

March 3, 2022



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder, Monica Stevens

March 2, 2022

What God Desires

Joel 2:1-2, 12-13

John 3:16-17

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2

We don't like to think about it or talk about it, but we are all sinners. We can't help ourselves. Many years ago, when I was in what we now call Confirmation Class, we learned that sinning is missing the mark. We can sin by doing the wrong things or by not doing the right things, but either way, we miss the mark of God's righteousness and perfection. We quite rightly say to ourselves, "Of course we miss the mark. We are human. Only God is perfect and righteous." As I said before, we can't help ourselves when it comes to sinning—we can't avoid sin and we can't remove our sin.

The prophecies of Joel depict God's judgment as a deadly and devastating plague of locusts that consumes everything in its path and leaves the people disconsolate and the land desolate. The good news is that judgment is not God's only word to Israel or to us. "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." From the beginning of time, humanity has repeatedly strayed away from God and every time, God has offered humanity a way to return to a right relationship with God. What God wants is for people to acknowledge their sinfulness, repent by changing their actions and attitudes, and to commit to living for God with their whole heart.

That sounds like a simple formula for success, but in reality, even on our best behavior, we fall short. We still miss the mark. As the Apostle Paul put it, "I don't understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." We just can't help ourselves. Even so, God's plan has always been to redeem and reconcile all people to himself by intervening directly in human life. In the Gospel of John we read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so

that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus, who is fully God, became fully human to be our teacher, our healer, our model, but most of all, he came to be our Savior and our Redeemer. All of the grace, mercy, and steadfast love of God was revealed in Jesus' sacrificial death on a Roman cross, and in that act, Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus gave himself to bridge the gap between us and the perfect holiness and righteousness of God. Jesus took our sin and destroyed its power over us, and in his resurrection, he gave us the gift of eternal life.

The Bible tells us that we were created from dust and our mortal bodies will return to dust, but through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus we have been redeemed and restored to an eternal right relationship with God, our Creator. In our reading from 2 Corinthians Paul tells us, "We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also to not accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on the day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the day of salvation." Christ became human as we are, so that through him, we might become righteous before God.

During this season of Lent commit yourself to confession, penitence, renewed faith, and walking with Jesus as he travels to Jerusalem through prayer, meditation, acts of love and service, and study of God's Word. Offer God the sacrifice of your heart, mind, and will. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

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The Church is Open for In-Person Worship Service!

The safety of our congregation and community are our highest priority. In light of increasing infections due to the OMICRON variant and in order to follow state and local guidelines and CDC recommendations, we strongly recommend that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth while anywhere inside the church and sanctuary.

The church office will open for limited appointments. Please call to schedule. Please enter at the narthex for Sunday worship and during the week use the back door at the portico.



Please join us for the **First Sunday in Lent** either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10:00 AM

Sermon by Elder Joyce Perez

Wandering Arameans

Based upon Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

Children of Ukraine



This youngster lives in one of the children's homes in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine's seventh largest city and the largest in the Dnipropetrovska Oblast. The Dnipropetrovska Oblast borders the two Russian-leaning regions, Donetsk and Luhansk. As of today, March 1, the fighting is 3 hours away. They were hit on Thursday night by rockets from the Russian forces but it's been quiet since.

Many wonder what they can do in this tragic situation. Here's one option. We still have a funding channel open to the children's homes in Kryvyi Rih. The urgent funding needs are generators and food and medical supplies and can still be purchased locally, though they are in short supply. Donations

may be made at the following Facebook link and will be sent immediately. Alternatively, grants and donations may be sent to "Peacework" at 620 N. Main St., Suite 306, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Peacework is a volunteer program affiliated with Community College Ministries in Blacksburg. There are no fees. 100% of the donation will go to the orphanages in Ukraine and donations are tax-deductible.

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/650310939581953/>

Steve Darr, Community College Ministries
[540-230-8581](tel:540-230-8581), steve@peacework.org

Upcoming Events

Presbyterian Women's Circle Meeting is Monday, March 7, 10:30 a.m. at 1 Starling Ave. in Martinsville hosted by Nancy Davis, and Cindy Edgerton will be teaching. We will be on lesson 7.

