

April-May 2026 Newsletter

Grace United Methodist Church

605-787-4858 — Email: gumc@midconetwork.com

Web site: www.gracepiedmont.com

Dear Grace United Methodist Church,

Hello church! What a March – “snow day” church and 70° just a couple of days later!! I am grateful for the snow and pray for lots more moisture in the coming months. You might have noticed that the Newsletter says “April-May” at the top. There is a reason. Many of you are aware of this, but many are probably not aware that Kristin and I will be on a four-week short-term leave from April 6 through May 6. Much more detail can be found later in the newsletter.

As we move into April, we enter Holy Week. This is one of my favorite times of the year. Our faith, after all, is much more about the cross than the manger. As we move into the season of Easter (the six weeks after Easter Sunday) we will hear about the stories that equip us to live out our faith in the real world, modeling Jesus’ example. Thanks for your time!! Blessings to you and your family this Spring!! – Pastor John



March 2026 Finance Update *(Through four Sundays)*

March Giving: \$ 18,285

Year-to-Date Giving: \$ 46,522

Year-to-Date Expenses: \$ 47,020

Overall: \$ -498

Our United Kingdom and Ireland Adventure

In October 2025, when filing out one of the annual forms with the SPR team, we came across question 1: “When was the last time you took a four-week short term leave?” My answer was this: “Never.” To be honest, it had never been on the form, and I wasn’t even aware that it was a “thing.”



They informed me that I needed to take this short-term leave. For the first time since our 20th wedding anniversary trip to Estes Park, Kristin and I began contemplating what we might do and where we might go for an actual “couples” vacation – other than camping in the Hills and visiting family.

After some conversation, we decided on the United Kingdom and Ireland. I wanted to visit some John Wesley sites and Kristin wanted to go back to Ireland. Since then, we have planned a month-long trip that will include stays in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London, Oxford, Bristol, Dublin, Laragh, Waterford, Killarney, Galway, and Donegal. We’ll also spend time in Glasgow and Cork as well as in national parks, on scenic drives, and visiting abbeys and other historical sites. We fly to Dublin and on to Aberdeen on April 6-7. We fly back home on May 6. Look for pictures on Facebook!!

We are so grateful for this opportunity. I cannot really express how grateful we are. I want to thank our Staff-Parish team (Arlana, David, Matt, and Mike) for encouraging me, supporting me, and helping everything work out for this adventure. Many thanks to Mike, Prairey, Steve, and Pastor Stephanie for stepping into the pulpit for the four Sundays that we’ll be away. Also, many thanks to Don and Jeff and Jolene for guiding the music for these weeks. Plus, a big thanks to our Grace Kids team (Cherie, David, Don, Meredith, Nancy, and Prairey), to our Art with Heart team (Sue plus Vicki), and to Kristal and Steve (our youth team) for stepping up and doing a little extra each week so that we can be away.

And... a heartfelt thanks to the staff that will step up – Cindy, Tanya, and Phyllis – and a big thank you to Pastor Connie, Pastor Jenene, and Pastor Stephanie for being willing to step in should the need arise for congregational care. Lastly, thank you to the many who have offered words of encouragement and support as you've heard about this plan developing and evolving!! 😊

Piedmont Valley Community Church!



“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for the One who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:23-24).

This is Farewell. Piedmont Valley Community Church will close the page on April 30. I have been honored to be your PVCC host the last few years. My prayer has always been that the Facebook page would bring hope and encouragement to folks who otherwise haven't connected with Grace UMC in a physical presence. My prayer now is that you all will find ways to study and pray with other friends in order to continue to deepen your faith.

I encourage you to follow Pastor John's blog: pastorjohnb.org. He posts his thoughts on his Bible readings and closes each with a prayer. These blog posts often teach me something and lead me into discovery of my own faith journey.

Livestream of worship will continue. If you can help host the live chat on Sunday mornings, please let me know. The chat is where we as a church body can connect with online worshipers and relay their prayer requests to those leading worship. I will be away from church from April 6 to May 6, so without volunteers, the chat presence will be on hold.

Praying you find joy in God's Presence, in peace, Kristin

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SEASON READING SCHEDULE

Journey's End & A New Start

Marching Orders (Palm Sunday)

Lenten Book: "Piety"

March 23 – Psalm 31:9-16

March 24 – Isaiah 50:4-9a

March 25 – Philippians 2:5-11

March 26 – Matthew 26:6-13

March 27 – Matthew 26:30-35,
69-75

March 28 – Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29

March 29 – Matthew 21:1-11

A New Start (Easter)

March 30 – Isaiah 42:1-9

March 31 – Psalm 36:5-11

April 1 – Hebrews 12:1-3

April 2 – John 13:1-17, 31b-35
(*Maundy Thursday*)

April 3 – John 18:1-9

(*Good Friday*)

