

THE PIEDMONT EPISTLE

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS BY WORD AND DEED

Annual Report 2018

LEADERSHIP

Priest's Report

Dear people of Piedmont,

In his book *God's Companions*, the Anglican priest Samuel Wells argues that in Christ God has given us everything we need, everything we need “to worship him, to be his friends, and to eat with him (communion).” As simple and straightforward as that thesis is, it is a proper reminder as we reflect on 2018 and how God has indeed provided us everything that we need. At Piedmont, 2018 saw continued proof of God's providence as we sought to “proclaim the Good News by word and deed.”

Here are some of the highlights of this past year:

Highlights of 2018

Daughters of the King—The Daughters of the King is a lay religious “order” for women, whose mission is “to extend Christ's Kingdom through Prayer, Service and Evangelism.” Sponsored by the chapter at St. Stephen's, Culpeper, we started the process this summer of forming our own chapter of the DOK.

New Prayer Books—Noting the declining condition of the copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* we use in worship, we initiated a very successful Prayer Book Drive which allowed us to purchase 44 new books to replace the older worn books.

Repainting—In our ongoing efforts to address the deferred maintenance on our buildings, we identified the east-facing façade of the parish house carport as a project for repair. This summer, we removed the rotten boards with peeling paint and replaced them with more durable Hardi-board, a fabricated board of concrete and fiber, and painted the façade to match the rest of the house's exterior.

Also, this fall we undertook to paint the upstairs hallway, bathrooms, anteroom and staircase. This project has brightened up these spaces, restoring pride and beauty to our worship spaces.

Holy Land Pilgrimage—This fall, I went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to Israel and Jordan. On this journey I got to see the Bible come alive as I visited several sites mentioned in the Bible, including sites in Galilee, where Jess taught, and in Jerusalem, the site of his Passion. In an effort to invite the congregation “along” on my journey, I offered two presentations before my trip, to orient participants to the geography and history of the Holy Land, and then two presentations after I returned to share the stories and insights I gained as a result of my travels. Both were well attended by interested members and friends from the community.

Challenges

Despite the vibrant ministries and fellowship of our church, we continue to see a decline in membership and attendance, in worship and in Sunday School (Shepherd’s Way). We have lost three members this year who have gone on to a closer walk with God—Beau Puryear, Donna Nettles, and Reggie Dale—and others have either moved away or been restricted in their movement by declining health. This is sadly in keeping with the direction of other churches in our area, and also with the downward population trend in Madison County.

This is not cause for us to accept decline as an inevitability however. As I’ve shared before, no more than 10% of Madison is in church on any given Sunday morning. That means there are plenty of potential members—the harvest is plentiful! Another thought to consider: according to research done by the American Growth Institute, an invitation by a friend or relative is by far the most powerful and effective way in which new people come to church—79% versus everything else (pastor invitation, program, Sunday School, etc.)!

Three Priorities for 2019

Looking forward, I identify three priorities that we should focus on in 2019: hiring a new organist, launching the after-school tutoring program, and committing ourselves to ongoing spiritual formation as adults.

Hiring New Organist/Choir Director

Since Martha Makula’s departure two years ago, Piedmont has been without a regular organist to lead us in worship. In her place, we have been blessed with a number of pianists and instrumentalists who have contributed their musical skills on a rotational basis: Alejandro Murillo, Jonah Clatterbuck, Theresa Klopp, and our Guitar Choir. We have been particularly grateful to Theresa Klopp for stepping up to lead the choir once or twice a month. But, as much as we have enjoyed and appreciated their leadership and talents, it is not right or wise to expect that they will be able to continue serve in this committed capacity indefinitely.

So, we are redoubling our efforts to identify and hire a part-time organist and choir director for Piedmont. Efforts in the past have been proved unsuccessful, due, I believe, to three factors: our remote location, the scarcity of organists in the population, and the fact that the position is part-time. I am encouraging the members of our congregation, if you know of a pianist or organist, to

refer them to me or to contact me directly. Let us leave no stone unturned, for while we trust the Lord will provide, we do not know how God's provision will come.

After-School Tutoring Program

In 2018 we identified an after-school tutoring program for elementary school children as an opportunity for our congregation to share the love for our neighbors in Madison County. Led by Dink Kreis and Dcn. Kathryn Thomas, we have met with and spoken to a number of stakeholders and interested and knowledgeable educators in the community, and we have drafted a plan for the operation of the program at the church one afternoon a week. It is now time to implement that plan and make this vision a reality. I call on our congregation to consider how you can contribute to its development so that we can launch this important ministry to which God is calling us.

