



A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

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*

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/>

Our Web Site: www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

Phone: 276-632-3431 *Fax:* 276-632-3802

office@firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org

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

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STEEPLE VIEWS



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First Presbyterian Church

January, 2008

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

I want to begin by telling a story I heard some time ago. Two students met in seminary and became close friends.

They shared many classes and many late night sessions together. At graduation they went their separate ways. One felt called by God to do small church ministry while the other went to a good size church. Over the years, they kept in touch by monthly church newsletters, occasional phone calls, and the traditional Christmas letter to family and friends. They both went back to their seminary for their twentieth class reunion. The one minister told of the small churches he had served within that time period. Then, he asked his friend to bring him up to date on his current church situation. The other minister humbly acknowledged that he was now in a church with well over one thousand members on the rolls and an average of seven hundred people in worship each Sunday. His friend responded, "Wow, seven hundred people in worship on a Sunday! Imagine that! How do you preach to that many people and please them all?" His friend replied, "I don't! I don't preach to please all seven hundred people. I only preach to please just One and that's the Lord!"

That story really speaks to me because it reminds us all in a very vivid way that ultimately we really only need to be concerned with pleasing One. We are accountable and answerable, most of all, to Jesus Christ concerning our thoughts, our decisions, our words, and our actions. Sometimes we are pulled in two or more ways trying to please a lot of different people with varying opinions; and, sometimes it is difficult, if not impossible, to be all

things to all people. While this is true for each one of us as individual Christians, it is equally true for a body of Christians. For instance, when the twenty-four elders and two pastors of the Session gather to make decisions, we don't strive to get our own way or to represent a certain interest group in the congregation. Rather, we "seek together to find and represent the will of Christ" (Book of Order, G-4.0301d). That's what matters the most!

I would like to suggest that, as we approach the new year, we strive to make and keep only one New Year's resolution before and above all others we might make about eating, exercising or spending habits or whatever else you have in mind. Let us strive to be and do our very best to please our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with our daily lives and our faithful witness. Let this goal be our guiding light for which we aim each day, each week, each month throughout 2008. And, when we do our best to please Christ Jesus, we have the assurance that our lives of compassion, integrity, and service are pleasing in the sight of the Lord. That is certainly a life worth living!

In Christ's love,

Randy

A Word from the Associate Pastor:

At the congregation's Annual Meeting in September, I shared with you my three goals for First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville in 2007-2008. I formulated these goals after listening to you: both to the things you care about and to the ways you hope to grow. The three goals are that we, as a congregation over the next year, will focus on (1.) prayer, (2.) fellowship, and (3.) encountering the Bi-

ble. In recent newsletter articles, I have discussed how we can become more disciplined in our devotional life by taking practical steps to improve our prayer life and our time studying the Bible.

In this month's article, I will be focusing on fellowship. This congregation is full of genuine and fun people, folks who enjoy spending time together. As a Christian community, fellowship is about having fun together, but it is also about much more than that. Jesus promised in Matthew 18:20, "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." I truly believe that as Christians gather together, sharing joys, hopes, concerns, and faith with one another, Jesus is really present with us.

M. Scott Peck tells a powerful tale, "The Rabbi's Gift," at the beginning of his book *The Different Drum*. A monastery that had once thrived was dying and had been reduced to five elderly monks.

The abbot is troubled by the decline of the monastery and decides to go to the woods to pray. He finds a rabbi there and the abbot asks him for advice. The rabbi's only words are, "One of you is the Messiah."

Returning to the monastery, the abbot shares this advice with the other four monks. None of them believe it at first: they know each other's faults too well!

Yet they were curious about the advice, so they started looking more closely, just in the slight chance the rabbi was right.

The strange thing was that they developed a profound respect for each other, which began to attract new visitors to the dying monastery. That place started growing and became vibrant as a positive spirit infused the monastery. Think of all the wonderful things that can happen if we expect that we can meet Jesus in our neighbors. Rather than focusing on each other's flaws, we can reap the benefits if we appreciate the good that each person offers.