April 4 – Matthew 27:57-66

April 5 – Matthew 28:1-10
(*Easter Sunday*)

Stories That Matter

"Unless I See"

April 6 – Acts 2:14a, 22-32

April 7 – Psalm 16

April 8 – John 20:24-31

April 9 – 1st Peter 1:3-9

April 10 – Acts 2:32

April 11 – 1st Peter 1:6-7

April 12 – John 20:19-29

"Astounded Us"

April 13 – Acts 2:38-39

April 14 – Acts 2:14a,36-41

April 15 – Psalm 116:1-4

April 16 – Psalm 116:12-19

April 17 – 1st Peter 3:17-23

April 18 – Luke 24:13-29

April 19 – Luke 24:30-35

"Knowing That Voice"

April 20 – Acts 2:42-45

April 21 – Acts 2:46-47

April 22 – Psalm 23:1-4

April 23 – Psalm 23:5-6

April 24 – 1st Peter 2:19-25

April 25 – John 10:1-6

April 26 – John 10:7-10

EASTER SEASON & BEYOND...

READING SCHEDULE

Stories That Matter (cont.)

"You Know the Way"

April 27 – Acts 7:55-60

April 28 – Psalm 31:1-5

April 29 – 1st Peter 2:2-3

April 30 – 1st Peter 2:4-10

May 1 – Psalm 31:15-16

May 2 – John 14:1-7

May 3 – John 14:8-14

"The Story Abides"

May 4 – Acts 17:22-31

May 5 – Psalm 66:8-17

May 6 – Psalm 66:18-20

May 7 – 1st Peter 3:13-17

May 8 – 1st Peter 3:18-22

May 9 – John 14:15-21

May 10 – Acts 17:22-31

"So That They May Be One"

May 11 – Acts 1:6-14

May 12 – Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

May 13 – 1st Peter 4:12-14

May 14 – Ephesians 1:15-23

May 15 – 1st Peter 5:6-11

May 16 – John 17:1-5

May 17 – John 17:6-11

God Poured Out

"Spirit Unbound"

May 18 – Acts 2:1-12

May 19 – Acts 2:13-21

May 20 – Psalm 104:24-34

May 21 – Psalm 104:35

May 22 – 1st Cor. 12:3-6

May 23 – 1st Cor. 12:7-13

May 24 – John 7:37-39

"Spirit in Partnership"

May 25 – Genesis 1:1-31

May 26 – Genesis 2:1-4a

May 27 – Psalm 8:1-4

May 28 – Psalm 8:5-9

May 29 – 2nd Cor. 13:11-13

May 30 – Matthew 28:16-18

May 31 – Matthew 28:19-20

Forming a Family, Preparing a People

"To Be a Blessing"

June 1 – Matthew 9:9-10

June 2 – Genesis 12:1-9

June 3 – Romans 4:13-17

June 4 – Matthew 9:18-26

Grace Kids

As we work through April and into May we will learn about Pentecost and the first Christians, then about the 10 Outcasts (Lepers) and Lazarus. We'll end with a day of celebration on May 11!!

Thanks for sharing your children w/us!! — *David Weeks and the Crew*



Art With Heart

We invite all 5th and 6th graders to join us Tuesdays after school to be creative, have snacks, and grow in faith.



Hello arty families!

In April, Pastor John and Kristin will be away from church, and Sue will take over with help from church friends Vicki and Don as our van driver. Vicki and Sue have some really fun projects planned! Parents, we will have Sue's number available when you pick up your kids the next couple of weeks. PLEASE LET SUE KNOW when we're gone (April 6-May 5) if your child will NOT be attending, so they can plan, and they know who to pick up at school.

We will finish up for the year on May 12th. Thanks for sharing your children with us! They are a joy!

We love seeing our 5th and 6th graders on Tuesdays. If your student is unable to be with us, please let us know ahead for planning purposes and so we know who to pick up (or not) at the school.

Thanks! --Kristin, Sue, and Pastor John

Youth Group News



Hello Church Family,

Our youth group wrapped up our “Kings” lesson series at the end of April — hard to believe we only have a few gatherings left before summer break!

We still have a lot to look forward to, including two game nights, a movie night featuring *God’s Not Dead*, a service project, and our final meeting on May 13th.

The youth have been soaking up the warmer weather, and we even held one of our last lessons outside. It brought back memories of when we used to ask teachers to take class outdoors — and this time, it worked out beautifully!

Wishing you all a wonderful spring season. Blessings, *Kristal*



Church Lawn Care Help Needed!!!

Hello church! We are looking for 3-5 individuals willing to help with the church “lawn.” If we can find 3-5 people, then each person would be responsible to mow and trim roughly once a month – depending on the amount of rain. The time requirement

is about 2 hours each time the lawn is mowed and trimmed. Pastor John or Jeff can answer any questions and will train any interested individuals. Please let John or Jeff know if you might be willing to help out! Thank you!!

