



Presbyterian Web Sites:

Our Web Site: www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org
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

First Presbyterian Church Staff:

Randall Stevens, Pastor rcstevensfpc@juno.com
Joseph Moore, Associate Pastor assocpastor@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org
Rusty Reaser, Parish Associate
Robert Chapman, Director of Adult Music adultmusic@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org
Betsy Haskins, Director of Children/Youth Music haskinsbetsy@yahoo.com
Cynthia Dobrinski, Organist
Debbie C. Youngman, Librarian
Sarah P. Altizer, Church Secretary office@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org
Robin H. Keys, Bookkeeper fpc@mail.kimbanet.com
Church Web Site <http://www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/>



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

First Presbyterian Church
1901 Patrick Henry Avenue
Martinsville, VA 24112
Address Service Requested

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

Non-profit (bulk rate)
US Postage
PAID
Martinsville, VA 24112
Permit No. 108



1901 Patrick Henry Avenue ♦ Martinsville, VA 24112 ♦ (276) 632-3431, Fax: (276) 632-3802
office@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org ♦ www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

January, 2007

Martinsville, Virginia

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE WITHIN THE KINGDOM

The month of January gets its name from Roman mythology Janus was the god (lower case “g”) who was guardian of portals and patron of beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted as having two faces; one face was in front looking forward and the other face was at the back of his head looking backward. As we step into January, and thus, enter into a brand new year, I find myself mimicking Janus (without worshipping him!) I, too, find it helpful to look back over the previous year while, at the same time, I look forward and wonder what’s ahead, what’s around the bend. I flip through the pages of my 2006 calendar and I am amazed at how fast the time has flown and the many activities (visits, meetings, trips, etc.) that I managed to fit into 12 months. Then, I flip forward on my 2007 calendar. While these pages aren’t nearly as “inked over” to the same extent as last year’s pages, nevertheless, the 28-31 blocks (for each day in a given month) are beginning to be filled in with notations concerning coming events and other happenings. I look back over 2006 and I am filled with gratitude. It has been a good year both personally and professionally speaking. I especially note with profound joy how far our son, Andrew, has come in his fight against cancer. Having been diagnosed with stage-4 cancer back in May 2005, he has “come a long way, Baby!” He had surgery back in April and has endured numerous chemotherapy treatments. Monica, Andrew, and I met with an oncologist at Duke in June and heard once again the grim statistics regarding his cancer. Later, that same week, Andrew

talked with his oncologist in Richmond, who told Andrew that when he first saw Andrew in his office he thought to himself that Andrew probably had about four months to live. So, here it is, over a year and a half later. and Andrew is looking and feeling well. Throughout this long, hard ordeal I have learned anew just how precious the gift of each day truly is and that fills me with gratitude and joy. I also know that there’s nothing like family, church family, and friends. Also, our joy was deepened when Andrew and Sarah Junod married in October (in my former church, the First Presbyterian Church of Richmond, VA) and I co-officiated. What a blessing Sarah has been to Andrew and to our family. We are blessed indeed! The new year finds Andrew scheduled for further surgery. An oncological surgeon, who only operates on the liver, will remove the last detectable spots (3-4) of cancer in Andrew’s liver. More chemotherapy will probably take place afterwards. Will Andrew be “cancer free?” We really can’t say, but we know this surgery and subsequent chemo treatments will increase his chances of beating or living with the cancer. Thus, we are both grateful and hopeful as we turn and face this new year. As always, thank you all for being on this journey with us, for helping us to be strong, for praying for Andrew and our family, and for being so supportive and understanding when I need to run to Richmond to help out when he is undergoing chemotherapy. That’s a gift you have given to me that I can never, ever repay. I can only be profoundly grateful. As I have said before and often (quoting someone else): “We do not know what the future

holds, but, we know WHO holds us in the future.” That will preach!
In Christ’s love,
Randy

Word from the Associate Pastor:

