

**August 9, 2024**

Dear Grace and Piedmont Congregations,

Greetings from West Virginia!

I cannot tell you how excited and blessed I feel to have the opportunity to join your communities! From the first time I heard of you, I felt a stirring in my spirit. After joining you for worship this past winter, meeting many of you, and then walking through the discernment process with your search committee and vestries, I have experienced a consistent affirmation in my heart. God has genuinely gone before us, and I look forward to the ministry in store for us together.

Allow me to tell you a little bit about myself. I have spent a lifetime in Christian ministry, but only joined The Episcopal Church five years ago. For twenty years I ran an equestrian program at an evangelical Christian camp that operated year-round in rural, Southwestern Colorado. During that time, I was very active in the local church, leading Bible studies, and small groups, as well as singing, and doing youth ministry. I spent a few years removing myself from fundamentalist evangelical Christianity, during which I ran an organic grocery store/sandwich shop and catering service. Once I found The Episcopal Church and experienced the call to priesthood, I enrolled at Virginia Theological Seminary and moved to West Virginia. Since starting school in 2019, I have been teaching horseback riding lessons to both traditional and handicapped students in several locations around Virginia.

I have always loved rural life and enjoyed a close attachment to nature. I am an animal lover and outdoor enthusiast. When I'm not outdoors, I prefer to be in the kitchen, around tables with friends, reading, or singing. I have two grown daughters with whom I am close in heart but not proximity. The eldest is married and living in Colorado. The youngest is at Bible college in Iowa. My favorite thing about The Episcopal Church, apart from the beautiful liturgy and traditions, is the freedom to explore Scripture with open curiosity and honest wrestling.

My deepest appreciation goes out to those who have worked so hard through the transition process to discern with one another and with me the call of God for our future ministry together! The next couple weeks will be spent moving and getting settled. I currently am beside myself with anticipation to meet everyone, get to know you, and settle into the life of our communities. God truly does answer prayer! Your hospitality, warmth, and the partnership I already feel in the work we have begun is a genuine gift.

With much love and eagerness to see you soon,

Rev. Deacon Becki Casey



**Sunday August 11, 2024**

Piedmont Episcopal Church 11 am

**AUGUST SCHEDULE for Holy Eucharist and Morning Prayer**

Rev. Dr. Pete Gustin - **August 11, 2024 - HE**

Bill Birkhofer - **August 18, 2024 - MP**

Rev. Deacon Becki Casey - **August 25, 2024 - HE**

## **THIS WEEK IN WORSHIP**

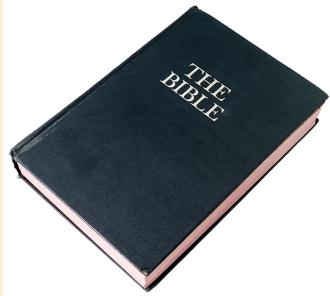
**Readings for August 11, 2024**

**2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33**

**Psalm 130**

**Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

**John 6:35, 41-51**



### Lay Servers - August 11, 2024

Vestry Person.....Sharon Hicks  
Usher.....Beppy White  
Acolyte.....Karen Czar  
Lector.....Briarley Rogers  
Intercessor.....Sue Brown  
LEM.....Dave  
Bagby  
Altar Guild.....Vickie Parker  
Fellowship.....Bill Birkhofer

### Prayer List

We offer prayers for those who are dealing with health issues and other ongoing needs:

Malcolm (**Mac**) Barber, **Bernadette** Blanding, **Caitlin** Bomar, **Kathryn** Caswell, **David** Cronk, **Janice** Edwards, **Joanie** Edwards, **Vera** Griffin, **Brad and Lydia** Hansen, **Zoe** Hubbard, **Shelby Jean** Hull, **Kim, June** Shannon Koepke, **Deedee** Lyon, **Julie** Mayhew, **Marilyn** Myers, **Hardie** Newton, **Carolyn** O'Brien, **Chris** Palumbo, **Robert, Pat** Roberts, **Pat** Riddle, **Julinda** Roth, **Myia** Mackenzie Shifflett, **Ann** Skidmore, **Brenda** Smith, **Richard, Sarah, Joe** and **Carolyn** Stanley, Kathryn Thomas and **Robert** Ulrich

**\*If you wish to add or remove someone from the Parish Prayer list please send an email to Kathryn Thomas [kathrynthomas@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynthomas@gmail.com) by Wednesday to ensure that it gets into the bulletin and weekly messenger**

### "Minister's Musings"

#### That Which Does Not Serve

Sunday is the feast day of St. Clare of Assisi. She is the female counterpart to St. Francis and established the "Poor Clares" in the eleventh century. She's a fascinating woman who, like most of the saints, lived an impressive life of devotion to God through challenging times and experiences. While there are many reasons to venerate St. Clare, this year I am struck by her hair.

