



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



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

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STEEPLEVIEWS



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First Presbyterian Church

March, 2008

Martinsville, Virginia

From My Perspective Within The Kingdom

Have you ever heard a story and it simply stays with you (inside of you) for years on end? The following story has spoken volumes to me over the past three decades. Margaret Slattery tells of a family she knew that lost three children in less than a week by diphtheria. Only the little three-year-old escaped. When Easter came the parents and child were at church.

The mother taught her class of girls that day in Sunday School, and the father went to the superintendent's desk, led his school in worship and read the Easter story with only a break now and then in his fine voice. Amid the faces lined by suffering, rebellion and despair, amid the badges of sorrow and mourning and the silent voices of the Easter congregation, they had seemed a miracle. "How can they?" men and women said to each other as they left the church. A fifteen-year-old boy walking home with his father from the Sunday school hour said hesitatingly, for he did not talk much with his father, "Dad, I guess Mr. and Mrs. L _____ really believe it, don't they?" "Believe what?" said the father, for he thought slowly. "The whole big thing, all of it, Easter, you know." "Of course," answered the father, "all Christians believe it." "Not that way," said the boy and he began to whistle lest his father should say more.

(Source unknown)

That story calls to mind an experience I lived through in my second pastorate. I won't go into all of the details but I can still recall with a great deal of sadness the death of a six-year-old girl due to leukemia. Naturally, it hit all of our church family very hard as this little gal and her parents and sister were very special to all of us. Shortly after the girl's death (and resurrection!), I remember one Sunday

morning during worship; the adult choir was singing an anthem. Right there in the midst of the choir was the little girl's mother, singing her heart out as the tears flowed down her face. As I witnessed that holy moment, I remember praying to God and asking God to help me believe - just like that mother. "Lord, help me to believe that way!" I have prayed that prayer often throughout the years, and I believe that God has answered that very prayer of faith.

As I sit here typing on the computer and trying to meet the newsletter deadline, I am all too aware that precisely a month from today (March 20) we will be getting ready for our Maundy Thursday worship service, followed by the Good Friday worship service at noon, and then, "on the third day" we will celebrate Easter and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So much of what I will say concerning Jesus' death and resurrection remains a mystery to me. I really cannot explain how it is that Jesus' death on the cross leads to the forgiveness of our sins or how God raised Jesus from the dead. My finite mind cannot grasp the Infinite and the Eternal.

However, while I cannot explain these holy events, I have experienced them in my own life and in the life of the church.

As we move deeper into Lent, and closer to the cross and the empty tomb, my hope and my prayer are that "we really will believe it - the whole big thing, all of it, Easter, you know." Furthermore, I pray that we will also live in such a way that our lives bear witness to the One, who died for us and rose again so that we might truly come alive in this life and the next.

In Christ's love,
Randy

A Word from the Associate

Pastor:

This is a busy time of year around First Presbyterian Church. First of all, I hope that many of you will make plans to attend our **All Church Retreat**, which will be Saturday and Sunday, April 5-6, at Camp Hat Creek, near Brookneal, VA. There will be activities available for children, youth, and adults. Or if you prefer, just sit around and relax in the rocking chairs! The food will be delicious, the fellowship will be enjoyable, and the weekend will be relaxing. You may either choose to stay in the retreat



center, in one of the hogans, or in your own tent.

If you need a ride to Hat Creek, the church bus will be available for up to 14 passengers and we will

carpool from the church parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Every one is welcome and we hope we will get a wide range of people, from our youngest to our oldest members, to attend. Be on the lookout for the registration form and a flyer with more information about the retreat. The deadline to sign up for the retreat is March 26.

The youth group will be participating in another Mission Trip this summer. Mission trips are times when our youth, who are passionate about serving others, are able to work together, grow in their commitment to Christ, and make a big difference. Our trip will be June 15-20 and we will be working with the MORE Program, which stands for Mission, Outreach, Relationships, and Education. First Presbyterian Church in Morehead City, NC runs the MORE Program. Some of

our work sites will include a soup kitchen, a food pantry, retirement homes, the Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army, and much more. Morehead City is at the beach, and we will have an opportunity to enjoy the beach and to participate in Outdoor Education, learning how to better care for God's creation. If you are interested in going on the mission trip, either as a youth or as an adult advisor, please let me know.