I am writing this article during the week before Christmas, so it has been hard for me to think beyond Christmas and towards January. Is it time already to wave goodbye to 2006? Before we get too far into 2007, I think it is appropriate to give thanks for the ways in which this congregation has provided opportunities for all of us to catch the Christmas spirit. Almost 30 youth and adults from our church participated in Christmas Cheer as we packed a thousand boxes for needy families in Martinsville & Henry County. The Christmas pageant, “On Our Way to Bethlehem”, tugged on our heartstrings as the work of Betsy Haskins, her many volunteers, and the children really paid off. The “Christmas Music Celebration”, led by Bob Chapman, Cynthia Dobrinski, and the adult choir, took us on a journey through many favorite Advent hymns, Christmas carols, and even the fable, “Brother Heinrich’s Christmas.” The congregation purchased and returned over 60 angel tree gifts; the food and presents that we delivered as part of the Angel Tree Project brought smiles to the faces of so many needy people in our community. I even saw a few tears of joy. Christmas Share has raised thousands of dollars for local charities and community service agencies. The Christmas caroling at King’s Grant brought the Christmas spirit both to our youth group and to the residents who joined in and sang along with us. And by the time you will have read this article, we will have had the opportunity to participate in three distinct and meaningful worship services on Christmas Eve.

As I was thinking past all of these Christmas activities towards the New Year, I came across a story that spoke to me; perhaps you will also find it touching. A store owner was tacking a sign above his door that read "Puppies For Sale." Signs like that have a way of attracting small children, and sure enough, a little boy appeared under the store owner's sign. "How much are you going to sell the puppies for?" he asked. The store owner replied, "Anywhere from \$30 to \$50." The little boy reached in his pocket and pulled out some change. "I have \$2.37," he said. "Can I please look at them?" The store owner smiled and whistled and out of the kennel came Lady, who ran down the aisle of his store followed by five teeny, tiny balls of fur. One puppy was lagging considerably behind. Immediately the little boy singled out the lagging, limping puppy and said, "What's wrong with that little dog?" The store owner explained that the veterinarian had examined the little puppy and had discovered it didn't have a hip socket. It would always limp. It would always be lame. The little boy became excited. "That is the puppy that I want to buy." The store owner said, "No, you don't want to buy that little dog. If you really want him, I'll just give him to you." The little boy got quite upset. He looked straight into the store owner's eyes, pointing his finger, and said, "I don't want you to give him to me. That little dog is worth every bit as much as all the other dogs and I'll pay full price. In fact, I'll give you \$2.37 now, and 50 cents a month until I have him paid for." The store owner countered, "You really don't want to buy this little dog. He is never going to be able to run and jump and play with you like the other puppies." To his surprise, the little boy reached down and rolled up his pant leg to reveal a badly twisted, crippled left

leg supported by a big metal brace. The boy looked up at the store owner and softly replied, "Well, I don't run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!" Christmas is a time when we focus on the incarnation, how God has taken on human flesh through the miraculous birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Since Jesus Christ has lived on this earth, amidst all of life's pains, joys, and hardships, Christ can relate to us and sympathize with us. I think much of the time, all any of us want is someone who will understand us. In Jesus Christ, we have someone who is always there to listen to our prayers, understands our deepest desires, knows our biggest worries, and loves us more than we can ever imagine. I am glad that Christ understands us and is willing to accept us, even with our flaws, like the boy is willing to care for the dog with the limp. Thanks be to God!
Peace in Christ,
Jody

Special Joint Adult Sunday School

Class: January 28, 2007 at 9:45 a.m.
The topic is Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness: What Presbyterians are Doing to Help. Judy Rogers, who works with mission and outreach as the Hunger Action Enabler for the Presbytery of the Peaks, will teach the class. She will speak about the Presbyterian Hunger Program and will also tell us about specific ways Presbyterians in Southwest Virginia are making a difference locally. The class will meet in the Reed Classroom.

GAUDETE performance in our sanctuary on January 7, 2007, at 4:00 p.m., with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall. This is an evening of a cap-

ella choral music celebrating the Christmas festival and Epiphany. Directed by O. Randolph Minter, GAUDETE is a vocal ensemble of 25 voices, which include our own John Bowles and Mary Ann McConnell. They performed at Duke Chapel on the Duke University Campus on November 19 of this year. For the last decade GAUDETE has presented these free programs in Southside Virginia and North Carolina.

