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Presbytery of the Peaks: www.peakspresbytery.org
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Pby. Disaster Assistance: www.pcusa.org/pda/
Presbyterian Today: www.pcusa.org/pcusa/today
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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

November, 2008

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

I was driving recently and I saw something, which evoked a memory that went back twenty-six-plus years ago. Here's what I saw: as I crossed over a small creek and culvert, there were two concrete walls about one foot high on each side of the road; their purpose was to prevent a car from going off the road and being airborne before smashing into the ground. Now then, here's what I remembered:

My first pastorate was in Itasca, TX. Outside of town was a Presbyterian Children's Home and, on most Sundays, there were almost fifty children and their cottage parents in Sunday School and worship with us. One of the youth was named Thomas, who was a huge fellow. I'm sure he weighed 300 pounds and most of that weight was muscle; it was no surprise that Thomas was a valued member of the high school football team.

On one occasion, Thomas was allowed to take a car from the Children's Home to go to a concert in Dallas. Thomas was returning home late that same night. He became sleepy and the car slowly drifted to the side of the road. He fell asleep and woke up when the small compact car he was driving hit one of those concrete walls on the right side of the road above the creek bed. The car immediately came to an abrupt stop on top of the barrier, and it immediately burst into flames! Thomas tried to open the doors of the compact; however, they were jammed tightly shut due to the terrific impact. Thomas was afraid that he was going to burn up inside the car because his large frame could not fit through the windows. He looked for some way out of the burning car. In his panic, he looked down and discovered that that concrete wall had ripped open the bottom of the car – the wall had peeled the floor of the car back like a sardine can lid that had been rolled back. Thomas squirmed through this “trapdoor” of an escape hatch and got out of the car to safety with only minor injuries.

I drove to the scene of the accident the very next day and looked at the burned vehicle. I wondered how in the world Thomas was able to get out of that burning wreck. And, I noted the floor rolled back, which gave Thomas enough space to exit the car. I also talked to Thomas about his narrow escape, and I can still recall Thomas saying, “God must surely have a purpose for my life!” I don't know what became of Thomas after high school – either he moved or I moved on to my next pastorate.

The concrete wall I saw recently was a door that opened on to “Memory Lane” and I walked right on through and reflected on Thomas' experience. And now, I find myself wondering: Have you ever experienced a miracle, some remarkable occurrence in your life in which the hand of the Holy seemed to be involved? It may have been a major miracle (with a capital “M”) or a smaller event that still made you go, “Wow!” Also, what blessings do you enjoy that cause you to stop and pour out thanksgiving to God?

Surely, we realize that both the Stewardship season and Thanksgiving Day are truly year-round (day after day) realities in our lives. We are blessed and we seek to pass on our blessings to others. I hope Thomas was able to discover God's purpose for his life, and I hope we too will live our lives on purpose – to the glory of God!

In Christ's love,
Randy

A Word from the Associate Pastor:

November is a month where we have an opportunity to reflect on the many things we are grateful for. Of course, on the fourth Thursday of the month we gather together on Thanksgiving with our friends and family, carve the turkey, and remember all we have to be thankful for. Our church, for the second consecutive year, will have New Consecration Sunday on November 9, where we are invited to reflect upon God's many blessings and to consider how God invites us to share the gifts of our time, our talents, and our money.

Gratitude seems a little harder for some of us to find this year. Instead I sense a lot of anxiety in our church, our community, and the world. Our church's members are anxious to see our church live up to its potential. Over the last two months, the stock market has been on a roller coaster ride and there has been talk of a potential global economic meltdown. Every day on the news, we hear about a new round of job losses, unfortunately some of those losses have been right here in Martinsville and Henry County. Many people are wondering how they will make ends meet.

Recently I heard the true story of a father and mother of a young man killed in the military in a little church. One day they came to the pastor and told him they wanted to give a monetary gift as a memory to our son who died in battle. The pastor said, "That's a wonderful gesture on your part." He asked if it was ok to tell the congregation and they said that it was. So the next Sunday he told the congregation of the gift given in memory of the dead son. On the way home from church, another couple were driving down the highway when the father said to his wife, "Why don't we give a gift because of our son?" And his wife

said, "But our son didn't die in any conflict! Our son is still alive!" Her husband replied, "That's exactly my point! That's all the more reason we ought to give in thanks to God." Isn't it interesting that we most often give gifts to God in memorial rather than in appreciation! It ought to be the exact opposite! But it's the same way in our prayer lives. We pray the best and the most when troubles come our way, not when we are being blessed.

