

8/11/2024

Asking for forgiveness rather than permission, I am a day late with my email this week. I spent last week covering ground in the western part of the state, starting on Monday, and by Friday afternoon, both my minivan and I were operating on fumes. So, after a good night's sleep...

My trip down I-81 was well worth it, as it always is. I visited parts both familiar and unknown to me. Familiar would include Roanoke, Christiansburg, Abingdon, and Bristol, while new adventures took me to Fincastle and Lebanon. Church of the Transfiguration in Fincastle is a small (but not tiny) parish located in Botetourt County, just outside of Roanoke. The morning I was in Fincastle, the parish was bustling with activity in the social hall – a group of women were at their regular gathering to hook rugs. They all proudly identified themselves as those who “hook” with an “er” on the end – I promise it sounds just fine in person, but I think I might get in trouble if I write it out in this message. You can see a picture and learn a bit more about Church of the Transfiguration [here](#).

Good Shepard in Lebanon is tiny (definitely smaller than small), located in Russell County, and is the home parish of a dozen or so Catholic families. It is part of the Spirit of the Mountain cluster, which also includes St. Therese in St. Paul and St. Mary in Coeburn. While all three parishes have a unique origin story, the Glenmary Home Missioners played a central role in each's history. You can read about all three parishes and get a feel for the area [here](#).

On my way back from Lebanon to my hotel in Bristol, I saw the sign for St. Paul, and I couldn't resist taking a detour. What a charming town on the Clinch River! I am jotting that down for a longer visit next time.

Margaret

Margaret Keightley

Executive Director

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P.S. Whether you realized it or not, if you give to the Annual Diocesan Appeal, you are helping small parishes like these. The Home Mission Grant program, partially funded through the Appeal, provides support for our smallest parishes to be used for making repairs and minor capital expenditures. I know most of you have already made a gift to this year's appeal, but just in case, Click [here](#).