Coming from an elite, powerful, and wealthy family, Clare was lauded for her beauty. Her affluent family was not impressed with her desire to leave them, for

a life marked by poverty and chastity. She fled at night to avoid detection, and to prove her resolve, she had St. Francis cut off her hair. In our world, this radical act does not translate. But at a time when long hair was a woman's mark of beauty, and when a woman's value was entirely linked with her beauty, a haircut was Clare's crossing of the Rubicon. Her determination to throw herself on God's grace by literally cutting off her human security was a tremendous act of faith.

Clare's humility, demonstrated by her choice to cut off her hair, is especially poignant this week. Sunday's Old Testament lesson is the Story of Absalom from Second Samuel, chapter 18. David's prideful son gets himself killed when his long hair becomes tangled in a tree, causing him to get stuck when his mule walked out from under him. Left hanging by his beautiful hair, Absalom was an easy target for the men who wanted to kill him. While his story is ridiculous, Absalom creates a striking juxtaposition against Clare.

Haircuts may or may not be our mark of sacrifice and humility. But they do provide a useful metaphor for helping us make choices to govern our lives. I don't think anyone would argue that Absalom would have made an excellent king, but if he hadn't been so vain about his hair, it is possible he would have defeated his father and won the throne. We all make choices every single day that define our priorities and shape our lives. Part of living into wisdom is discerning the priorities that do not serve us in fulfilling our call. Once we identify those things, we gain the opportunity to act in faith, like Clare, and cut them away.

Living a sacrificial life can be challenging at times. It's not always easy to let go of things we love, even if they aren't serving us. On the other hand, Absalom is a powerful cautionary tale. May we accept the grace necessary to cut away all that does not serve.

-Rev. Becki



Prayer in thanksgiving:

Almighty God, giver of every good gift, we give you thanks and praise for your guidance in our search

for our new clergy Rev. Deacon Becki Casey. Holy Spirit, be present with her as she prepares to join the congregations of Piedmont Church and Grace Church as our faithful pastor to care for your people and to equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## Piedmont SCHOOL SUPPLY Drive

Thank you to all who donated to the School Supply Drive!

Thank you to Rev. Deacon Becki Casey and Jaynie Jackson for delivering the supplies to William Wetzel Middle School on August 6th. Wishing all the children a successful and safe school year ahead!



Thank you to Wes and Kelsey Cotten for providing for our after worship fellowship time August 4! The food and drinks (ESPECIALLY the coffee bar) were delicious! And thank you to all that provided a dish to make our meal plentiful.

WEEKLY at PIEDMONT CHURCH



**Tuesday**

**7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study in the Sun room**

**Wednesday**

**6:30 p.m. Bible Study with Norris John**

**6:30 p.m. Choir Practice - Brad Jackson**

**Friday**

**9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer led by Bill Birkhofer**

**(There will be no choir practice or dinner on Wednesday evenings in August)**

**AUGUST Vestry MEETING 8/18/2024**



**Taste of the Mountains Main Street Festival  
August 31, 2024**

**Mark Your Calendars! More information to come!**

**We will have a sign up sheet available this Sunday**

**We have 1 1/2 hour slots to fill! A great opportunity to come**

to out and support our Madison community and meet new friends!



**On the months in 2024 with a 5th week  
August and November**

**AUGUST 30, 2024**

We will be packing weekend food bags for 30 to 36 children from Madison County that live with food insecurity.

These bags will be packed on Sunday, August 25th after Church and delivered to the Boys and Girls Club in Madison, to be sent home on the Friday of the 5th week. Please see Bill Birkhofer for the sign up sheet for food donations!

The deck on the parish house is in need of replacement, as well as repair work needed to the deck doors and windows. THANK You for the generous donations already received! We continue to work toward our goal of completing this work by the end of the year. Thank you to Joe Parker for overseeing this project.



**Bereavement Support Group**

**No one should have to grieve alone.**

Piedmont Episcopal Church together with Gentiva Hospice is offering a

bereavement support group that will provide spiritual and faith-based gatherings designed to accompany each person in their unique walk with grief. Bereavement is not only the loss of one's beloved, but can be the loss of your way or direction as well. Madeleine L'engle in talking about her own experience says, "Bereavement is not the truncation of...love, but one of its regular phases."

**Join us as we learn to walk this new and difficult path together.**

- **Meeting: Piedmont Episcopal Church, 214 Church Street, Madison, Virginia**
- **Times: First Tuesdays of each month @ 6 PM  
September 3, 2024**
- **Place: Piedmont Fellowship House, next door to the church, living room, enter through the kitchen door in the carport.**

**For more information, please contact:**

**Sharon Hicks, LPN, [sharonsarbonne@aol.com](mailto:sharonsarbonne@aol.com)**

**Pastor Stephen Mathis, [sjwmathis89@gmail.com](mailto:sjwmathis89@gmail.com)**

**Rev. Kathryn Thomas, [kathrynhthomas@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynhthomas@gmail.com)**

## Please Remember!

The **Fourth Sunday** loose offering in our collection plate goes to **Piedmont's Outreach**.



Email us

Piedmont Episcopal Church | 214 Church Street | Madison, VA 22727 US

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