

May 27, 2021



Steeple Views

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARTINSVILLE, VA

Devotional Meditation

Elder Monica Stevens

May 27, 2021

Only the Very Best

All my life I have been an unrepentant word nerd. I love the way words work together to give form to the thoughts of one person and then give those thoughts life by transferring them through speech or writing from the mind of the originator to the mind of the receiver. The ability to form and use words for communication is a priceless and astonishing gift from God, but sometimes words fall short. Although English has the largest vocabulary of any language on earth, there are times when even English is too poor a language to do justice to some concepts. One of those concepts, the Hebrew word *hesed*, is too rich to be easily and succinctly understood in one or two words.

Ancient Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures most often use the word mercy for *hesed*, but righteousness, grace, glory, and hope are also used. Hebrew words that parallel *hesed* also include faithfulness, strength, goodness and salvation. English Bibles use love, steadfast love, loyalty, favor, devotion, and mercy to translate the term. As you can see, *hesed* is a short word that carries a lot of meaning.

Psalm 36 is a psalm of praise and adoration that paints a picture of God's nature for us. When meditating on this psalm it is important to remember that *hesed* is never just an abstract feeling of good will, but it always entails practical action for good on behalf of another—in this case, God acting on behalf of humanity. Let's take a look at verses 5-10 to get a sense of God's all-encompassing eternal and unshakeable love for his Creation. Also, notice how many times the NRSV translation which I am using uses "steadfast love"—their translation for *hesed*.

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep;
You save humans and animals alike, O Lord.
How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All the people take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
They drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.
O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
And your salvation to the upright of heart.

In verses 5 and 6, the psalmist describes the love, faithfulness, righteousness, and salvation of God in the most immense and magnificent terms he can imagine—from the heights of the heavens to the farthest reaches of the deeps and embracing all of Creation. This loving God really does hold the whole world in his hands.

Verses 7 through 9 define the care God personally and lovingly lavishes on his people. He provides us with refuge and shelter, as would a brooding hen with her chicks. He draws us close giving us warmth and protection. The Lord opens his house to us and feeds us from the bounty of his table. He doesn't give us crumbs, but the very best he has to offer. He quenches our thirst from the river of his delights. The supply is unlimited and it brings joy and refreshment to our souls. When we are with God we are tapped into the very source of life and light in God's presence, we see only light and the darkness is vanquished. All of this and so much more is the *hesed* of God.

In verse 10 we pray with psalmist that God will continue to bless us with his steadfast love and salvation, and that he will keep our hearts upright and pure. The psalmist paints such a vivid and compelling picture of God's care for his creation it draws us in and makes us want to share in this life of abundance and light with God forever. This has always been God's plan for us.

God has given and continues to give us his very best and that includes the insurmountable gift of his Son, Jesus. In Jesus we have our Messiah, our Salvation, and our Redeemer who transforms our lives from the black and white to vivid color. When we are given the very best, we need to be sure that our response is the very best that we can offer as we give glory to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

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The Church is Open for In-Person Worship Service!

The sanctuary has reopened for in-person worship and will continue with restrictions as before (wear a mask, enter at narthex, social distance) unless otherwise notified.

Virtual services will still be available on Facebook for those that wish to remain at home until they feel safe to return.



Trinity Sunday

Please join us for the first Sunday after Pentecost either **in person** or via **Facebook live** at 10 am.

God is Calling. Will You Answer?

sermon by Monica Stevens

Based upon John 3:1-17 and Isaiah 6:1-8

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

The Veterans Service Organization will hold a **Memorial Day Service at Roselawn on Monday, May 31 beginning at 12 Noon.** Pastor Mark will be participating in the service.

Join us for Lemonade on the Lawn on Sunday, June 6 immediately after the worship service. Enjoy some fellowship time outside but remember to practice social distancing.

Educate Virginia will host an onsite Covid-19 vaccination clinic in the church parking lot on Sunday, June 6 from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. Anyone in the community desiring a vaccination is encouraged to come out.

Our church is the host site for the Martinsville-Henry County After 3 Summer Program sponsored by PHCC. This program will run Monday through Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., June 7 through July 23. They will remain downstairs and will be using the fellowship hall, kitchen and hallway areas.

A Congregational Meeting will take place at 11:30 AM on Sunday, June 13, following the 10:00 AM worship service to elect the Nominating Committee members. Elder Brooke Cundiff will present the nominees and Elder Billy Kirby will chair the committee for the Session. The meeting will be in person and also on Zoom.

Summer Adventure Camp

**JOIN US AT CAMP BETHEL FOR
A SPECTACULAR WEEK OF ADVENTURE
June 20-25, 2021**

Adventure Camp has your perfect mix of wild fun and discipleship activities. Adventure Camp is for active youth who enjoy the outdoors.

For more information: [Adventure Camp, Camp Bethel](#)



**Middle School
Adventure**
for rising 6th-8th graders,
ages 12-15

**High School
Adventure**
for rising 9th-12th graders,
ages 15-18

**New this Summer:
Biking
Rock Climbing
Belaying**



For more info & to register, visit the Presbytery website here: [Adventure Camp | Presbytery of the Peaks \(peakspresbytery.org\)](#)



Compassion Camp 2021: The Sequel is Coming Soon! Register NOW!

We will once again be offering a virtual at-home Vacation Bible School program this summer. Although we are sad to not have an in-person VBS or Camp Peaks program this year, we look forward to those returning next

summer.

