



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

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

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*Our Mission is to:
Share God's love, embrace our neighbors, nurture each other.*

STEEPLE VIEWS

First Presbyterian Church

January, 2010

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

This morning (Wednesday, December 8, 2010) I left the house at 5:50 a.m. to walk my dog, Toby, and the outside temperature was 15 degrees; I'm not sure what the temperature was with the wind chill added to the equation. At any rate, it was (Brrrrrr) cold! It was so cold, in fact, that I was wearing gloves.

When I do wear gloves I almost always think of Carol Howie's story that took place late one winter's night in a New York subway. It was a cold, blustery, and bitter night, and very few people were on the subway at that hour. At one station, a dismal-looking woman got on. Her clothes were ragged and dirty. She was either extremely tired or weak from illness, or hungry – or perhaps she had had too much to drink.

As the train lurched forward, she stumbled, slumped into a seat, and went fast asleep. She slept through the screeching and the swaying of the train. Her hands were nestled inside two of the most tattered gloves you've ever seen – so full of holes that you could see that her hands were cold and chapped and almost frostbitten.

Then a strange thing happened. A young Puerto Rican boy stood up to get off of the train as it slowed to stop. He could have gone out the exit closest to him, but he chose to go past that sleeping woman. He paused in front of her for a few moments; then he removed his gloves, laid them in her lap, and got off the train. When someone asked him why he had given her his gloves, his answer was simple but profound. He said, "Because I am a Christian!" He did it because of Christ; he dedicated his act of kindness to Christ.

As we prepare to step out of 2010 and into a brand, new year, I propose that we make and strive to follow only one New Year's resolution, which is summed up best by the young, Puerto Rican boy's reply: "Because I am a Christian!" I suggest that we let that principle be our guiding light for the next twelve months. If we lose weight or keep in better touch with our friends or read three good books a month, that's all well and good. But our main goal in life and certainly in the new year ahead should be that we are going to be Christians – "little Christs" – to the very best of our abilities and energies.

I like that notion of dedicating our lives in acts of kindness to Christ and, along the way, other people are blessed by the good will we create. The Lord knows that there is way too much ugliness, cynicism, and darkness that takes place in the world. Just read the newspapers – especially the letters to the editor – and you will get your fill of the daily nastiness that some folks like to dish out in big heaping servings. On the other hand, we can, we must, live to make a difference – why? – "because I am a Christian!"

We express our love for God as we love, care for, and serve others. When we reach out to another human being and help that person, it is as though Christ himself is reaching out to them with love and compassion through us, and the love of God becomes incarnate once again. The Apostle Paul said it well, "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).

In Christ's love,
Randy



Happy Birthday in January to.....

- 4 Marie Thompson, Melissa Seamon
- 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, Cathy Martin, Olivia Robertson
- 13 Alex Lawson
- 16 Wendy Seamon, Billy Kirby
- 17 Carolyn Franck, Wilson, Jake Sanders, Grace Anne Edgerton
- 18 Hilary Moore, Mary Pilson, Anne Carlyle Hurt
- 19 Helen Flythe, Jennifer Eden
- 21 Mark Mason, Bonny Pace, Ruth Decker Chaney
- 23 Natalie Shoebridge, Milt Davis
- 24 Greg Darnell
- 26 Chester Buffkin
- 28 David Garland
- 29 Rusty Reaser, Alan Ferguson
- 30 Lanie Walsh
- 31 Jim Haskins, Mattie Wingfield

And in February to.....

- 1 Logan Jennings
- 2 David Seamon
- 3 Andy DeVault, Harold Lamm, Lillie Willis, Doris Renno
- 5 Michael Mason
- 6 Charlie Miller
- 7 Emily Goldstein, Ben Smith
- 8 Frances Leavitt, Guy Stanley
- 9 Marshall Chaney, Emily Parker
- 11 Jo Dykes

Sympathy of the congregation is extended to Iliene Hite on the death of her brother Bobby Eugene Lawrence, November 5, 2010, in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

We are grateful for those persons, who have served our church as elders on the Session during the past three years and who now rotate off of the Session for at least a year. Please be sure to say, "Thank you," to Paul Cannaday, Nancy Davis, Cindy Franck, Gavin Russell, Betty Stanley, Charles Toothman, and Joan Montgomery (who filled a two year unexpired term and was re-elected for a full three-year term on the Session). We are grateful for each person, who gave so much of their time, energy, and abilities to serve the Lord and this congregation on the Session and through one or more of its committees. To the elders in the Session's Class of 2010: "Thank you for a job well done!"

The Tempo "Our Musical Pulse" The Chancel Choir

As I write this article, it is December 8, 2010. It has to be in early because our type setter will be on vacation the last half of this month. So, here goes.....

Next Sunday the Sanctuary Ringers ring and Lynn Pritchett plays her flute on the anthem the Chancel Choir is singing.

The Christmas Music Worship and Celebration service and fellowship is on the 19th and 3 rehearsals away. Hopefully I can report, after the fact, that it was a well attended and appreciated service and fellowship opportunity for our church and community. I appreciate the hard work of the Chancel Choir members who attend regularly, work diligently, and put up with a director who occasionally raises his voice in rehearsal and expects the choir to know every note and rhythm perfectly. Then there is the processional.... I appreciate the singers who join us for our programs. I also appreciate our organist, thank you Cynthia!