Spiritual Formation for Adults

As Christians, we recognize that we are not "done" at baptism, but that we are called to grow in our faith and to be continually formed, informed and reformed by the truth of the Gospel. This process of Christian formation is a life-long process, a journey, where we cooperate with the Spirit, with grace, in order to become "sanctified," formed in the likeness of Christ. This process is one which involves the training of our hearts, of our habits, and of our minds.

With that in mind, I will be offering this year several adult formation courses to provide our congregation with a multitude of opportunities to deepen your faith. The tentative schedule of courses includes the following:

Lent: Finding God in the Bible

Easter: Who is The Holy Spirit?

Summer: Bible Study: An Invitation to John

Fall: "Burning Questions": Death, Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven and Hell

Advent: An Advent Study: Repentance, Faith, Holiness, Love

I am inviting the people of Piedmont to take part in these courses and setting as our goal to have each member participate in at least one of these offerings. It is my firm belief that participation in these courses will not only benefit you in your faith but will make us a stronger, more vibrant, more faithful congregation as a result.

May God, who has begun the good work in us, carry it on to completion in Jesus!

--The Rev. Terry Miller

Deacon's Report

The Spirit who blew over the waters at creation is still a wind, whipping over the wilderness, ever working God's act of re-creation on our world. This whirlwind is the breath, the voice of the prophets in the desert, proclaiming to all who would listen: here is the Way.

-Br. Lucas Hall, SSJE

That wind is the very same, very strong wind that blows here at Piedmont with voices always proclaiming that we are people of the Way. For me, I have felt it in so many ways:

CHRISTIAN FORMATION: While an ongoing formation is crucial for all of us, the Psalmist reminds us to take particular care in instructing our children because, "His truth endureth from generation to generation."

- In Shepherd's Way, the love of the Good Shepherd is shared every Sunday so that our children know that they are His precious lambs.
- This past summer, the Atrium in the undercroft was rearranged to support a curriculum for our middle schoolers as preparation for confirmation.
- Above all, and most importantly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and studied every Sunday, even with the smallest lambs.

THE ORDER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE KING: In November a group of 10 women gathered in the Fellowship House at Piedmont to begin a six month period of postulancy and discernment to join The Order of the Daughters of the King:

- Reaffirming the promises made at Baptism and Confirmation, a Daughter pledges herself to a life-long program of prayer, service and evangelism. She receives support in this commitment from a worldwide community of like-minded women.
- The Mission of The Order is the extension of Christ's Kingdom through Prayer, Service and Evangelism.

Please join us on this Holy ground as we seek to grow closer to our Lord and each other as we pray for God's will in our lives and the life of Piedmont Church.

OUTREACH: As we each seek to attain "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13). 'Christ's' to each other, 'Christ's' to God, our outreach is the natural expression of our love both for Christ and for those we wish to invite to join as people of The Way:

- Once a month, I am privileged to carry a Deacon's Mass, consecrated and sent forth from Piedmont to our brethren at St. Paul's Ingham.
- MESA is richly supported by Piedmont with offerings of foods as well as voice as Norris and I represent Piedmont on both the executive Committee and BOD.
- Though I am still awaiting fingerprinting, Piedmont and Christ's Love will be represented in outreach to the unaccompanied minors in a juvenile facility in Staunton
- Finally, there are so many ways, as in the tutoring program in their the wings, that we join in God's act of re-creation of our world.

In thanksgiving as a fellow pilgrim on The Way
--Deacon Kathryn Thomas

Senior Warden

After a year, 2017, filled with necessary, large-scale maintenance projects, 2018 offered a chance to catch our breath a bit and direct more of Piedmont's energies outward. While smaller-scale rehabilitation projects continued this year (see our Junior Warden, Hardie Newton's report) organic ministries focused on those beyond our walls either took place or began germinating for future implementation. The essence of our parish ministry can be found in any of the following activities undertaken or continued this past year: Sponsoring a number of children from MESA's Barbara's House for sessions at Belle Meade Camp...Offering labor and helping hands for reflooring and other work at Barbara's House...Sock Drive to benefit those in need...The ongoing MESA food drive to benefit those who might otherwise go hungry. In the planning stages is an after-school tutoring program designed as a resource for elementary school children...an effort that I'm hopeful will come to fruition this year.