It is human nature to focus on the things that are not working out the way we hoped, but I hope we can still see God's presence in our lives. At our Officer Retreat, we discussed how Jeremiah writes that God says, "When you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you." God is with us; and the God we believe in is bigger than the storms we are facing. This November, I hope we all can take a step back and remember the many ways God has blessed us.

Peace in Christ,
Jody Moore

New Elders-Elect

On Sunday, October 19, the following elders were elected to serve on the Session: the Class of 2011 consists of Jim Baker, Manley Boyd, Catherine Bridges, Victoria Esarey, David Garland, Bill Kirby, Darla Main-Schneider, and Denise Unterbrink; Joan Montgomery was also elected to fill an unexpired term in the Class of 2010.

Beginning on Wednesday, October 22, and concluding on Wednesday, November 19, these elders-elect will meet with Randy, Jody, and Rusty for five sessions (an hour and a half each session) for officer training. The five classes will cover their personal faith journey and experience within the church, essential tenets of the Reformed faith, the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order, the history of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the responsibilities and expectations of elders, plus practical training in ushering, serving communion, and counting the offering.

Following these five sessions, the elders-elect will meet with the Session and be examined on Monday, November 24, at 7:00 p.m. Then, they will be ordained and/or installed on Sunday, January 11, 2009, during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Please be sure to thank Jim, Manley, Catherine,

Victoria, David, Bill, Darla, Denise, and Joan for agreeing to serve on the Session of our church. And, please keep them in your prayers as they train and prepare to assume office.



Happy Birthday in November to

- 3 Bill Hensley, Mildred Moorman
- 5 Neil Tatum
- 8 Donna Lawhon
- 10 Kathy Washburn
- 11 Leon Gunter, Elizabeth Wotring
- 13 David McConnell
- 15 Norma Cumberledge, Hank Moore
- 16 Sharon Rakes
- 18 Ruth Easley, Donna King
- 19 Susan Bowles
- 20 Sam Hurt
- 21 Jim Baker, Henry Moore
- 22 Cliff Campbell
- 23 Sue Benfield
- 24 Judy Ware
- 25 Jean Hill, Ed Pace
- 27 Leanna Blevins, Margaret Clanton,
Joe DeVault, Margaret Knight,
Analisa O'Toole
- 28 Katie Krauss
- 30 Steve Mahoney

And in December to:

- 1 Anne Vipperman
- 2 Margaret Hotchkiss, Erik Stegall
- 3 Dru Rothrock
- 4 Ashby Pritchett, Debra Easley
- 6 Keith Sanders, Roslyn Ramsey,
Katherine Lester
- 8 Lyn Davis
- 9 Jack Adkins, Joan Montgomery, Chris Wingfield
- 10 Betsy Haskins, Marion Miller
- 11 John Kuhn
- 12 Brian Williams, Ron Dailey
- 14 Merv King
- 15 Kim Boyd
- 17 Matthew Mason
- 18 Bill Kirby

- 19 Beth Chapman
- 20 Claire Adkins
- 22 Jeb Bowles, Vera Jane Kuhn, Grayson Russell
- 24 Jackie McLachlan
- 26 Smith Chaney
- 27 Nancy Moore, Cathy Stone, Gael Chaney
- 28 Doc Altizer, Brenda Williams
- 29 Ken Smith, Denise Unterbrink, Lucy Wilson,
Kimberly Toothman

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Bill and Fran Hensley and family on the death of Bill's mother, Elizabeth Turner Hensley, in Martinsville. Elizabeth, a member of First Presbyterian since April 7, 1940, joined the Church Triumphant on October 1, 2008.

The Tempo

"Our Musical Pulse"

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir is busy preparing repertoire for this season of the year as well as the Advent and Christmas Seasons which follow. There are a couple of singers who have joined us for our Christmas Music Service which will be on Sunday evening, December 21, at 7:00. If you want to join us in our ministry of music for the program or as a full-time singer, we invite you to make that known to Mr. Chapman. For regular singers, rehearsals are from 7:00-8:00, and for regular and program singers rehearsals are from 8:00-9:00 on Wednesday evenings and from 10:00-10:30 on Sunday mornings with the exception of November 16 and December 14. The Christmas Music Service is open to all so make your plans to come to the service on December 21 and to bring friends with you. Our special guests for the service will be the Chamber Brass from Roanoke. PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!

Sanctuary Ringers

I am pleased to report that we have twelve ringers now and no open positions. If you are interested in being a substitute ringer I would like to talk to you. You will be hearing this fine choir in worship on November 16, and December 14 at the 11:00 worship service. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00.