From my conversations with you, I sense that many of you would like to have more opportunities for informal conversation and interaction with each other. So in response, the Worship Committee has begun to organize two events during 2008 that will allow us to grow as Christian friends, who share mutual affection and laughter.

First, our church has reserved Camp Hat Creek for a **Church-Wide Retreat** on April 4-6, 2008. That weekend, the entire church family, from two to ninety-two, is invited to join us. Whether you are a single person or a married couple, a youth or a preschooler, an empty nester or a retiree, we hope you will plan to attend. It will be a weekend of relaxation, campfires, beautiful scenery, good food, worship, and great conversations. Save the date! There will be more information about the retreat in the weeks to come.

Second, we are planning a Homecoming in the fall of 2008. Many churches have a **Homecoming**, a time when its former friends and members are invited to come back for worship and other festivities. We thought it was about time for our church to have such a celebration. If you are interested in helping plan either event, please contact: Betsy Haskins (for the homecoming), Bill Peterson, (for the retreat), or me. I am looking forward to both events as opportunities for us to grow closer together as a church family!

Peace in Christ,

Jody



A special birthday wish to **KEN SMITH** whose birthday is December 29. Regretfully, Ken has been inadvertently left off the birthday list for several years, and the publisher offers her public apology.



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
- 9 Jennifer Nease
- 10 Jim Beard
- 11 Debbie Youngman, Olivia Robertson, Cathy Martin
- 12 Betty Jane Simpson
13. Andrew Matheney, Alex Lawson
- 14 Nick Fraser
- 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, Mark Mason, Bonny Pace
- 23 Milton Davis, Natalie Shoebridge
- 24 Greg Darnell, Gary Hokanson
- 26 Chester Buffkin
- 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

THE Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated on December 16, for Charles Ryan Toothman, infant son of Charles and Kimberly Toothman.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Clyde and Jean Hill on the death of Jean's sister, Harriet Guth, December 13, 2007.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Walt and Connie Anderson on the death of Walt's sister, Doris Anderson Gargett, December 18, 2007, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CONGRATULATIONS and best wishes to Mary Kay Kahn and David Huston Chittum, Jr., on the occasion of their marriage November 24, 2008, in Roanoke, Virginia.



Children and Youth Music

December has been wonderful so far and the best is yet to come!! Uppermost in my mind, is the wonderful job that the children and youth did on our Christmas pageant, "Christmas in Reverse"! It was a wonderful evening. The children really set their sights so high and accomplished so much. They sang better than any group I have ever had. The message of Jesus' coming was powerfully delivered.

A project like this does not happen without so much support. Smith is just amazing. Here is what he did: built the stage twice (it was a few years ago, but we appreciate it every year), put up the backdrop, figured out how to do the video in the middle of the play and run the sound at the same time, put up microphones, set up speakers, ran the sound, helped with the lights, set up a video with extra sound, so that we have a wonderful DVD of the performance with wonderful sound is this making you

tired?? Smith, thank you so much.

Amy Mason, Laura Stevens, Wendy Seamon, Meredith and Kimberly Seamon, Emily Beard, Sam Smith, Carrie Buffkin and Parker Gunn all were back stage keeping the crowd focused!! I appreciate their help so much! Our parents were wonderful! Heidi Pinkston, Teri Ferguson, Debbie Easley and Linda Mitchell (a grand mom) were busy in the kitchen making our reception so great. All the treats that the families brought were enjoyed down to the very last cookie.

Props were made by Peggy Cassady, Susan Aaron, Missy Bowles and others. These are friends of the church whose children are active in the program. We love having friends in our group.

Christmas parties were really fun this week and we have a break til January 7th when we will begin again with gusto.

As for me, I am anticipating with joy and wonder, the birth day of our Lord. I am also very excited about our first Christmas with our beloved grandson, Landon, who is a blessing to us. 9 months old and into everything and we love every minute of it!

