

# THE PIEDMONT EPISTLE

*PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS BY WORD AND DEED*

November 2018

## An Afterthought

Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ,

I'm not a procrastinator. I'm really not. Sometimes I just want to mope over a matter before responding to it, in a sermon or email or newsletter. At least that's what I tell myself. But now that we are halfway through the fall, halfway through the conventional season of stewardship, I can't really use that as an excuse for not having come up with my "stewardship" article for this month.



Thinking about my procrastination, I recognize that part of it is that I want to have something original, inspiring, engaging to say about stewardship. I mean, this subject comes up every fall, and we clergy are expected to offer something fresh. And so I was waiting to be inspired. And I waited. But nothing came. So I put it on the backburner for a while. I suppose I could use the excuse that I was gone for two weeks at the first part of stewardship season, but I've been back for a month now, so I don't know how much mileage I can honestly get out of that.

Really, I suppose the issue is I'm just not particularly motivated. I mean, stewardship is not a subject that gets me excited. It's not very "sexy"....all that we have is Gods and we are suppose to give some of it back to God. Yeah, we hear that every year.

**Stewardship is not an excited subject. It's not very "sexy." And it often becomes an afterthought.**

It doesn't make for a very stirring message. It's not like the humbling, awesomeness of Jesus' sacrifice, or the comforting assurance that we are not alone and that God is with us in the pit. It's not even intellectually challenging like the question of why does God let bad things happen or what is our role in our salvation. No, stewardship seems to just be about affirming a fact that we already knew, or that we at least had heard before, something we are familiar with.

So, when stewardship "season" came around this month, I hope you'll forgive me for not jumping at the chance to write on the subject. For several weeks, the subject was an afterthought—"Oh yeah, I'd think, I should really get to work on that." But then I don't.

Reflecting on this, I recognized that that's the issue in itself. We think we know all about stewardship, but when it comes to acting on it, to giving to the church, for the church's mission, it becomes an afterthought. After we've paid all the other bills, after we've made sure we have enough for the things we enjoy, for dinners out and trips and nice things for ourselves, our spouses, our kids, our homes, maybe we remember to give. Believe me, I understand.

But, that is the point of stewardship, what stewardship means. In lifting up stewardship as a theme in this time of the year, at harvest time, during the “in-gathering” of the produce and fruit of our labor, we are reminded that all that we have, all that we possess, has been given to us. It's a blessing, a gift from God, given to us in God's providence.

Often times we have the attitude that Bart Simpson had when he was asked to pray at dinner: “Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves. So thanks for nothing!” Yet all that we have—from the food we eat, the skills we've acquired, the education we've received, the opportunities we've taken—have all been given to us. They are a gift. This is not to discount our work or contribution, but it is to remind us where those blessing come from—God.

To bring up the subject of stewardship is also then to invite us to ask, If these things—our possessions, our talents, our wealth—come from God, and are therefore God's, what would God want us to do with them as stewards of God's gifts. What is God's will and design for the gifts that He has given us?

Rather than an afterthought, stewardship challenges us to wrestle with this bigger question—How am I acting as a steward of God's gifts?—before we ask the smaller question of How much am I going to give to the mission and ministry of the church? For the first naturally leads to the second.

Understood in those terms, stewardship becomes a critical matter, a matter of vocation, of living in light of and in response to God. Maybe it's not sexy, but it is critically important, as it embraces the whole of our life as Christians, as disciples.

Ok, so maybe it did take a little “extra” time for me to realize this, but I hope that, in light of this, you might also come to consider how stewardship has been an afterthought for you too, and begin to ask yourself, How am I acting as a steward of God's gifts? For that question is not only relevant this month, but for the whole of our life with God.

All the best,

*W Terry Miller*

Terry+

**Stewardship is a matter of vocation, of living in light of and in response to God's gifts.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Feast of All Saints—November 4

In thanksgiving for our spiritual ancestors and in recognition of our indebtedness to their sacrifice and witness, we will be celebrating the Feast of All Saints on the first Sunday of November. Please contact Fr. Terry or Deacon Kathryn if you would like to include the names of deceased loved ones in the prayers.



### Loose Plate Offering

The Loose Plate Offering (cash) that is collected on the fourth Sunday of November (November 25) will be given to the Angel Tree to purchase presents for needy families in Madison County. Please remember these children in your giving.

### MESA Food Donations

Please bring a can, bag, bottle, or box of non-perishable food item to give to the MESA food pantry.

**Stewardship Month**—Throughout November, we will be celebrating the blessings God has given us and asking you to prayerfully commit to offering those blessings to the mission and ministry of God at Piedmont. James Maloney will be overseeing the pledges and an In-Gathering Celebration will take place of December 2.