Upcoming Worship Series (*Post-Easter*)

Starting on April 12 we will begin “Stories That Matter.” The season of Easter, or Eastertide, is a time of embracing the promise and hope of Resurrection. It is a time to lean into the stories that matter in our journeys of faith. Come and gather around the stories of those who wrestled with the Easter event and some of the words of preparation that Jesus gave to help us live the reality of eternity now. It is clear from these stories that Jesus wanted to equip us to thrive as we live out the Easter promise. This season, we hope you’ll engage in stories that matter.



April 12 – “Unless I See” – In John 20, Thomas reminds us that the power of Resurrection is inseparable from its reality. In worship we seek to engage all of our senses — sight, sound, touch, taste — to notice Christ’s risen presence among us and within us. Peter connects to the eternal – to the hope that is our inheritance that comes through genuine faith in Jesus Christ.



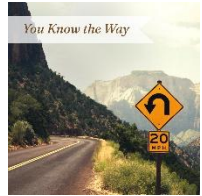
April 19 – “Astounded Us” – In Luke 24, the risen Jesus walks with two downcast disciples, explaining God’s life-giving and enduring word. In the end, they see and understand that he is Jesus as he breaks the bread. In life we find this same joy as we live into the astounding news that love has conquered death.



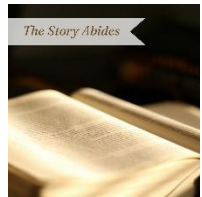
April 26 – “Knowing That Voice” – Like sheep, we learn to recognize the Shepherd’s voice together. This is important as there are many other voices in this world. As the flock, we find life to the full in Christ. And in moments of suffering and trial and in those times when we go astray, we turn to Jesus, the sinless one who heals us and calls us back into the community.



May 3 – “You Know the Way” – In John 14, Jesus declares, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” This simple truth invites us to unite belief with holy living, exploring how faith shapes our daily choices and communal witness. Peter explores our firm foundation, encouraging us to place our faith in the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, so that we can live as God’s people in the world.



May 10 – “The Story Abides” – In John 14 we are reminded that the Spirit abides in us, preserving and weaving our shared story as the body of Christ. Peter also writes of the Spirit bringing the presence of God into our lives. As we intentionally choose to be guided by the Spirit, we will experience the ongoing narrative of God’s love being lived out in our community.



May 17 – “So That They May Be One” – Jesus prays for our unity and glorification in him in John 17. Because this is not always easy, we will wrestle with what it means to live as answers to Christ’s prayer for oneness in the world. And at times, the world brings trials as the devil is ever on the prowl. Peter reminds us that Jesus will restore, empower, strengthen, and establish us in these battles.



Weekly Spiritual Grow Opportunities:

- Sun. – 8 AM — Adult Sunday School — SS Room (*Ends May 17*)
- Sun. – 9 AM — Worship (in person or online) - Sanctuary
- Mon. – 3 PM — Grace Kids — Fellowship Hall (*Ends May 11*)
- Tues. – 3 PM — Art w/Heart — Fellowship Hall (*Ends May 12*)
- Wed. – 7:45 AM — Women’s Small Gr. — Sunday Sch. Room
- Wed. – 1 PM — Midweek Chat — Chapel
- Wed. – 6 PM — Youth Group — Fellowship Hall (*Ends May 13*)
- Thur. – 5:30 PM — Men’s Bible Year Study — Fell. Hall
- Fri. – 6:30 AM — Ladies’ Bible Study — SS Room

Upcoming Monthly Events and Meetings:

- April 2 – 6 PM – Maundy Thursday Worship
- April 3 – 6 PM – Good Friday Worship
- April 5 – 6:30 AM and 9 AM – Easter Sunday Worship
- *April 14 – NO TEAM or LEADERSHIP Meetings*
- May 3 – 9 AM – Garden Planting

Birthdays for April:

- April 3 – Cindy Puckett
- April 5 – Gloria Hunt
- April 9 – Chris Silver
- April 15 – Lorraine Puckett
- April 16 – Marilyn Schwaner
- April 16 – Cam Zabel
- April 20 – Wes Stromberg
- April 22 – Coke Helmstetter
- April 26 – Tristen Pfister
- April 30 – Zoe Pfister

Birthdays for May:

- May 3 – Chloe Jacobs
- May 12 – Barb Walker
- May 15 – Dani Masters
- May 15 – Beth Haivala
- May 15 – Irene Graff
- May 24 – Rita McVay
- May 24 – Gary Reynolds
- May 26 – Holly Kopplin
- May 29 – Bart Haivala
- May 31 – LeAnna Masters



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10060 Foothills Drive

PO Box 265

Piedmont, SD 57769