There are at least two ways you can support our youth and their mission trip, even if you are not able to go on the trip yourself. The first way is for you to pray for us. Pray that we will have a meaningful week that will lead to spiritual growth, where we can assist those who are in need.

Secondly, you can attend a fundraising dinner we will be having for the mission trip. **Save the date, which will be Sunday, April 13, at 6:00 p.m. in the church's Fellowship Hall.** This dinner will be a nice opportunity for individuals and families to gather for a relaxed evening and some good food. This will be similar to past fundraising dinners, including the Valentine's Dinner and Cinco de Mayo dinner we have held in past years. This year's theme will focus on the beach and our menu and decorations will put you in a summertime mood. We will send out invitations in the mail in March. Then we ask you to please RSVP for dinner by Tuesday, April 8 so that we'll know how many to expect. I look forward to seeing you at the retreat and the fundraising dinner!

Peace in Christ,
Jody Moore

The last two **Kirk Night** suppers and Lenten worship services will be on the first two Wednesdays of the month - March 5 and 12. The catered meals will be served beginning at 5:45 p.m. (a cash donation is appreciated); the prayer over the meal will be offered, followed by announcements, at 6:10 p.m.; and, the Lenten worship service will begin at 6:20 p.m. in the sanctuary. Our guest preachers will be Rusty Reaser (3/5) and Henry Baumann (3/12). We hope you will plan to come and be fed - both physically and spiritually!

- 7 Bob Davis, Kisean Adams
- 8 Troy Lee Rakes, Mary Catherine Stegall
- 9 Marty Davis, Jody Moore

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Debora Brown and family on the death of her father, John Dayton Reutter, February 7, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan.

SYMPATHY of the congregation is extended to Bob and Frances Bledsoe on the death of Frances' nephew, Jackie Minter, February 18, 2008, in Martinsville.



Happy Birthday in February to

- 3 Ruth Thompson
- 4 Duke Easley, Margaret Hurt
- 5 Carter Ferrell, Dee Moore
- 6 Allison Knighton, Myrtis Lester
- 8 Harriet Mattox, Bill Garrett
- 9 Tyler Price
- 11 Carol Darnell, Don Richman, Nicholas Young
- 12 Bill Peterson, Bob Clark
- 15 Fred Isenhower
- 17 Dick Sowdon, Rachel DeBusk, Alanna Ferguson
- 18 Catherine Bridges, Rick Renz, Steve Edgerton
- 19 Matt Johnson
- 20 JoAnne Sanders
- 23 Diane Clark
- 24 Holt Truitt
- 27 Pam Mason, Kenzie Rakes, Charles Toothman
- 28 Christiana Campbell

and in April to:

- 2 Nick Carter
- 3 Claude Young
- 4 Max Pinkston
- 5 Kate Judson

Holy Week

Palm Sunday in the Park is on March 16. We will celebrate Palm Sunday with other churches that border Wilson Park on Church Extension St.

Please plan to meet in the narthex of the church at 9:30 a.m. to receive your bulletin and palm leaf. Then, we will walk together to the park for the 10:00 a.m. worship service (or, if you need a ride, the church bus will be available). The Rev. Bob Button, who is the interim minister at Broad Street Christian Church (and a Presbyterian minister) will preach the sermon.

Maundy Thursday (when Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples in the upper room) is March 20. We will have a potluck supper at 5:45 in the fellowship hall, and then we will move upstairs to the sanctuary for the worship service at 7:00 p.m. During worship, we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper by intinction - people will come forward to the Table to sup by taking the bread and dipping it into the juice, and then they will return to their pews. If

you prefer, you can either receive communion from the bread and juice trays on the front Table or an elder can serve you the communion elements in your pew.

The Good Friday worship service will be held at noon, on March 21, in our sanctuary. Once again, the service will focus on the “Seven Last Words” of Christ from the cross. Various hymns and prayers will be interspersed throughout the service.

Easter/Resurrection of the Lord is celebrated on Sunday, March 23 (which is very early this year). We will begin with a 9:30 a.m. Easter breakfast in the fellowship hall. The children will participate in an Easter Egg Hunt following the breakfast. Sunday School will begin at 10:00 a.m. and conclude at 10:40 a.m. Then, we will gather in the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m., amidst the beautiful and fragrant Easter lilies, and “pull out all the stops” as we worship the risen Lord and proclaim his resurrection victory over death!