The **JOY Fellowship** and the Tuesday Morning Bible Study Class would like to invite you on a special outing. On Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at 11:30 a.m., we will travel to Ernie's restaurant in South Boston. Usually JOY Fellowship goes on mystery trips, where the location of the meal is unknown. Since Ernie's has been a popular request, we are letting you know in advance where we will be eating. We will take the church bus and will leave immediately after the Tuesday Morning Bible Study, which begins at 10:30 a.m. in the Reed Classroom. Even if you cannot join us for the Bible Study, you are welcome to join us for this outing at 11:30. Please call the church office to R.S.V.P. We should return to the church by the mid-afternoon.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY in
January to:**

- 1 Nancy Philpott
- 4 Marie Thompson, Melissa Seamon, Vicky Easley
- 5 Katherine Earles, Ashley Pruitt
- 6 Iliene Hite, John Chappell, Lea Washburn
- 7 Buck Flythe, Rob King
- 8 Stan Cobb
- 10 Jim Beard
- 11 Debbie Youngman, Cathy Martin
- 12 Betty Jane Simpson

13. Andrew Matheney, Alex Lawson
- 14 Nick Fraser
- 15 Peyton Horsley
- 16 Billy Kirby, Wendy Seamon, Joe Vipperman
- 17 Carolyn Franck, Carrie Sanders, Jake Sanders, Grace Anne Edgerton
- 18 Anne Carlyle Hurt, Hilary Moore, Mary Pilson
- 19 Jennifer Eden, Helen Flythe
- 20 Mary Brown
- 21 Ruth Decker Chaney, Katie Haskins, Mark Mason, Bonny Pace
- 22 Adeliah Isenhower, Max Hoopinger
- 23 Milton Davis, Natalie Shoebridge
- 24 Greg Darnell, Gary Hokanson
- 26 Chester Buffkin
- 27 Doug Woolard,
- 28 David Garland
- 29 Rusty Reaser, Alan Ferguson
- 30 Pat Hokanson, Lanie Walsh
- 31 Jim Haskins, Mattie Wingfield

and in February to:

- 1 Carolyn Lackey
- 2 David Seamon
- 3 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

CONGRATULATIONS to Will and Rebecca Stone on the birth of their daughter, Natalie Rebecca Stone, December 15, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. Bill and Cathy Stone are the proud grandparents!

THE Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated on December 24, 2006, for Cole Grayson Tatum, infant son of Neil and Kym Tatum.

CONGRATULATIONS and best wishes to Nancy Brown Cox and Nicholas Keith Sanders on the occasion of their marriage in the Chapel on November 24, 2006.

50 YEARS AS MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

On Sunday, January 21, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, we will recognize the Rev. Dr. Clarence Reaser on the occasion of his 50th anniversary of ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Rusty will also preach and reflect on what he has learned over the past half-century of ministry. During his 50 years of faithful ministry, “Rusty” has served mostly as a military chaplain, and then, following his retirement from the military, he served as pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Warner Robbins, GA. Since that retirement and his move to King’s Grant Retirement Community, Rusty has served faithfully in our congregation as a Parish Associate. You can usually find Rusty around the church: helping as a coliturgist in worship and singing in the Chancel Choir; co-teaching the Tuesday Morning Bible Study class, Officer Training class, and the new and prospective members’ class; visiting and praying with those in need; co-officiating at Witness to the Resurrection services of worship; meeting and planning with Randy and Jody; and greeting and sharing his warm and caring spirit with our members. On April 27, 2003, we witnessed as Rusty and Ann Vaughan exchanged wedding vows in the midst of the 11:00 worship service (Ann will begin serving

a three-year term on the Session in 2007.). Please plan to be in worship on January 21, 2007, for this very special day in Rusty's life and in the life of our church! Also, a light reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

Chancel Choir Christmas Music Celebration

The Chancel Choir's Christmas Music Celebration on December 10, was well presented and well attended. My appreciation to each of the singers and instrumentalists for their hard work and their dedication to the task which resulted in a marvelous time of celebration. Additional thanks is due to Anne Peterson and her committee for the reception following the program. After a program like this one the musicians are tired, hungry and thirsty and this gives them a chance to unwind and refresh not to mention the opportunity to interact with those who attended from our church and from our community.

