



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



Our Mission is to:

Share God's love, embrace our neighbors, nurture each other.

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

May, 2009

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

As I write this article, I am still basking in the glow of Easter and our celebration of the risen Christ. It was a great joy to see the sanctuary full with lots of families in for the holiday and lots of children all over the place. I have often said, when the church is full and alive with the Good News of our risen Lord, because I preach from a manuscript, what I say won't vary too much, but how I say it will vary a great deal. It was a real delight to hear so many voices singing their praises to God and affirming their faith in God.

I was flipping through an old file and I came across a devotional thought, which is entitled "Free At Last," and it was written by Martin Pike. "The locust laboriously made his way up the wall until he came to rest on the windowsill of the church office. He was an ugly creature, encased in a dull shell. In due time the shell case split along the back and a head struggled through the opening. The struggle continued and stubby projections that looked like tiny shoulder blades appeared. Slowly, like an unfolding Japanese fan, they became fragile wings. His labor continued until he stumbled from the prison in which his body had been encased beneath the Earth for long years. Today the sound of the cicada is heard on every side. The long wait has ended. The old has been made new. The cycle of life has begun again. The next morning I saw the old case still on the windowsill. Except for the fact that it was dull and brown, empty and wingless, it looked exactly like the creature that somehow had managed to break free from it."

Then, Martin Pike offered this insight: If God set the locust free from his dungeon in the Earth, enabled him to escape the dull, hard, restrictive shell in which he had been encased, gave him brilliant colors and gossamer wings, is not the Creator all the more likely to do as much and more for us? Will not the one who breathed into us the breath of life set us free from hatred, injustice, pride, greed, and all those qualities that have imprisoned us? Will God not empower us with a love that exceeds anything we might anticipate, and transform our dullness into a redemptive brilliance? (The Presbyterian Outlook, October 7, 2002, p. 13) Resurrection is all around us as well as within us. While we affirm the resurrection of the body in the hereafter, the good news is that resurrection power is available to us in the here and now. We don't have to stay the same, and we need not settle for less. Our risen Lord invites us to join him in the dance of life and, in the process, we grow and change and become who we are truly meant to be. As we live in Christ Jesus, and he lives within us, we are transformed from one degree of glory to the next. Here's hoping that Easter and the reality of our own resurrections are something we celebrate all year long.

In Christ's love,
Randy



Happy Birthday in May

- 1 Logan Esarey, 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 Paul Elsenheimer, Pearl Richardson, Monica Stevens
- 14 Jon Tatum, Farrell Pace
- 16 Kemp Newnam
- 17 Margaret Ann Irby, Heath Russell
- 19 Taylor Shank, Anne Banks Boyd
- 20 Colleen Dallas, Doris Treacle
- 22 Curtiss Lester, Elizabeth Pritchett, Joanna Wood
- 23 Randy Bumgarner, Annie Grace Payne
- 27 Margaret Smith, Kent Williams, Virginia Seamon, Jacob Wingfield
- 28 Ginny Newnam
- 29 Christine Fraser, Ed Linker

And in June to.....

- 1 Cynthia Dobrinski, Gage Lawson, Reid Lawson
- 2 Suzanne Lacy, Cole Rothrock
- 3 Bob Knighton, Riley Wood
- 4 Laura Beth Eanes, Mike Eanes, Pat Wilson
- 5 Meredith Bumgarner
- 6 Nancy Plonk
- 8 Phil Payne
- 9 Lori Hurt, Josh King, Susan Smith
- 10 Allison Campbell, Cindy Edgerton

Congratulations to Carrie Sanders and Darrell Wilson on the birth of their twins, Emma Elizabeth and Evan Ray Wilson, on March 21, 2009, in Martinsville. Madison Sayles is the proud big sister and Keith and JoAnne Sanders the proud grandparents!

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Milt and Nancy Davis and Ralph and Lyn Davis on the death of Ralph and

Milt's brother-in-law, Roy Stern, on April 8, 2009, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Tempo

"Our Musical Pulse"

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir is catching their collective breaths after being involved in the Darkness and Light program since January. I express to the choir my thanks for their work on this service of worship.

