

November 9, 2023



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Pastor's Corner

Elder, Monica Stevens

This devotional message was originally published in August of last year, but as I thought about all of the strife in the world on the one hand, and all of the positive changes and exciting possibilities for our future, I remembered this scripture. Paul's message reminds us of our calling as members of the Body of Christ. What a blessing and responsibility it is to be the church in this place and time.

Life Together

Ephesians 4:1-6

"Therefore, I encourage you to live as a people worthy of the call you received from God. Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you all together. You are one body, and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all." (CEB)

Outside my kitchen window is an oak tree that has probably been there for the better part of fifty years. One of the tree's most interesting features is the large burl that has formed on its trunk on the side of the tree facing the house. When we moved in, there were two smaller burls, but over the last twenty years they have continued to grow to the point where they have closed the gap between them and they are growing together. Burls are a collection of woody cells called callus tissue which cause a disruption in the growth pattern

of the trunk of a tree as a result of damage from insects, bacteria, fungi, or an injury. While they may look diseased, they generally don't interfere with the growth of an otherwise healthy tree and allow the tree to keep growing.

We are also familiar with callus tissue that builds up on various parts of our body to protect them from the wear and tear of repetitive use. Think of the fingertips of guitar players, the lips of brass players, and the feet of dancers and runners. If we have the misfortune to break a bone, our body sets to work healing the bone by deploying special cells to the break site to first form a soft callus that will hold the bone together, and later replacing that with a hard callus, and then finally after about six weeks replacing the callus with regular bone.

Whether on trees or on people, calluses are a special kind of helpful hardening that serves a protective and healing function. Calluses of this nature are good. What's not so good is when we form a metaphorical callus around our heart—our thoughts and emotions. This hardening usually begins as the result of an emotional trauma. The trauma can be the result of circumstances such as a great loss, or intentional abuse or injury by another person. In the short term, a protective layer around our emotions might help us to "make it through" the pain of the initial injury, but unlike helpful calluses, if hardness of heart is allowed to remain, it gets harder and more impenetrable and it stunts the growth and interactions of the affected person. The longer and more carefully people nurse their pain, the harder their heart gets and the more isolated and bitter they become.

When we have calluses in places where we don't want them, we soften them with balm and then gently file them away. In today's scripture, Paul describes a loving, accepting, nurturing community that has been called together by God and knit together by the peace and unity of the Holy Spirit. Being an active part of this community provides us with a balm to ease the pain that comes to each of us throughout our lives. Being surrounded by the love and nurture of such a community helps to remove the hardened spots on our psyche much like the gentle motion of the water smooths away the roughness of stones.

Of course, reaping the restorative benefits of living within a Christian community is only half of the story. We are called to BE that community and to be worthy of our calling. That means sharing what we have received from God with others. People who are hurting don't need us to preach at them. They need someone to walk alongside them, to sit with them, to talk

with them, and to humbly, gently and patiently share the love and compassion of God through our presence with them. With God's help through the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be the balm that helps to heal the hardened hearts in the world.

"Glory to God, who is able to do far more beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21, CEB)



Please join us for worship this Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost at 10:00 AM

**Sermon by Pastor Bea
based upon Matthew 25:1-13 and Psalm 70**

Liturgist: Sharon Kirby
Ushers/Greeters: Monty and Joan Montgomery

Liturgist Schedule

November

12 Sharon Kirby

19 Pearl Minter

26 Joan Montgomery

December

3 Monty Montgomery

10 Nancy Moore
17 Ashby Pinkard
24 Sam Smith
31 Lynn Pritchett

Be Aware!

**Protect yourself
from scammers!**

Watch for emails, texts or calls that might be fraudulent and do not trust communications (even if they sound legitimate) that ask for personal information, money or gift cards.

You will NEVER get an email from the church or your pastor asking you to purchase gift cards because we are busy or in a meeting.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:30-4pm

Friday 9:30-2pm

Voicemail will be monitored.