This program was the result of over six months of planning and preparation. To the congregation it may appear easy but that is because the participants have done the work and paid the price. Many persons who have musical talent choose not to involve themselves in choir membership because of the amount of preparation time the ministry of our Chancel Choir asks. If God has given you the talent, He will make room in your schedule to accommodate the time necessary for choir membership. Give that some thought as we approach this new year. Rehearsals resume for this choir on Wednesday evening, January 3, at 7:00 p.m.

Sanctuary Ringers

The Sanctuary Ringers will begin rehearsals in the 2007 new year on Monday, January 8, at 7:30 p.m. If you are a

bell ringer we can find a place of service for you. 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. Let Mr. Chapman hear from you if you are interested.

The next time the Sanctuary Ringers ring in worship will be on January 28 in the morning worship service.

Adult Music Report 2006

Part one of my message to you this morning comes from the Chancel Choir. They would first extend to singers an invitation to sing and serve with them as they lead in worship each week. You will find this choir to be a warm and caring, family-like group of singers who are serious and committed to their ministry of music at FPC. This year we extend to interested singers two short-term options plus regular membership. The First Option is a Christmas Music only involvement. Rehearsals for these singers will be from 8-9 on Wednesday evenings and from 9:45-10:30 on Sunday mornings beginning in October. The Second Option is the Sunday morning only involvement. Singers come from 7-8 each Wednesday evening and sing the Sunday morning service. The third option is full membership where singers choose to do everything. May all of these tribes increase. Vicki Wells also mentioned that for her, singing in the Chancel Choir is an honor and a privilege. Those are options available for all.

I begin part two of my message this morning reading from Psalm 40, the first through the third verses.

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry.

He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire.

He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

He has given me a new song to sing, even a hymn of praise to our God.

Is your personal testimony that of the psalmist?

Indeed, God does give to the redeemed a new song, a unique song, and a reason to sing. Not only does he give us a song but voices with which to sing this song and the opportunity, even in this church, to worship Him through our singing. Do you realize that Christianity is the ONLY singing faith. I admonish each of us to take advantage of this marvelous opportunity.



Children's Music

Happy New Year to each of you and to all whom you hold dear!! As I write this on December 20th, many musical memories come to mind. I was so proud of the children who were in "On Our Way to Bethlehem."

They really did a beautiful job on their spoken parts, songs and movement. The play was beautifully presented and very well received. The many youth and adults who helped are to be commended as well. Amy Mason and Laura Stevens are so great to be present every Monday and at all rehearsals. Thank you from the bottom of my heart! We have many youth who have given their time to help as well. This awesome group includes the following: Emily Beard, Michael Mason, Ben Pinkston, Kimberly and Meredith Seamon, Carrie Buffkin, Sam Smith, Parker Gunn, and Maggie and Martha Pilson. It is indeed wonderful to see teenagers take such an active role in their church. Thank you one and all.

These plays simply would not happen without the expertise of our beloved Smith. He is always at the ready to do whatever needs doing to make things a success. Sound, lights, stages.. nothing is too much for our Smith. Many thanks

to you for all you do for the children and for our church. Heidi Pinkston, Kim Boyd, Laura Dunnigan and others produced our lovely reception. Thank you to all our cooks who brought delicious food to share. That is always such fun. We also had great make-up artists backstage-Elizabeth Walsh and Susan Aaron even coaxed the boys into a little make up. They all looked fabulous.

Margaret Pilson did a wonderful job on December 3 with her beautiful music. She is a wonderful flutist and people so enjoyed her contribution to worship. Our handbell quintet brings so much to worship. They will be playing in worship on Christmas Eve. I look forward to it immensely.