You may have noticed that many of the singers you hear and see singing are not regular members who sing with us all year. We appreciate those who enjoy singing the programs with us and come in the couple of times a year for these presentations. Our guest singers were: Connie Anderson, Lynn Anderson, Sara Blaha, Patti Clevenger, K. Byron Corcoran, Jenny Hensley, Lang Mauck, Judy Mattox and Walt Seamon.

In the last "Tempo" I mentioned that it was too late to get involved in the Chancel Choir as a regular or program singer because the remainder of our preparation time was too short for them to learn the music. Now, the door is open and the knob is on the outside for new members. Come and join with us .

It is almost time for the "Summer Stretch", June, July, and August. I will have more to say about this time of year next month.

Sanctuary Ringers

I appreciate the work of the ringers who have been involved in the Sanctuary Ringers this past year. We have had all positions filled for the entire season. Not only have these ringers rung some challenging music but have gone beyond the norm to ring the bell parts in several anthems that the Chancel Choir has sung. It has been a number of years since this choir has rung on Easter Sunday and they rang and played the bell part on the anthem this past Easter. Thank You!

We have two events left before the "summer stretch", ringing in church on May 31 and the Family Cook-out.

Perhaps you noticed in a couple of the services this Spring, Lynn Pritchett was ringing some very

large bells which really gave a great foundation to the choir sound. These bells were on loan from Broad Street Christian Church. We appreciate A. Robert Chapman, Director of Music at Broad Street, for lending them to us. What an amazing year this has been! So much music, so much joy, so many connections with families and children! But we are not done yet!

Kindermusik children are getting ready for our favorite unit: *Peter and the Wolf*. This involves knowing all the orchestral instruments, the story itself, which we act out, and have small figures with which to work as well. This is a really special group! Music Together is growing and well. All our families want to continue throughout the summer. If any of you have grandchildren or friends visiting during the summer, come and join us on Tuesdays at 11 for a lot of music and fun. Check with me about dates. We will be meeting most weeks as long as there are 6 families who can be present. Orff children did a wonderful job on Palm Sunday! They worked so hard. It was made harder by the fact that I could not sing a single note- my usual April and October allergy bit. I was so proud of them. We are working hard for Mother's Day, which will be our final Sunday for the spring. We are blessed to have all choral responsibilities that day and we are raring to go! Stay tuned for Drama camp this summer where we will present a complete work at week's end!!! Cantabile Ringers are amazing. We will be ringing in May and June and have some wonderful music to present in worship!



BIG NEWS

Remember *Operation Christmas Child*-this was our church's project for the Shoebox Ministry and also was the children's Christmas pageant. Our church sent over 160 shoeboxes to be distributed in the world to children in need. Our children were invited to include their address and picture. Three of our children heard from the ones who received their boxes!!!! Evidently our boxes arrived in Burkina-Faso, a small independent country in West Africa. All letters were to French speaking children. Sarah Toothman's letter was written in French; Luke Erikson's was translated from French to English as was Cameron Aaron's. They included pictures of each child and Sarah's letter contained two necklaces that her writer had made for Sarah!

The children plan to collect small objects suitable to mail to our new friends in May. These can be things that we included for the Christmas delivery. They include the following: small toys, sun glasses, small picture books, flip flops, hard candy, coloring books and materials.....Anything that a child would enjoy. If you would like to include something, just leave it in my box in the office or on my desk.

It is wonderful to see love go halfway around the world and then come back again!

Session Highlights ***(from March 30, 2009)***

- Victoria Esarey gave the opening devotional and prayer.
- Noted with sadness the death of Norma Rae Mason Cumberledge on March 2, 2009.
- Celebrated the births of Emma Elizabeth Wilson and Evan Ray Wilson on March 21, 2009 (children of Carrie Sanders and Darrell Wilson).
- Approved the Session's minutes for the February 23, 2009, meeting.
- Approved a contract with Betsy Haskins, who will provide music for the children and youth as well as music for the contemporary (early) worship service.
- Gave approval to the Red Hat Society to use the church's facilities on April 3, 2009.

•Approved the “Stewardship of Our Capital Resources” document to be a part of the Officers’ Handbook in order to give more in-depth guidance to anyone wishing to make a planned gift to the church; and, approved the “Endowment and Giving Opportunities” brochure as an information item for church members.