Please join with your church family and friends for as many of these worship and fellowship events as possible. Your presence and involvement will make Holy Week that much more meaningful!

Go to www.firstpresbyterianmartinsville.org to explore the updated website!

The 2008 Seventh Grade Confirmation Class will meet during February, March, and April. The members of this year’s confirmation class are: Claire Adkins, Madison Haley, Caroline Harris, Michael Mason, Ben Pinkston, Jacob Wingfield, and Virginia Zentmeyer.

Please pray for these youth as they are proceeding through the confirmation journey!



Children and Youth Music

February is speeding by at breakneck speed.

There has been a lot of action in your church’s music wing.

Come by and see our music carpet!! Everyone loves the way it perks up the Children/Youth music room with bright colors and educating symbols. Plus, after almost 20 years, we now can sit on a warm rug instead of the cold floor. Believe me, old bones really appreciate that!

The Cantabile ringers are ready for take off to the Raleigh Handbell Festival. We have practiced and are ready to ring in the large group of ringers that will be there. We will also be performing a solo in the final concert, that will feature Margaret Pilson on her flute. Carrie Buffkin, Parker Gunn, Maggie and Martha Pilson, Meredith Seamon and Sam Smith are truly a dream group. We have a blast practicing on Sundays after church. Their level of commitment to their church and to their music could not be better! We will be leaving at 6 am and returning in the evening. Sounds like fun, you bet it is! You will also be hearing them on Palm Sunday morning.

These ringers will be singing in our big program on Sunday, March 9th. Orff I and II will be singing and the older group will be ringing. Bob and I have planned a very special worship experience for you on that morning. We will be singing together and the children and adults will be singing anthems by themselves. With a brass quintet and percussion, it will be a profound experience as we journey together to the cross.

We have 3 new members in Music Together. Tuesday morning at 11 should be on reality TV. There are so many good things going on with these infants, toddlers, and young children. No one could resist watching. We are seeing a lot of smiles, giggles and new friendships forged.

Kindermusik students are forging through our new folders. The first year children are reading their first 3 notes with ease and enjoy practicing on the staff of our new carpet. The second year students are really moving up in the recorder playing department. They are playing with ease and joy.

I hope this Easter season is filled with the joy that is there for all of us through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Betsy

Community Service

Our congregation is responsible for supplying lay personnel to assist the volunteer Blood donors as they submit to the procedure required by the local chapter of the American Red Cross manned by trained professionals, on **the fourth Thursday of each month** (except November). We are appreciative and thank the volunteers who have faithfully served for many years, and encourage others to join our team in this community service.

The 3 positions to be filled from 12 -3 and 3 – 6 P.M. by our ambassadors of good will are:

- 1) A cheerful greeter who welcomes prospective donor, gives him the required reading forms to review, and if understood and consented to, gives him a number, invites to rest until his turn is called by the nurse for a confidential interview and testing.
- 2) An able bodied 'walker' who directs the donor to the secluded area for donations, and assists him to be comfortable,

relaxed in a folding lounge chair with the desired arm bared and resting on the chair. A soft drink or water is given, reassuring with a smile and encouraging words. Keep alert to the needs of the donor, while the nurse is monitoring the blood flow. When the procedure is completed, escort the donor to the canteen, making sure he is seated before you leave him. This can be physically challenging!

3) Snacks and drinks are offered to each donor, who must be monitored at rest for 10-15minutes. Be alert for any reactions, ring a bell if assistance is needed. Encourage them to make another appointment for the next acceptable time. Remind them to keep well hydrated the next several hours. Check their donor card, award a donor appreciation pin at each new gallon level.

If you feel you would like to volunteer for this challenging activity, please contact Doris Marshall, 276 638 2998. Or, if possible, come to the Liberty Fair Mall on the 4th Thursday afternoon, roll up your sleeve, and become a regular donor of your own precious life-giving Blood. Thank you, God is with you.
Doris Marshall

Presbyterian Women

OUR church is busily planning a **Homecoming** to be held the weekend of August 16-17. The Invitation Committee asks that parents please place in the offering plate or send to Connie Anderson, (1115 Corn Tassel Trail, Martinsville, VA 24112) addresses of their children who live away. We want all members (past and present) to return to First Presbyterian for this exciting event!