The other memories are of Christmas parties with each group. They are always fun and the fellowship we share is a great good thing.

Let's make 2007 a wonderful year in our church. We have so much for which to be thankful. Blessings to each of you in this new year of our Lord and Savior. Betsy Haskins

On Sunday, January 14, 2007, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, we will ordain and/or install the elders who will serve on the Session as the Class of 2009. Please plan to be present and offer your prayers and your support for these eight elders-elect: Chris Beeler, David King, Lang Mauck, Emily Parker, Bill Peterson, Ann Reaser, Anne Vipperman, and Melissa Wingfield. Also, we give our thanks and appreciation to those elders in the Class of 2006 who will be rotating off of the Session after having served these past three years. Those elders are: Doc Altizer, Nancy Baker, Bill Kirby, Tommy Martin, David McConnell, Johnny Pinkard, Erik Stegall, and Neil Tatum. Thanks to all of you for a job well done!

SPECIAL SESSION ON VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE

9:45 A.M.

JANUARY 7, 2007

Reed Classroom

DISCUSSION LED BY

-Joan Montgomery, Principal
Patrick Henry Elementary School

-Nancy Baker, Member
Martinsville City School Board

They will discuss recent school shootings, what our schools are doing to keep children safe, what parents and adults can do to help and about violence. Join the "I Promised What?" Class for this interesting discussion!

A Thank You Note

On Sunday, December 10, our Chancel Choir, Instrumentalists and Soloists presented "A Christmas Music Celebration – Director's Favorites". Bob Chapman and those who worked with him in this effort presented a stunning program and received accolades from those who were there. We are all so proud of the music program in our church and always look forward to sharing it with members of the community from other churches. A "Thank you" goes to all of the performers for a job well done.

We also want to thank the Women of the Church who contributed wonderful food for the reception held immediately after the performance. You could tell that the sandwiches, cookies, ham biscuits and punch were enjoyed because there was very little of anything left over. The tables looked beautiful and I was very proud of how well our women rose to the occasion – which was obvi-

ously a very special one. Your efforts were greatly appreciated.

Christmas is upon us. I realize that the Women of the Church will not meet together until January 8 so I want to thank all of you again for working so hard to make the reception a smashing success. Wishes come to you from me for a wonderful Christmas, and happiness and peace in the New Year.

Anne Peterson

The **2007 Confirmation Class** will begin meeting soon with Randy and Jody. The first meeting is set for Sunday, January 21, at 5:00 p.m., followed by supper (prepared for them by the youth groups) from 6:00-6:30 p.m. The class will meet through March and those young persons, who are ready to be received as full and active members of the church, will be confirmed and commissioned on Palm Sunday (April 1, 2007). Please pray for the following youth as they take this very important step: Emily Beard, Alanna Ferguson, Libby Goldstein, Katherine Lester, Matthew Price, and Kimberly Seamon.

The **Senior High Youth** are invited to a David LaMotte Concert at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church on Sunday January 7, 2007. This is a free concert: all you will need to bring with you are some canned foods to give to the Interfaith Food Pantry and some money for a meal on the way to Blacksburg. David LaMotte is a well-known and talented musician in Montreat circles. We will meet in the church parking lot at 4:00 p.m. and should return at 11:00 p.m. Please R.S.V.P. to the church office by Wednesday January 3, 2007.

Triennium: Want to attend an international senior high youth conference with over 6,000 Presbyterians? Triennium, which takes place every three years, is happening this summer on the campus of Purdue University in Indiana. The dates of Triennium are July 17-22, 2007. If you are interested, you need to fill out an application, give a \$50 deposit, and return that to Jody no later than January 16th. The church will subsidize the cost of this conference. There are a very limited number of spots to Triennium, so send in your application as soon as possible!

CHRISTMAS SHARE: The project was a success! We had contributions of \$4,448 to the fund. Various agencies in our area benefited from your generosity.

WAY TO GO! We reached our goal of 250 cans of spaghetti sauce collected in December for Grace Network! Keep those cans of sauce coming in January!

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