In order to feed others, we must also feed ourselves, and we have been blessed with opportunities for spiritual enrichment this year. A chapter of Daughters of the King prayer group is in development and has enjoyed active participation. Father Terry was able to make a pilgrimage to Israel in October and shared with us not only pictures, but his newly-gained insights into the Holy Land.

We continue to be blessed by the ministry of our dedicated clergy and laity. Father Terry and Deacon Kathryn work tirelessly to develop programs that lead us in the direction of Christ and enable us to do the same for others. We thanked Susan Kennedy as she stepped down as Co-treasurer and welcomed Beth Roireau back to that role, to work alongside Nick Spencer.

We, as a vestry, remain thankful as always for the offering of talents by so many for all of the critical roles in the church.

All of the above takes place against a backdrop of an obvious desire to maintain the vitality of our small country church. We face the same demographic, societal, and financial pressures as all churches, and doing so in a small community brings its own blessings and challenges. The blessings, of course, are the closeness and sense of family we're able to share, while the challenges include having the hands to do the work necessary to keep the parish operating, while leaving enough hands free to reach-out to those we are called to serve. Piedmont has a long, long history of finding the right balance between parish nourishment and outreach beyond these (beautiful!) four walls, and I'm confident that we will continue that tradition

--Jim Landolt

Junior Warden

It is evident that we, as Piedmont Church members in the year 2018, participated generously as a group in three major areas. Our Sunday services were wanting new Prayer Books. We responded by purchasing forty four, the majority of which of which were dedicated to the memory of family

or friends. Secondly, feeling responsibility to our close relationship with MESA, we sponsored four children from Barbara's House to attend a summer day camp and furnishing them with the needed clothing, shoes and daily lunches. Thirdly, understanding that Terry's study in the Holy Land would translate into shared moments of spiritual and historical importance for our Church family, we presented him with an envelope of pocket change as encouragement for his journey.

Regarding maintenance, old boards above the Parish House carport were replaced and painted, trees overhanging the Parish House roof were pruned (both the pecan tree above the deck and the cedar of Lebanon in the front). We bought a new vacuum cleaner, hired a new sexton and increased cleaning duties and hours, and have undertaken major painting projects in the back halls/bathrooms of the Church, including the stairwell. We are in the process of replacing the lightbulbs behind the Chancel window, as well as in the ceiling fixtures in the Church basement. These are near completion, including new ceiling fixtures and shades in the bathrooms.

Pending Projects:

- Painting of stairwell/installation of remaining light bulbs.
- Re-stretching of carpeting in Church.
- Re-pointing exterior Church bricks (filling gaps in mortar between bricks), including front steps of Church.
- Securing base mountings of exterior wrought iron railings.
- Church pews: professional advice regarding preservation of wood.
- Washing/replacing bulbs in Church chandelier.
- Dusting/cleaning of Church balcony area.

--Hardie Newton

Treasurers

See separate Treasurers' Report

WORSHIP

In worship, we come before God to give Him praise and thanks for all the blessings in this life, chief of which is God's radical act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. Each week, we come together as a people, who are formed and shaped by this act, by our relationship with Christ, to remember who we are, whose we are and what really matters. We come to worship in times of need—when suffering seems unbearable, when our sins overwhelm us, when sickness and disease threaten our life, and when someone we love has been taken by death—and in times of joy—at a wedding, for the baptism of a child and to celebrate the smaller blessings of our lives. With all of these occasions, whenever we gather in Jesus' name, the promise is that God meets us there, with his Word, his Sacraments, and the fellowship of the Church. At Piedmont, worship is our central and most important activity. It is why we exist, the core of who we are as a people, and the source from which flows all else that we do.

Here is the breakdown of worship figures:

Number of Sunday Morning Services	52
Number of Services Cancelled by Weather	0
Number of Non-Eucharistic Sunday Services	3 (Morning Prayer, Lessons & Carols)
Number of Weekday Services	3 (Ash Wed, Maundy Thurs, Good Fri)
Number of Memorials/Funerals	3
Average Sunday Attendance	35 (2017: 41)
Easter Attendance	79 (2017: 86)
Christmas Attendance	88 (2017: 114, 2016: 82)
Christmas Day Attendance	8 (2017: 9)

--the Rev. W. Terry Miller

Altar Guild

The mission of the Altar Guild is to prepare all things necessary for worship at Piedmont Episcopal Church.

