

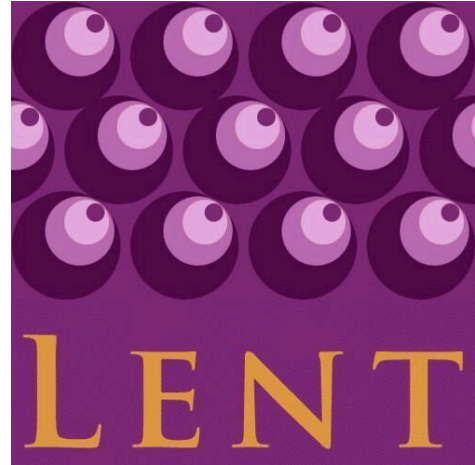
Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

March 13, 2024

In this issue: Reflection, Pastoral Continuing Ed week away, Art at EPC, March Mission, Easter Flowers, Outreach Prompts, outdoor companionship class learnings, Session Notes



Reflection from Elder Jay McGregor

One gift that the Spirit has given me through my learning at Edgcumbe is a transformative understanding of the Genesis story. Within the recipe of Reality's creation is the goodness of all beings and things. This is our beginning.

Nicodemus hears Jesus say, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) In the illumination of the Creation story, we can understand Jesus' words this way, "Unless a limited human being is reborn from the First Beginning, the primal mystery of fire and light, they will not see and feel the illumination of the "I can" of the cosmos."

Jesus, hearing that Nicodemus is confused, goes on to say, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) Again in the light of the creation story this can be understood as; Unless human beings in their limited self are reborn from water and breathing, from that original spark of the Devine that was our beginning, we will not live in right relationship with the truth or Reality of God's creation.

In Thomas we read that the disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us, how will our end come?"

Jesus said, "Have you revealed to yourself the beginning, that you already are looking for the end? Look! The end will be where the beginning is. The one who is blessedly ripe will come to standing in the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death. The ripe are those who come into being from the beginning, before they exist."

This hopeful message of rebirth has the power to open my eyes to the Reality of the goodness around me and within me. The kingdom is near and we can feel our cheek warmed by its embrace.

Pastoral Time Away—Continuing Education, March 11-17th

Pastors Luna and Phil are away from work this week of Continuing Education from March 11-17th. The Elders Eleta P and Connie H-V will lead worship on Sunday, March 17th. If you are wanting Pastoral support this week, please reach out to any of the sitting Ruling Elders (Connie H-V, Todd B, Ingrid E, Jay McG, and Michelle T).

Art at EPC

The Minnesota Contemporary Quilters have again graced us with their beautiful quilt creations! The quilts have been hung on the walls of the sanctuary and will be up through the end of March. The theme for this year's show is "Lines" and each quilter was uniquely inspired by this theme. Enjoy the show!

March Mission: Minnesota FoodShare

This month Edgcumbe is collecting funds for the Foodshare Campaign that supports approximately 300 Minnesota food pantries. We are also continuing our support of nearby pantry Francis Basket. Our own food shelf at Edgcumbe gives extra items to this pantry located in the apartment complex across the street from Sibley Plaza on 7th Street.



Here are some more highlights about food insecurity in Minnesota, and St Paul at Neighborhood House: (We'll give updates on other pantries in the Twin Cities throughout the month)

- Minnesotans made a record-breaking 7.5 million visits to food shelves in 2023. This is up 36.4% from the previous record of 5.5 million visits in 2022, and up 102% from 3.7 million visits in 2014.
- **At Neighborhood House (across the river at 194 Robie St.) the food pantry is now serving over 1700 unique families per month. Neighborhood House also provides language classes, a gym for kids, and school supplies for students.**

Please donate to the March mission by including "Foodshare" in the memo line of your check donation, or online at Give Now by typing "Foodshare" or "March Mission" in the memo box. Blessings and many thanks for your support for our neighbors during this Lenten season!

Easter Flowers

We have ordered 10 yellow and 10 purple mums for Easter decorations. If you would like to contribute to beautifying the sanctuary and take an Easter flower home with you after Easter Sunday service, the cost of each mum will be \$11.