I wish, from deep in my heart, all the joys, blessings and grace of this wonderful Advent and Christmas season for you and all whom you love.



Our memorial donations to the church library are listed below:

SILENT NIGHT illustrated by Thomas Kinkade

Given in memory of Juliet Pichirallo by Reed Stone Moore.

365 MEDITATIONS FOR WOMEN BY WOMEN edited by Sally D. Sharpe

Given in memory of Juliet Pichirallo by Nancy Betz.

FINDING GOD IN THE STORY OF AMAZING GRACE by Kurt Bruner and Jim Ware

Given in memory of Juliet Pichirallo by Circle 6.

THE CHRISTIANS AS THE ROMANS SAW THEM by Robert Louis Wilken

Given in memory of Juliet Pichirallo by Circle 6.

A STAR SO BRIGHT by M. Christina Butler

Given in memory of Sylvia Persinger Lents by Mary Page.

GREAT JOY by Kate DiCamillo

Given in memory of Sylvia Persinger Lents by Mary Page.

On Sunday, January 13, 2008, during the morning worship service, we will ordain and install new elders to serve on the Session as the Class of 2010. Those to be ordained and installed are: Paul Cannaday, Nancy Davis, Cindy Franck, Gavin Russell, Betty Stanley, Charles Toothman, and Doug Walsh; Erik Stegall, who has already been ordained as an elder, will also be installed at this time. Please be sure to be on hand to support and pray for these new elders as they lead through their service on the Session.

Also, the following elders, who are in the Class of 2007, will be rotating off of the Session: Jim Beard, Catherine Bridges, Milt Davis, Joe DeVault, Helen Hawkes, Monty Montgomery, Pearl Richardson, and Forrest Truitt. Please be sure to thank these elders for a job well done!

In our church, most activities and events don't just happen! Rather, we tend to get things done by way of the Session's seven committees. Each committee discusses an idea, event or project and then presents a motion to the Session. If the Session approves the motion, then the sponsoring committee goes to work in

order to make their proposal a reality. Included within this Steepleviews' newsletter is a chart showing the organization of the 2008 Session's committees. Listed under each of the seven committees are the various areas of responsibility concerning our church's life together. Obviously, a number of other church members are required (besides the 3-4 elders assigned to each committee) to serve on these committees in order to oversee, plan, and do the necessary work assigned to each one. If you are able to help call the church office (632-3431) and let Sarah, Randy, or Jody know of your interest and willingness to go to work in a given area. Thank you for volunteering!

The Tempo "Our Musical Pulse"

Chancel Choir

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. At this point we are in real need of additional sopranos, altos, tenors, baritones and basses. If you have an interest in singing with us in our Music Service in April 2008, please make that interest known to Bob. Wednesday evening rehearsals resume on January 2, at 7:00 P.M.

This article is being written before the Lessons and Carols Service, which was on December 16, so there are no comments on that service in this issue of *Steeple Views*. The Chancel Choir began preparation in October and I appreciate their hard work and loyalty.

Sanctuary Ringers

This choir rang on Sunday morning December 9. I appreciate the pleasure of my association with this group of handbell ringers. You will be hearing them in worship during 2008. Their re-

hearsals begin on January 2, at 6:00 P.M. If you have an interest in being a regular ringer or a substitute ringer, please make that known to Bob.

Hymns

Christian hymns are as old as the Christian Church and have their roots in our New Testament. Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper. Through the centuries each generation has made its contribution. Religious, political and economic conditions have not only influenced authors and composers but have often determined the use of their hymns. Countless multitudes have been spiritually motivated by hymns which have become such an integral part of both private and corporate worship.

GAUDETE performance in our sanctuary on January 6, 2008, at 4:00 p.m., with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall. This is an evening of a cappella 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. For the last decade GAUDETE has presented these free programs in Southside Virginia and North Carolina. Let's all come out to hear this program and support our two choir members!

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Editor: Patrice Newnam, Publisher: Sarah Altizer;
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