### Virtual Holy Land Tour—Wednesday, Nov 7 & 28, 6pm

Join for two evenings as Fr. Terry recounts his journey through the Holy Land (Israel and Jordan) last month. Starting with a “virtual tour” of Galilee and the north on the 6<sup>th</sup>, we will then begin walking the road that Jesus took to Jerusalem and to the cross on the 28<sup>th</sup>. A light Middle Eastern dinner will be provided both nights.

## FURTHER AHEAD

### Christmas Services

**Monday, December 24**

Christmas Eve Service @ **7:30pm**—Come all ye faithful and your families too! (Note new time)

**Tuesday, December 25**

Christmas Day Service @ **8am**—Celebrate the birth of our Savior Christmas morn at this solemn, richly traditioned service.



## PRAYER JOYS & CONCERNS

We offer prayers of healing for friends and family:

Melvin Amos	Lisa Gardner	Susan Muston
Corey Barker	Cynthia Gerstner	Abigail Newman
Barbara Beach	Carrie Gilles	Carol Nowak
Emily Begovitch (Kathy Henken's niece)	The Gleason family	Amanda Paff
Fran Bowers	Griff & Vera Griffin	Sara Parmenter
Jean Brashears	Stanley Griffin (Vera & Griff's son)	The Puryear family
Max Brown (Sue Burnett's friend, 4-y.o.)	Reggie Hall (Barbara Straightiff's brother-in-law)	Maria Rosenberg
Jane Camerer	Susan Hansen	Lorraine Sandifer
Doris & Roland Chapman	Luke Harbert	Myia MacKenzie Shifflett
Sandra Clore (Waltine Robinson's niece)	Sue Lam	Jacqueline Smith
The Cox family	Ted and René Hinds	Barbara Straightiff
Harley Cronk	The Hitt family	Stephanie & Keith Stricker
David Cronk	Ren LeVally (Dink's son)	Bob Thomas
Janice Edwards	Richard Medeiros Jr.	Matt Tsun
The Filmore Family	Keira & Brendan Miller	Robert Ulrich
Patrick & Sean Fohner	Rosalie Mow (Doug's mother)	Bernie Valdez
James Gardiner	Susan Mowchan	Donna Whitman (friend of the Griffiths)
	Dorothy Mudd	Augusta Woodward
		Jeff Yowel

We pray for peace and the restoration of people's safety and dignity in Philippines, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Iran, Sudan, West Africa, and the Congo. We pray for the victims of violence in Beirut, Baghdad, Kenya, Paris, and San Bernardino.

We pray for the men and women in the armed services, especially Mike Butterworth, Patrick DaSilva, Graham Davidson, Sean Hegg, R.E. Hutton, Nathan Kinkey, Alex Gochenour, Jeffery Mainwaring, Todd Mainwaring, Anthony Mark, and Clay Puryear, and for our first responders. We pray for our presiding bishop, Michael Curry; our bishops, Shannon Johnston, Susan Goff, Bob Ihloff, the churches of the Diocese of Virginia, and for our 70 million brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion.

We pray for the families in Barbara's House; for the work of Madison Emergency Services Association, Madison Free Clinic, Literacy Council of Madison County, Boy's and Girl's Club of Madison, Senior Nutrition Site, Madison County Education Foundation, and Boy Scout Troop 116.

We pray for our youth in college: Nick Bader, Josh Good, Izzie Hansen, Ben Landolt, Sam Landolt, Paul Jackson, Peter Thawngzauk, Jacob Young, & Nathan Young.

We give thanks to God for all the families in this blessed Piedmont Church, and especially for the work God has done in the life of Peter Bank, in his recovery from surgery. Gracious Lord, guide, preserve and protect your servants as they create for your glory a holy family of love. May their love for each other be a sign of your tender care.

# Graves Chapel News

Greetings folks....I hope everyone is enjoying the sporadic sunshine and the nice crisp Fall weather!

For *this month* (November 2018) the Evening Prayer Service will be held on Sunday **November 18th** at 4:00 pm.

The service will also be offered as a *Thanksgiving Day* service as well.

Everyone is welcome! Bring your neighbors, and any additional friends and/or guests...

Graves Chapel is located at 104 Bluff Mountain Road Madison (Graves Mill), Virginia.

Should you have special prayer requests or needs, please feel free to contact our Lay Preacher Susan Bagby.

Additionally, Susan can offer you spiritual direction. She is a counselor and is certified as a spiritual director. There are no fees associated with her professional services however she does request a tax deductible donation be made directly to Graves Chapel.

Please feel free to contact Susan at:

[Susanhbagby@gmail.com](mailto:Susanhbagby@gmail.com) or,

Telephone---434.978.1627

Additionally, a reminder to mark your calendars for the annual Graves Mill Community Christmas Dinner on Saturday December 8, 2018 5:00 pm social hour begins--dinner to follow.

And the day before--Friday at 9:00 am---***Chapel decorating day*** in which **we need volunteers!**