CHICAGO on stage at Magna Vista HS March 11-13. Briana Tatum and Caroline Kirby will be performing.

Mystery Mission Madness: A mission event for middle & high school youth will be taking place on **Saturday, March 19** from 1-5pm at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roanoke. Registration forms can be found here: peakspresbytery.org/winter-retreat Please return forms to Sam or the church office by Monday March, 14. For more info, contact Sam: sam@peakspresbytery.org

Presbytery of the Peaks Youth Council's
Mystery Mission Madness

Saturday
 March 19,
 2022



1-5pm
 Covenant
 Presbyterian
 Church
 Roanoke, VA

Keynote Speaker:
 Anghaarad Dees



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
 MASKS ARE REQUIRED
 REGISTER AT peakspresbytery.org
 EMAIL sam@peakspresbytery.org FOR MORE INFORMATION

Plans are underway for **confirmation class** to take place this Spring. If your child (8th grade or older) has not been through confirmation and would like to take part, please contact Sam (sam@peakspresbytery.org). For those already signed up, more details will be coming soon!

Our Deepest Sympathy

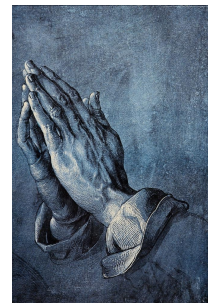
Karen L. Shook, daughter of Wendy Shook and the late Don Shook, passed away on Sunday, February 27, 2022. Services will be private.

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Karen Shook Family, Ruth Aaron (Pinkards), Pat Baumann, Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Mike Boswell, Catherine Bridges, Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Judy Epperly (Nancy Baker), Daniel Handy, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Dru Rothrock, Troy Spencer (Pam Rakes' father), Scott Stevens (M. Stevens), Bruce Thomas (M. Stevens), Carl Utley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski (Susan Pilson), persecuted Christians and all troops in defense of freedom throughout the world.



Please submit prayer requests to Rita in the church office, [\(276\) 632-3431](tel:2766323431), office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org.

Congregational Care and Fellowship

If you are in need of prayer, a meal, transportation, etc...due to a death in the family or the birth of a baby, please reach out to the Congregational Care and Fellowship committee by contacting Pearl Minter at [276 340-3476](tel:2763403476).

Grace Network Donations

The 1st quarter 2022 food donation item is **Baking Mix (small) or Flour**



Please consider donating extra when you are able to get out and about as your donations will become more important than ever.

Hygiene Items - We are always in need of these items!

**Items may be brought to church but please call the office to make sure Rita is there. Alternatively, you may drop off at Grace Network, Monday - Friday, 9-2 PM*



Steeple Views Reminder

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Steeple Views is published weekly on Thursdays. **DEADLINE** for submission of articles is Tuesday evening.

If you have information you want included in Steeple Views, **PLEASE SEND TO:** fpcsteepleviews@gmail.com. If you send to another email address, the information may get lost and subsequently not included in the newsletter.

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Sharon Kirby, Editor

For updates and announcements, please click on the link below or copy and paste into your web browser:

https://www.peakspresbytery.org/images/2020_Peaks_Postings/PP_Aug18_2020.pdf

Our Mission

Share God's Love, Embrace Our Neighbors, Nurture Each Other

Printed copies of *Steeple Views* are available at church. Current and back issues are also on our website:

www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/page.cfm/topic/newsletter

Useful Links

FPC website:

www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org/ or www.fpcmartinsvilleVA.org/

FPC online directory: members.instantchurchdirectory.com/

FPC Facebook page: www.facebook.com/FPCMartinsvilleVA

Presbytery of the Peaks: www.peakspresbytery.org/

Presbyterian Church (USA): www.pcusa.org/

Daily Bible Readings: www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/daily/

Church Office Phone: [276-632-3431](tel:276-632-3431)

Our mailing address is:

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Spencer Koger, Interim Director of Music, srk86879@gmail.com

THE SESSION

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Stewardship and Communication

Betty Hudson: Christian Education

Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

Class of 2024

Pearl Minter: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Neil Tatum: Facilities

Liz Ferrell: Worship

TRUSTEES

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

2024: Duke Ferrell, Milt Davis

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