The Altar Guild is responsible for preparing all the things necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist or any of the other sacraments and offices included in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Book of Occasional Services*. This includes:

- Preparation of the Altar Table and the Credence Table/Shelf for Holy Eucharist.
- Placement of frontals, hangings, and banners in the proper seasonal colors.
- Supervision of the decoration of the sanctuary with flowers.
- Placement of the candles on the Altar Table and within the Sanctuary. This year we were pleased to replace the wax altar candles with oil candles.

- Procurement and provision of all necessary materials used in worship (bread, wine, water, oil, candles, palm fronds, etc.)
- Storing and reverent returning to the earth of the consecrated elements.
- Care, preparation, cleansing, and storing of all the vessels, linens, hangings, and candles.
- Cleanup after the service.

The Altar Guild prepares the altar each week for the regular Sunday Eucharist as well as for all weddings, funerals, and memorials services. We hosted three funerals/memorial services this year at Piedmont Church. The seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter are times of greater liturgical significance and thus greater responsibilities.

The Altar Guild had twelve active members in 2018. These members serve two months throughout the year, in teams of two. If you are interested in joining the Altar Guild, or would like more information, please contact Vickie or Carol. Altar Guild is not restricted to the ladies of the congregation.

--Vickie Parker and Carol Nowak

Acolytes

Acolytes are responsible for lighting candles, assisting with preparation of the altar for communion, and receiving the offering plate, while crucifers' duties include leading the procession with the cross and opening & closing the altar rail gate. Currently Piedmont Church is blessed to have a faithful corps of acolytes and crucifers serving during worship each Sunday. They include, Amanda and Thomas Dale, Jordan Spencer, Annika and Caden Burnside, Beth Roireau, Molly Sanford (our newest acolyte!), and yours truly. Traditionally, these roles have been filled by children, whereby they play a vital part in the life of the church, become very familiar with the liturgy, and gain self-esteem as they are given more responsibility. Thankfully we never outgrow being someone's child, and can always use more knowledge and self-esteem, so age is not an impediment to service! New volunteers are always welcome...training is provided...and the scheduling is very flexible...feel free to ask me about this opportunity to serve!

--Jim Landolt

Music

Following the departure in 2017 of Martha Mikula as organist and music director, we immediately began seeking Martha's successor. Because of geography and the general dearth of organists, we were unable to immediately identify a candidate for the position, but we were blessed to secure the talents of a team of musicians--Theresa Klopp, Alejandro Murillo, Jonah Clatterbuck, and our own Guitar Choir (Jim Landolt, Bev Young, Dave Henken, and Brennan Bemis) who have shared musical leadership each week. This has been a great blessing to us as we continue to seek a long-term organist.

--The Rev. Terry Miller

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Children

As Christians, we recognize that we are not “done” at baptism, but that we are called to grow in our faith and to be continually formed, informed and reformed by the truth of the Gospel. This process of Christian formation is a life-long process, a journey, where we cooperate with the Spirit, with grace, in order to become “sanctified,” formed in the likeness of Christ. This process is one which involves the training of our hearts, of our habits, and of our minds.

Shepherd’s Way

See the Deacon’s Report above.

Vacation Bible School

For four Sundays in July, our youth once again delved into the Old Testament, this time to discover David: the under-dog boy-warrior, the loyal friend, the King and psalmist/musician. All activities took place in the church yard during the 10am service. Our youth “erased” a magic-markered, life-sized Goliath using water balloons (which was surprisingly difficult!), followed clues from the Psalms for a backyard treasure hunt, made noisy music with a variety of percussion instruments, composed their own individual psalms and mounted them on their own hand-made paper. Along the way there were lively discussions about faith, friendship, loyalty and personal challenges and goals. Each child took home a t-shirt decorated with a “Conquer your Goliath” theme. Many thanks to Maureen Duesterhaus, Theresa Griffith, Brennan Bemis and Sue Brown for making it a success.

--Beverly Young

BIBLE STUDIES

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Adults

As Christians, we are called to grow in our faith and to be continually formed, informed and reformed by the truth of the Gospel. This past year we at Piedmont promoted and provided for this process among our adult members through the following offerings.

MCDOWELLS' BIBLE STUDY (Monday nights)

The Monday Night Bible Study met in 2018 at the house of Nick and Cindy McDowell. The gathering was informal, and the format was often an episode from the Teaching Company, followed by questions, answers and discussion. The videos used cover the history of religion; the Old and New Testaments; and issues related to the development of systematic theology from the period of the Early Church to the present time.

