The need is obviously greater than our church can meet alone, and we hope other congregations will be as enthusiastic as you have been in providing this service to Martinsville's children. When Dr. Kizner spoke last November at our church, he was asked what can we do to help, and his answer was, "Get involved in our schools!" If you feel you can do this, or would like to know more about the program before making a commitment, please call me at **632-6774** or Cindy Franck at **632-5581**. We can both tell you this is a rewarding experience that is greatly needed and appreciated. Thank you to all who are or have been PALS over the years!!

Brenda Williams