On Sunday, February 10th several of our Presbyterian Women gathered to fill 41 boxes of cookies and candy to send to our college students. Gail Chaney designed and prepared Valentine

Cards that were enclosed in the boxes to let the students know their church family was thinking of them. A big thank you goes out to everyone who made more than fifty-three dozen cookies it took to fill these boxes. It was interesting to see such a large variety of cookies this year. We stuffed chocolate chip, oatmeal, M&M, peanut butter and snickerdoodle cookies along with brownies, coconut balls, and many other types of treats. Janet Fentress has been chairman of the Valentine's Day Cookie Project for many years. We thank Janet for all her efforts she has put forth each year to make this a huge success.

There are many upcoming events for our Presbyterian Women to participate in. Please mark your calendars for the following:

Monday, March 3, 10am The General Meeting of Presbyterian Women will be held in our fellowship hall. Please join us for light refreshments and a time of bible study provided by Randy Stevens. We are thrilled to have Virginia King as our guest musician for this event.

Tuesday, March 25, 9:30am
Presbyterian Women Council Meeting

Sunday, April 20, 2pm The Annual Spring Cluster Gathering will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Va.

June 12-15 The Summer Gathering of Presbyterian Women will be held at Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. The theme this year is "Together in God's Love."

July 11-15, 2009 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women will be held in Louisville, KY. "God Will Do Wonders Among You" is this year's theme.

October 4 We are very excited to invite women from the Presbytery of the

Peaks to join our church for the 20th Annual Fall Gathering. Please pencil this date on your calendars as we will need everyone's help on this date.
Susan Pilson

The Tempo "Our Musical Pulse"

This year the Chancel Choir sought out Betsy Haskins, the children's and youth singers and ringers, to join them in a service of worship and music. The plan met with a positive response so put Sunday morning, March 9, at 11:00 a.m. on your calendar for this service.

The service will center around the passion week and crucifixion of Christ. You will hear the choirs individually and together. The congregation will have the opportunity to join in appropriate hymns. The sermon of the morning will be a short setting of Christ's Seven Words on the cross.

Joining with us in the service will be a Brass and Percussion ensemble who will accompany the final anthem in addition to joining with the organ in the hymn singing accompaniments. Additional singers from our area will be singing with the choir.

Please extend to persons in our community to join with us in this service. Save the date of March 9 at 11:00 a.m.

The choir welcomes Gael and Smith Chaney and Darla Main-Schneider as members in the Baritone, Alto, and Soprano sections. Now is a good time for persons who will join with us after the Easter season in preparation for the Summer Stretch which is not that far away. Speak to Mr. Chapman soon and join with us.

Sanctuary Ringers

The Sanctuary Ringers rang in the morning service on February 24. The next times they will ring in worship will

be in April and May. There are still regular positions in which we need ringers plus ringers who will be willing to substitute.



Weekday School News

Well, I would like to say that spring has sprung, but Mother Nature seems to be a bit confused lately. The children have been busy learning about our Presidents and preparing for Easter. March is designated "The Month of the Young Child" and we have several special events scheduled.

There will be a special dance class, the Martinsville High School Jazz Band will be doing a program for us and the SPCA will be here in the next month. The teachers are in the process of planning for spring parent conferences, March 19 and 20, and we will be on Spring Break the week of March 24.

Weekday School registration is also getting underway. The schedule is as follows:

- Current Students: March 3 - 6
- Church Members and Siblings of current students March 10-13
- General Public March 17-20

If you have any questions regarding this process, please feel free to come by or give me a call in the Weekday School Office @ 632-3431.

Melissa White

EASTER LILIES

The church invites families and individuals in the congregation to place a potted Easter lily in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday, March 23.

All who wish to place a lily in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one or friend may do so by contacting the Church Office or by filling out the form below and placing in the offering plate with payment. These names will be included on a special insert in the bulletin on Easter. Each plant is \$14 payable to the Church Office in advance. The last date for ordering and making payment to the Church will be Sunday, March 10.

Please place my order for an Easter lily:

Name _____

Phone _____

In memory of

In Honor of

Enclosed is my check in the amount of

_____ I will pick up my lily immediately after worship.

_____ I will leave my lily at the church.