From Bob's Music Stand

It would be unusual for me to write a column for the Steeple Views and not include an invitation for persons to join with us in our Ministry of Music here at First Presbyterian. The invitation is not printed as filler material but as a sincere invitation to singers and ringers to join with us. We are fortunate to have a full ringing choir this year. Most of the ringers have been in the choir since I came to FPC. There are others who have come and gone. In the Chancel Choir most of the singers have long records of membership and have given countless hours in preparation and worship service through the years. We lose membership through death, age, health, and transfer of membership. There are still members of FPC who have musical talents they could invest in the program here. In this time when we focus on STEWARDSHIP please remember that MONEY in no way takes the place of STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND TALENT. Our Music Ministry needs you and perhaps you haven't realized yet that you need us. As you give prayerful consideration to what you will pledge for the new year, please consider your time and talent pledge as well as your pledge of gifts. RLC



Children and Youth Music

I guess we are all in the busy season that seems to begin with Halloween, cruises through Thanksgiving and arrives with startling speed at Christmas. It is a wonderful, amazing time. Kindermusik children are enjoying their glockenspiels. The day is coming when they finally get to take them home and there is great excitement over that! As I write this, our Halloween party is just

around the corner and that is going to be great fun. Music Together is organized (well, sort of) chaos. Our 10 boys and 2 girls are all walking and they are all over the room! It is a really great group. We are enjoying the Bongos collection from Music Together. We are also anticipating our Halloween party next week.

Orff children are preparing for our play, A Christmas Operation. As I mentioned last month, the play is one that highlights the Samaritan's Purse ministry. This ministry strives to send millions of shoe boxes filled with small gifts to children who are in war torn areas, or are orphaned, or are hospitalized. We will be preparing our boxes at Youth Group on November 9th. It would be great for all of us to prepare a box to send with the children's offerings. If you want more information about preparation of the boxes, I will be glad to help out.

The date of our play has been changed to Sunday December 14th at 3 pm. Please put this on your busy Christmas calendar.

I wish all of Christ's special blessings for you during this holiday season.

In Joy,
Betsy

Angel Tree 2008

As the Christmas season approaches, a tradition which is dear to the hearts of many of us at First Presbyterian is the Angel Tree project. This is a special time of giving when members of our congregation select angels representing less fortunate children and families in our community, shop for specific listed items, and return the wrapped gifts to be delivered just before Christmas. What a JOY it is to anticipate the excitement and smiles when the gifts are unwrapped on Christmas morning! The Christmas angel trees will be in the narthex and Sunday School hallway for distribution on Sundays, November 23, November 30, and December 7. Wrapped gifts—with the angel taped to the outside—are to be returned to the Session Room in the church by December 10. Youth Jam young people and volunteer adults will deliver the gifts during the following week.

Christ the King Sunday: November 23 is *Christ the King Sunday*, which is the last Sunday in the liturgical year. The following week, the new liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent. Christ the King Sunday acknowledges that Christ is Lord of all creation. Even though earthly powers have some limited power in this world, everyone is ultimately subject to Christ's sovereign plan and rule. This Sunday, we celebrate that divine justice will overcome all obstacles and ultimately have its way.

Advent Breakfast

An Advent Breakfast will be on Sunday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring the whole family! We will trim the Christmas tree that morning and ask that you bring any ornaments your family would like to add to the tree.

Advent Workshop

The Advent Workshop is scheduled for November 23, 2008. Once again this year, we will have some of the Pinkston Special Blend Chili. Come one, come all for a tasty and fun evening. There will be a variety of craft projects in which you can participate.

Friendly Visitors

Did you know that our church is pairing together people who might be interested in having a visit with a group of volunteer "Friendly Visitors?" If you have any suggestions of any church members who might be interested in partnering with a friendly visitor or you, yourself, are interested in being a friendly visitor, please contact Jody Moore. There will be a meeting with all current friendly visitors and those interested in becoming a friendly visitor on Sunday, November 23, at 12:15 p.m. We will meet in the Session Room.

Christmas Share 2008

Once again, this year, the Mission Committee is sponsoring *Christmas Share*. Through this program, you are able to give an anonymous donation to a local charitable organization such as Red Cross or Grace Network. The church will give you a card that you can send to a loved one, telling them that a gift has been given to that organization in their honor. Our church has raised over \$40,000 in four years through *Christmas Share* and are looking forward to another year of strong giving!