Contemporary Service

We have some wonderful music for May and hope to see you at worship!
Here’s something exciting! We will celebrate our One Year Anniversary on Sunday May 3rd! That is quite a momentous occasion! Our numbers are growing and the connections made in worship are becoming quite strong. I want to thank each musician for his/her commitment throughout the year!! Our musicians are as follow:
Betty and Gene Stanley, Sandra Ford, Will Franck, Lynn Pritchett, Virginia King, Gael Chaney, Randy Stevens, Bill Garrett, Darla Main-Schneider, Beth Lawson, Sam Smith, Josh Hill, Valerie Hill and our newest member Ed Lane. Our tech team is as follows:
Tommy Martin, Ann Marie Franck, Jim Ford and Smith Chaney. Ashby and Johnny Pinkard are present each Sunday morning to make sure that logistics go smoothly.
This is quite a commitment from a very special group within our church family. We are blessed because of each of you!!!
I hope this Eastertide is full of Christ’s richest blessings!
In Joy,
Betsy

News from the Stewardship and Visioning Committee:

The Session’s Stewardship/Visioning Committee is involved not just with plans for the annual stewardship season, but also making us all aware of ways in which our Church’s future and the better fulfillment of its mis-

sion can be strengthened. To that end, it has been working on a brochure containing information about the Church’s existing endowment funds and methods by which we might seek to add to them. We anticipate that this brochure will be finally revised and approved by the Session in the near future. It will then be made available to all Church individual members or households. We also propose in future newsletters to continue to highlight this subject and perhaps stimulate thinking on a subject which, although important, is one that is easy to delay considering for much too long. Those who have thought about it and then done something in response have been motivated by a love to the Church and a desire to make an enduring gift to promote its mission and well being. Perhaps you would like to join them?

....and from the Mission and Evangelism Committee:

The Butterfly Project was successfully completed on Monday, April 20, when five middle schoolers and seven adults delivered gifts and food boxes to six needy families in our community. The First Presbyterian congregation once again responded generously with clothing, shoes, and books/games for the children, and with cash to purchase food for each household. Response from the recipients was spontaneous, appreciative, and heartwarming. Many thanks to the Mission Committee members, to Randy Stevens, and to those many from our church family who contributed gifts and money.

Mission Committee members have resumed the task of regularly recycling the church’s scrap paper which accumulates in the six blue bins situated throughout the church building. Look for the receptacles, recognizable by the familiar recycling icon, to dispose of unwanted papers.

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Editor: Patrice Newnam, Publisher: Sarah Altizer; Mailing Staff: volunteers

Youth Sunday this year will not be on Mother's Day as it has been in the past. It will, instead, be on the following **Sunday, May 17**, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please plan to attend and support the youth of our congregation as they lead us in worship, especially the graduating high school seniors as they reflect on "What the church means to me." The youth will lead the entire worship service, including the prayers, the call to worship, scripture, etc. **Please note: On May 17, there will not be an 8:45 a.m. Contemporary Service so we can encourage everyone to attend the Youth Sunday service at 11:00 a.m.**

Pentecost will be celebrated at First Presbyterian this year on Sunday, May 31, 2009. Pentecost is the third most important Christian holiday of the year (Easter and Christmas are the two most significant holidays). Pentecost is the birthday of the church when the early church recognized the gift of the Holy Spirit. The liturgical color of Pentecost is red, which represents the tongues of fire and the power of the Holy Spirit. We are inviting everyone in the congregation to wear red this Sunday, so there will be a "sea of red" in the congregation. Following worship, there will be refreshments served on the lawn, including a birthday cake with red icing to commemorate the church's birthday!

Donations were made in April to the following Funds:

General Memorial Fund

Memory of Walker Shank By: Mrs. Marge Dunn

Memory of Norma Cumberledge By: Mrs. Marie B. Lannom

Mrs. Marge Dunn

Mr. Ralph E. Shank

Stevens Fund and Pastors Discretionary Fund

Memory of Andrew Stevens By: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rudder

Parents of College Seniors: Please call the Church Office and let us know if you have a child graduating from college so we can include them in our list of 2009 grads.