ANNOUNCEMENTS
& UPCOMING EVENTS

Think Tank Meeting - Monday, November 13 at 2 PM.

Presbytery Meeting - Thursday, **November 16** at First Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg. This is an in-person meeting only.



Community Breakfast, November 18 with team leaders **Henry and Nancy Moore**. If you are able to help prep, cook, clean, or fellowship, please reach out to **Nancy at [276 732-3400](tel:2767323400)**.



Commitment Sunday is November 19 when we offer our financial and discipleship gifts to God for the upcoming year. **A potluck will follow the service** so please bring your favorite dish to share and join us for food and fellowship.

Martinsville Churches



Forest Hills



First Martinsville



Grace Community
Resource Day

Over the summer, Grace, First Collinsville, First Martinsville and Forest Hills Presbyterian Churches joined together the second Sunday of each month for worship and fellowship. And in October, the other churches helped support Grace's Community Resource Day. Everyone benefitted from the partnership. Pews were full, more voices carried the music, pastors got a respite from preaching, relationships were built and strengthened, and the community got to see a strong, vital, vibrant Presbyterian presence.

Comments from parishioners had similar themes:

- "We look forward to doing it again."
- "We love the sounds of all those voices singing hymns together."
- "Let's plan to do this more and do other things together also."



Forest Hills



Grace Community
Resource Day



First Collinsville

2023

Worship  Serve Together

Happy November Birthdays!



- 2 Colton Sanders
- 3 Bill Hensley, Elizabeth Harris
- 5 Neil Tatum
- 6 Brooke Cundiff
- 8 Donna Lawhon
- 15 Steven Minter
- 18 Donna King
- 21 Henry Grady III Moore
- 23 Sue Benfield
- 24 Judy Ware
- 27 Joe DeVault, Leanna Blevins
- 28 Norah Cundiff

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Larry Stanley (Patsy Stanley's brother in-law), Family of Lauren Prince, Family of Nancy Brown, Sue Benfield, Georgette Bishop, Jackie Bloxom (P. Stanley), Mike Boswell, Marilyn and Ernest Bremner, Catherine Bridges, Bud Buffkin, Cathie Carter (B. Tatum), Bob Chapman, Joel Christman (B. Stanley), Steve Edgerton, Marge Dunn, Neill Ferrill (S. Ford), Gary Francisco (Shanna King's Father), Daniel Handy, Marvin Hudson, Betty Carol and Harold Lamm, Darrel Lemke (N. Davis), Mary Manning, Maggie Pilson, Susan Rosser, Becky Stone Sawyers (L. Pritchett), Dee Moore Smith, Laura Stevens, Scott Stevens, Bruce Thomas, Nathan Toms (A. Madonia), Carl Utley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski, persecuted Christians, military service men and women, missionaries, and all refugees and immigrants forced to flee their countries.



Congregational Care and Fellowship



If you are in need of a [prayer shawl](#), or know someone that could use one, please pick one up from the narthex and be sure to sign it out. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pearl Minter.

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 at [276 340-3476](tel:2763403476).

Grace Network Donations

[4th quarter food donation item is Jelly \(28-32oz\)](#)



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

Hygiene Items are always needed (optional)

- *Toilet Paper
- *Bath Soap
- *Dish Detergent
- *Feminine Products
- *Toilet Paper
- *Deodorant
- *Deodorant
- *Toothpaste
- *Laundry Detergent

**Items may be brought to the church or dropped 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 Wednesday evening.

If you have information you want included in Steeple Views, **PLEASE SEND TO:** fpcsteepleviews@gmail.com. For time sensitive announcements, please send to skirbycwj@gmail.com

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

Presbytery of the Peaks

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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THE SESSION

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

Class of 2024

Pearl Minter: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Neil Tatum: Facilities

Liz Ferrell: Worship

Class of 2025

Ron Rebman: Mission/Outreach

Sue Legg: Stewardship and Communication

Monica Stevens: Christian Education

TRUSTEES

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

2024: Duke Ferrell, Milt Davis

2025: William Kirby, Gale Legg

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