Send your check with the order form, located at church, to the office or place in the offering plate. Thank you!



What I Love about EPC is...

To prepare for the Pie Social and Clothing exchange in early May, the Outreach Team is asking the congregation to help with the content of our promotional material. To create flyers and cards and posters that reflect who this community is, we need to hear from you about your authentic experience of being a part of EPC. While we will create opportunities to do this work in worship over the coming weeks, we also want to provide ways for you to share your words and reflections with us in multiple ways. If you have a reflection on one of the following prompts, please email Phil at pastorphilgg@gmail.com. Feel free to send as many reflections as you want! Here are some possible prompts, but please make up any of your own.

- What I love about EPC is...
- My life has been changed by this community...
- EPC is the best church in the world because...
- I know God is at work here because...

While you are reflecting on these prompts, you can use this opportunity to think about using your answers as a way to invite new people to our lovely worship services on Sunday mornings!

outdoor companionship class learnings....

well! i have just completed my first class in the outdoor companionship training—and my mind and heart are sooooo full! it seems there will be a lovely balance between engagement with new ideas, alongside practical, outdoor experiences—so i am just thrilled about that!! 🥰

one of the outdoor experiences i am being invited to practice is called a “sit spot”, which is a 20-40 minute sit in nature and to behold what i see, feel, hear, smell, and taste. the minimum time of this experience is 20 minutes, because that is how long it is needed for the natural be-ings to re-orient to your presence at the site, and then trust you in it. essentially, the heart of the practice is to allow joy, wonder and amazement to erupt out of all that you are experiencing! it's essentially the embodiment of the genesis creation story witnessing that all that god makes is good! so, this practice invites a person to really experience the goodness of creation!! i want to invite you to join me in this practice so that you too can behold and witness god's amazing handiwork!!! would you be willing to find a 20-40 minute time this week and sit outdoors and engage your senses—what to you see/smell/hear/feel/taste? can you allow yourself the gift of having a soft fascination with all that you behold, and be mindful and present to it all? do you have a place where you'd like to practice this? If nothing immediately arises, i invite you to go into the backwoods at edgcumbe, and find your way to any of the stations, or maybe even the prayer garden. our backwoods is just ripe to sit in and to behold it all!!

if you do end up trying this, i will be so curious to hear about your experiences!! please let me know how you found it to be!! and, as always, i will be grateful for your prayers for me over these next weeks and months, as well as prayers for our epc community about how we can

intentionally extend the love and healing into our outdoor spaces for all of the community to experience!! thank you for walking alongside me in these days!! in joy!! ~pastor luna ✨

Session Notes

Session met on March 7, 2024. After devotions led by Connie, session approved the minutes of the last session meeting (Jan 26) and the annual congregational meeting (Jan 28).

Worship schedule and pastors' time off:

Pastor Luna will be on continuing education leave for the next 6 Sundays, with the theme of forest bathing. Pastors Luna and Phil will both be on continuing education leave March 11-17, and May 15-22, when Pastor Phil will be participating in EPP training in the UK. Further out: they will be either on vacation or continuing education leave June 24-30. Plans for worship during these absences have been made, with assistance and guidance by Pastor Phil and session members.

Maundy Thursday, March 28, will include a potluck and the Holden Evening Vespers. Communion is scheduled the first Sunday of each month, and outdoor services will be held on the 2nd Sunday of each month June through September weather permitting.

We discussed ways to welcome recent visitors into our community.

The terms of two elders (Jay and Todd) are ending in 2024, term limits are 6 years, and in addition there are open seats on session.

Building and grounds: The St Paul Conservatory has extended its lease through June, so the grand piano will remain in the sanctuary for now. Running a utility line into the backwoods is under discussion. Some exterior work on windows and interior cleaning is necessary.

With the extension of the Conservatory lease, our budget is in good shape.

Future plans: A pie social and clothing exchange is planned for Friday/Saturday May 3/4. Session also suggested to take a look at updating our website.

And enjoy the St Paul quilters exhibit of their new work in the sanctuary!

Submitted by: Ingrid & Ron Eggert