PARISH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP (Thursday nights)

We have just completed another year filled with new discoveries as part of our Thursday night studies. Discoveries about ourselves and how our relationships with each other, impacts our relationship with God - how in our relationships, the abundant bounties made available to us impacts our relationship with our neighbors, which in turn impacts our relationship with God. One discovery that will have a lasting effect on us came from the reading and study of Job 31:16-18. This passage moved us to respond to the plight of those who hunger in our community, and with the overwhelming support of our church family we were able to provide them with over a ton (2,060 lbs.) of food during the course of 2018!

We are once again extending an open invitation to the community at large, to come and share in God's word, every Thursday from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm.

--Norris John

ADULT FORUMS

PRACTICING OUR FAITH: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(Wednesday nights, February 21-April 1)

For the season of Lent, we explored how it is more than just a matter of beliefs, it is a way of life, a way of life that is shaped and expressed by spiritual 'practices' or disciplines, shared activities that developed over time to integrate faith into daily life. Over the course of five weeks, we explored seven classic Christian practices and considering three other possible "postmodern" practices, placing them in their historical and biblical context, reexamining its relevance to our times, and showing how it gives depth and meaning to daily life. Join us as we explore these ancient practices and rediscover their relevance for today.

DISCOVERING THE HOLY LAND

(Sunday mornings, September 23 & 30)

In anticipation of my trip to the Holy Land, we hosted two Adult Forums in the fall, during which we explored the land of Israel, as it was known in biblical times and as it exists today, including current political, humanitarian and security issues.

Virtual Tour of Israel

(Wednesday evenings, November 7 & 28)

Upon my return from the Holy Land, we hosted two evening sessions at the church during which I related stories and showed pictures of my travels and discoveries in Israel and Jordan. We also explored the flavors of the Holy Land, dining on food from the Middle East.

--the Rev. W. Terry Miller

OUTREACH

As Christians, we are called to serve those outside the Church, in witness to and as an embodiment of the new life we have in Christ. At Piedmont we affirm this explicitly in our mission statement: "Proclaiming the Gospel by Word and Deed." We live out this mission in a variety of ways: collecting food donations for Mesa, volunteering to renovate Barbara's House, supporting area charities, collecting socks and winter clothes to give to those in need, and buying presents for the HeadStart program through the Angel Tree program.

Mesa Food Pantry

Led by the tirelessly encouraging leadership of Norris John, our church collected and donated over a ton (**2,060 lbs.**) of food to the Mesa food pantry over the course of 2018!

Loose Plate Offering

On the fourth Sundays of each month, we give the loose plate offering (cash) to designated local charities. Here is what we have given during the past year:

Boy Scout Troop \$78
Madison Free Clinic \$65
School Supplies \$166
Mesa Food Pantry \$142
Mesa Food for Children \$69
Mesa Food for Thanksgiving \$140
Madison Free Clinic \$100
Angel Tree \$205

Angel Tree

As we have done in Christmases past, in 2018, Piedmont Episcopal Church collected Angel Tree gifts for Madison Children. These gifts are the centerpiece of the children's winter celebration

and visit by Santa, the biggest event of the pre-school classes' year. It provides families where money is tight with something extra for a joyous Christmas. Two classes of a combined 38 children participated this year. The Angel Tree is organized in collaboration with the CAP Head Start program. Parents of the children know where the donation come from, but the children do not know of course. It is a true sign of the kind and generous spirit of this congregation that contributions started flowing in as soon as the Angel Tree with paper angels carrying the children's wishes was set up in the Parish House by Helle, Amanda, and Thomas Dale on the first Sunday of advent. It is beautiful to see a real manifestation of the spirit of Christmas in these gifts. Several families brought a number of gifts, showing great generosity. The Angel Tree makes Christmas more meaningful for all of us at Piedmont and is consistent with the PEC focus on outreach to the community and deep care for the least among us.

--Helle Dale

Pumpkin Fest

In October, we hosted our second Annual Pumpkin Festival, a pumpkin-themed fundraising and community-outreach event. While a somewhat smaller affair than last year, we enjoyed the fellowship and sold food prepared by our members, carving pumpkins, heirloom pumpkins, chili, hotdogs, and baked goods. Led by Susan Kennedy, the event was a success, raising \$547. We learned a lot in the process and are excited to host the event again next year.

--the Rev. W. Terry Miller