Who's Invited? Compassion Camp 2021: The Sequel will be available to participants, preschoolers-rising 6th graders, **July 26-30**. While each day's session will be sent out via email each morning, you will be able to complete each session at your leisure. This event is FREE so invite your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends, and neighbors.

Materials & Supplies: The supplies you will need are items you will likely have readily available in your household. A list of supplies will be available soon & help with supplies will be available to anyone who requests.

Registration: You can find more information & register your children [HERE](#) or please contact VBS co-directors Sam Smith at sam@peaksprebytery.org or Debbie Norton at dnorto02@leeu.edu if you have any questions.

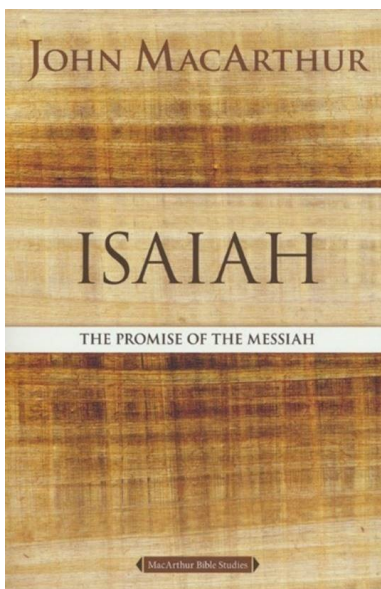


What can we pick up for you? Contact **Victoria Esarey** **276 732-9110** or email vesarey@gmail.com. These items will be broken down into parts, making them more valuable as recyclables.

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 Lynn Pritchett at [276 252-6068](tel:2762526068).

MacArthur Bible Studies: Study of Isaiah



Begins: April 11 at 8:30 AM - June 13 by Zoom

The *MacArthur Bible Studies* provide intriguing examinations of the whole of Scripture and continues to be one of the bestselling study guide series on the market today. In this study, Dr. MacArthur examines the words of the prophet Isaiah, showing how God proved to be faithful to his people (and us) by promising to send Messiah who would save them from sin. These latest all-new studies join the ranks of the previously released study guides, now offering readers a comprehensive selection of Old Testament Bible studies by bestselling author and theologian John MacArthur.

Each lesson includes:

- **Drawing Near:** An opening question based on the key theme or topic of the lesson

- **The Context:** Background information on the passage of Scripture being studied
- **Keys to the Text:** Detailed commentary on the passage being studied
- **Unleashing the Text:** Application questions on the passage highlighted in the lesson
- **Exploring the Meaning:** Three key takeaways from the passage
- **Reflecting on the Text:** Reflection questions on the passage highlighted in the lesson
- **Personal Response:** A journaling section to help readers apply the principles

Each study includes an introduction that provides background information to each book of the Bible being studied and a closing "Reviewing Key Principles" lesson to help cement the main themes of the study.

To sign up or for more information, contact Denny Casey (d.a.casey@comcast.net).

Happy Birthday in June



- 1 Reid Lawson
- 1 Gage Lawson
- 3 Riley Wood
- 8 Shanna King
- 9 Susan Smith
- 10 Betty Hudson, Cindy Edgerton
- 11 Tracy Hinchcliff
- 12 Lt. Col. David King
- 16 Ainsley Russell
- 18 Susan Pilson
- 23 David Price, Basil Boyd
- 24 Dr. Denny Casey
- 26 Sarah V. Wells, Ann Reaser
- 29 Caroline Kirby

Our Deepest Sympathy



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Judy King and family, on the passing of **Jim Murray**. Jim passed away on Saturday, May 22. The services will be private.

Prayer Requests

These members and friends of the congregation need our prayers:

PRAYER CONCERNS

Family of Jim Murray (Judy King), Carl and Georgette Bishop, Ernest and Marilyn Bremner (S. Ford), Jim Brunt (N. Davis' brother), Laura Buffkin, Tommy Cobb (M. Dunn), Sandra and Mark Dobrinski (brother and sister in-law of Cynthia), Daniel Handy, Dr. Jimmy Jordan, Leonard Kelley (Monica Stevens' brother), Betty Carol Lamm, Eddie Levi, Mary Manning, Laura Stevens Milton, Regenia Noel (M. Stevens), Anne Peterson, Gene and Betty Stanley, Tammy Tucker Wardinski (Susan Pilson), Sarah Vicki Wells, 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, office@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org.

Please remember

Cornbread Mix



The 2nd quarter food donation item is **Cornbread Mix (i.e.: Jiffy)**.

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*

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/

Steeple Views is published. **DEADLINE** for submission of articles is Tuesday evening. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Sharon Kirby, Editor steepleviews@fpcmartinsvilleVA.org

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THE SESSION

Moderator: Rev. Mark Hinchcliff

Clerk: Nancy Baker

Treasurer: Henry Moore

Class of 2021

Lynn Pritchett: Congregational Care and Fellowship

Rob King: Facilities

Monica Stevens: Worship

Class of 2022

Brooke Cundiff: Mission/Outreach

Pamela Rakes: Stewardship and Communication

Betty Hudson: Christian Education

Class of 2023

Billy Kirby: Administration

TRUSTEES

2021: David Garland, Ed Linker

2022: Joan Montgomery, Ashby Pritchett

2023: Sandra Ford, Joe DeVault

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