The Bucket Choir Last article I reported that I had not had any takers on this proposed choir. I now have two, Walter Anderson and our beloved Office Manager, Sarah Altizer. If you are interested in joining this ELITE CHOIR you better speak up before the membership fills up.

Have a Blessed Christmas and a Marvelous New Year

A Commercial Message If you are a person who makes resolutions for the new year and sing or ring, I hope you will consider a resolution which has Chancel Choir and/or Sanctuary Ringers membership in it. Right now we have an even dozen in the Ringers but we need at least an even three dozen in the Chancel Choir. (Assorted sopranos, altos, tenors and basses) We need substitute ringers. Sam Smith has been generous enough to help us on a couple of Sundays by coming home to ring. Actually I think he likes his mother's home cooking.

Have you noticed our Associate Pastor? You see her with the Altos on the anthem and behind the bell table in position 4. Thanks to the Search Committee and to the church for hiring such a talented individual.

Rehearsal Break The Sanctuary Ringers are finished with rehearsals after December 12. Rehearsals begin again at 6 p.m. on January 5, 2011. The Chancel Choir is finished with rehearsals after the pre-service rehearsal on December 19. Their next Wednesday rehearsal will be on January 5, 2011. Of course they sing on Christmas Eve and December 26 and meet 30 minutes before those services.

Thanks to our Office Persons Sarah and Nancy serve all of us well and perhaps we don't give them enough credit and praise for the great jobs they do in keeping us going as a church. We are indeed fortunate to have them both.

The Church Office will be closed Monday, December 27 and Tuesday, December 28, in celebration of Christmas. We will also be closed that Friday, December 31, for New Years. We will return Monday, January 3, 2011!! Whew! Time flies when you're having fun!

Children and Youth Music



Happy New Year!
I hope your Christmas-tide was filled with joy, blessings and grace and that this year will be filled with all God's richest blessings. I love this time of year, working with the children: there are NO distractions!

"Arrest These Merry Gentlemen" was a huge success, thanks to so many helping hands. Smith, as usual, gave 200 percent, adding extra lighting, microphones and special effects. He is such a talent and so generous with his time, expertise and resources. We just could not have these large productions without Smith.

This year for the first time, we had a lighting expert. Jim Ford was the one who controlled all the lights and they were fabulous. Again, we have the joy of having a good friend in the congregation who is so giving and generous of time and talents. Thank you, Jim.

(These two are truly two peas in a pod. Listening to their conversations about all the electrical stuff is amazing and totally over my head. Boy, am I thankful for them!!)

The children outdid themselves in many ways. They learned copious lines, practiced and practiced and practiced and sang, and sang and sang! Hours were countless. The next day, I saw Ashton Gravely, (the shepherd with the flashlight issue). Ashton is a quiet little boy, so when he said, beaming from ear to ear, "I just loved being in

that play! When can we do another one?”, my heart filled with joy. This is after all, what I am looking for: the opportunity for children to have a positive, nurturing faith experience that will last in their hearts.

Lanie Walsh, Sarah Toothman and Caroline O’Toole had huge parts which they handled so well. Olivia Aaron and Aleigha Hodges did as well. Our shepherds, Ashton Gravely, Spencer Hodges, Hannah Church, Lauren Luther, and Briana Tatum were so good! Townsfolks, Kellene Wotring, Colin Walsh, Madison Sayles, Ayden Pickett were masterful. Zachary Gilley, the big rig fig driver, was superb.

I would like to thank Analisa O’Toole for organizing the reception and Susan Aaron for adding her special touch.

Thank you for coming out and supporting the children. It means so much to play to a packed house!
January classes

All classes begin the first week in January with new material and a fresh slate!

See you at church!!!
In Joy, Betsy

Contemporary Service News

Please note: on Sunday, January 9, 2011, there will not be an early service. Instead, the entire congregation is encouraged to gather for the 11:00 worship service at which time we will install the new elders, who will be serving on the Session as the Class of 2013. The new elders coming onto the Session are: Jim Beard, Joan Montgomery, Bill Peterson, Ann Reaser, JoAnne Sanders, and Cathy Stone. Please be in prayer for these six elders as they return to the Session and serve our congregation over the next three years. And, please be sure to support them in worship (at 11:00 a.m.) on Sunday, January 9.

Parents of College Students:

Please call the office with your child’s new address. The Congregational Care Committee needs updated addresses for the Valentine Cookie packages!

Session Highlights from November 29, 2010 Meeting

- Gavin Russell led the Session in an opening devotional and prayer
- Approved the October 25, 2010 minutes of the last stated meeting
- Voted to sustain the exam of the elders – elect (the Session’s Class of 2013: Jim Beard, Joan Montgomery, Bill Peterson, Ann Reaser, JoAnne Sanders, and Cathy Stone) and proceed with their service of installation on January 9, 2011
- Transferred Ruth Decker Chaney to the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, TN
- Reactivated and transferred Bob and Hesta Anderson to the Parkway Presbyterian Church of Winston-Salem, NC
- Approved the Boy Scouts using our fellowship hall and kitchen on Sunday afternoon, February 13, 2011, for a Cub Scouts’ award banquet.
- Nancy Davis and Gavin Russell reported on the October 28, 2010, Presbytery of the Peaks’ meeting
- Noted communications by the clerk and heard reports from the chairpersons of the Session’s committees and the pastors.
- Shared joys and concerns and were led in a closing prayer by the moderator

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