

On Monday, the Eleanor Presbyterian Church hosted “Moneychanger Monday.” Commissioned Ruling Elder John Yeager offered a brief devotional that was followed by music from a 5 piece bluegrass group from St. Albans. That was fun. I had never heard of anyone doing anything special on “Moneychanger Money” before this. Even if it doesn’t include bluegrass music, this gives us a chance to do something different during Holy Week.

On Maundy Thursday, the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Hurricane did a service based on the Stations of the Cross. We started out with communion in the Fellowship Hall and then moved to different parts of the church where we remembered how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and was arrested, how he was tried by the Sanhedrin and examined by Pontius Pilate, how he was mocked by the soldiers and then crucified. This may have been the most creative way to celebrate Maundy Thursday I’ve ever seen.

On Good Friday, the Presbyterian Churches in the Teays Valley Cluster had a Tenebrae Service at First Presbyterian Church in St. Albans. There was a packed house for this quiet, meditative service. The rainy weather added to the somber mood. This was probably the best example of collaborative planning by a cluster that I’ve seen.

I celebrated Easter with the Marlinton Presbyterian Church. Even though their new pastor, Rachel Shepherd, didn’t officially start until April 1, she and her husband were already in town so they had her preach at the Sunrise Service. Rachel must have had a great sermon because everyone was still smiling when I got there for the 11:00 AM service. I don’t know which I enjoyed more: the energy of the Marlinton congregation or the beautiful stretch of highway between Richwood and US 219.

Five different services in five different congregations. Incredible energy. Incredible creativity. This presbytery is blessed with some great pastors. And we have congregations doing some great ministry. This week really gave me hope for the future of this presbytery and it made me glad that I decided to come back to West Virginia.