Operation Christmas Child "The Shoe Box Project"

The youth group is taking part in a unique mission project called "Operation Christmas Child." Samaritan's Purse operates a number of projects including "Operation Christmas Child", a program where shoe boxes are packed with personal hygiene items, school supplies, toys, and distributed to nearly 8 million children annually in 95 countries. Samaritan's Purse is an International Relief Organization under the direction of CEO and founder, Franklin Graham. To date, this organization has collected and distributed more than 61 million shoe boxes to boys and girls in over 135 countries.

People across the country are getting their items and donations ready to send to their churches. Our youth are asking that all families participate in this project by bringing at least one filled shoebox with suggested items and donations to the church office by October 30th. A big Christmas box will be placed outside the office for donations. The youth will pack and wrap shoeboxes during youth group on November 9. The boxes will be delivered to our local drop-off center before November 12.

"Operation Christmas Child is a great way to bring joy and the Good News of Jesus Christ to children in need of hope." What a perfect gift to give in honor of Jesus' birthday.

Gift Suggestions

Girl or Boy: Ages (2-4 years)

(5-9 years) and (10-14 years)

School Supplies: pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons or markers, stamps and ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc.

Toys: small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small Etch A Sketch, toys that light up or make noise(with extra batteries), Slinky, etc.

Hygiene Items: toothbrush, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in plastic bag), comb, washcloth, etc.

Other: hard candy and lollipops (please double bag all candy), mints gum, T-shirts, socks, ball caps, sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries).

A Personal Note: In a separate envelope, you may enclose a note to the child and a photo of yourself or your family. (If you include your name and address, the child may write back.)

DO NOT INCLUDE: Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; out of-date candy; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.

Stories of Faith

(Stories of Faith are written for Steepleviews by members of First Presbyterian Church. If you have a faith experience that you would like to share, please email it to jmstegall@comcast.net or leave it with Sarah Altizer in the church office.)

By NANCY DAVIS

My faith journey includes someone I am sure is a part of many people's faith journey in this community. I'm talking about Carolyn Franck.

I first met Carolyn over 30 years ago. She and her husband Bill had a dinner party for some new Tultex employees and their spouses. My husband then was one of those employees. So, I got to go too!

I was, of course, quite nervous meeting the "Big Boss" and his wife. I even fretted over which fork to use. But I found Carolyn to be the most down-to-earth, warm, sincere person I ever met. She was the perfect hostess and made us "new guys" feel very much at ease.

About 2 weeks later I saw Carolyn at the grocery store. It astounded me that she not only remembered my name, but the fact that I had recently started a new job. It showed me she truly cared about other people -- a natural part of the spirit of Carolyn Franck. She is the most unselfish person I have ever known. I try every-day to emulate that quality in my own dealings with others.

Carolyn and I continued our friendship through the local Mental Health Association. She was the Executive Director several years and worked us board members hard! Her inspiring work ethic and dedication taught me another vital life lesson. She is a very special friend.

In 1985 I experienced a painful separation and divorce. Carolyn was aware of what was going on in my life.

She called me at work one day and asked if I could take the next afternoon off without getting in trouble. I was working at Pannill Knitting Co., and since her brother was the CEO, I told her I thought something could be arranged! She picked me up at noon and we went to her family's mountain home in Vesta. We walked, talked, laughed and shared the beauty of that special place. She even fixed me dinner!

I don't remember much of what we talked about. But that's not really the point.

Carolyn loved and accepted me. For the first time in months, she made me feel that I had worth as a human being. And she convinced me that I was not a total failure because I hadn't been able to keep my marriage vows. It was the beginning of my recovery from a hurtful time and a new beginning of growing in my faith that continues today.

Even my later marriage to Milt Davis has a Carolyn Franck flavor to it. We talked about her on our first date. Milt informed me that she was there for him after the death of his beloved wife, Sue. Carolyn lovingly told Milt she would be his official "hugger."

When Milt and I started attending Sunday school, she used a little subtle arm-twisting to get us into The Irby class that she attended. As a result our faith has been strengthened -- again, much to the credit of Carolyn.

Around the time of her 80th birthday, Carolyn and I had lunch together. She talked about how she was looking forward to this "new adventure." Her words changed my whole attitude towards my own aging process. I can laugh at aches and pains and thank God for every day He gives me.

There have been times when I thought the greatest accomplishment I could hope for in this life would be exactly like Carolyn Franck. What she has taught me by her example is to try to be the best Nancy Davis I can be every day.

I appreciate every opportunity I get to talk about this wonderful lady. I love her. And, I am forever thankful to her for being such a huge part of my faith journey.

(Nancy and Milt Davis have been long-time members of First Presbyterian Church. They have been married 22 years.)