

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Thanksgiving Update – November 23, 2016

Welcome Home

Welcome home, family of God. Welcome to yourself, welcome to each other, welcome to the earth. Julie and I had a restful and refreshing two weeks of staycation and continuing education time. It is also wonderful to be back in your midst and preparing for Thanksgiving and Advent together. Thanks to everyone in the congregation and on staff for all your work while we were gone. It is good to be welcome here.

Advent Humility

The church sanctuary looks lovingly prepared for Christmastime. Now it is time to prepare our hearts and minds as the first Sunday of Advent arrives already this weekend. In worship this Advent, we will be reading from the poetic words of the prophet Isaiah who is crying out in the wilderness for us to see and follow God. At the same time, we will be taking suggestions from the *Rule of St. Benedict* to live in humility at all times. Humility does not mean to live as if you are less than everyone else; humility means to live in complete freedom and openness before God and each other. Humility means letting go of my need for status and my criticisms of others. Humility means searching for God with my whole heart. Humility means abandoning my self to God's wondrous plan. Humility, somewhat painfully, means accepting even the most difficult parts and people of my life as my teachers.

Waiting for God (Advent means "waiting") is an act of humility. God coming as a baby in a stable is an act of humility. Seeing God in everyone is an act of humility. Allowing God to teach me and use me as God sees fit is an act of humility.

This Sunday, we will be reading Isaiah 2:1-5 and Psalm 122. We will light the first Advent candle and sing and pray together. We will remember who we are and who we aren't. We will feast together at Christ's communion table.

Thanksgiving and Montreal High-Rise Meal

First two quick Thanksgiving exercises:

#1 Worrying is practicing fear.

Gratitude is practicing grace.

Would you like more fear or more grace in your life?

Now you know which to practice.

#2 Take a survey of yourself.

Of any given hour of your day, how many minutes do you spend worrying,
and how many minutes do you spend feeling grateful?

Write down your answer or guess.

Does that ratio work for you?

Adjust as needed.

Second: a reminder to all Montreal Highrise servers and turkey carvers to be in the building kitchen by 11am tomorrow morning. Thank you

Next Bible Study with Pastor Phil—November 28

We'll meet in the Parlor again from 6:30-8pm. Our texts will be Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72; Romans 15:4-13; and Matthew 3:1-12.

Advent Giving Tree

Collecting NEW Pajamas, Slippers & Books for Project Home

It has been our tradition at Edgumbe to dedicate the tree in the Narthex as our "Giving Tree" each advent and collect items for a local organization. This year's Giving Tree will benefit the homeless families who are currently with Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul's Project Home. Project Home would like to give each person staying with them a new pair of pajamas and a book for Christmas, and we would like to help them achieve that goal.

Now through December 18, we are collecting NEW pajamas & slippers for all-ages: infants, children, youth and adults, and NEW or VERY GENTLY USED books for all-ages. As you are making out your holiday shopping list, please also consider picking up one or several of these items for these families. Going out shopping on Black Friday? Stores often have great deals for these items on that day. Donations can be placed either on or under the tree in the Narthex.

Christmas Flowers

The order for this year's purchase and donation of red or white poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas is attached. The form will also be in the bulletin for the next few weeks. Final orders need to be in by December 11. There are two options – you can purchase plants and take them home following the Christmas Eve service or you can simply donate funds outright to purchase additional plants that will then be taken to those who are no longer able to get out to worship with us in person.

Stewardship Time

Get your pledges in please...Thank you to all who have turned in your pledges for 2017. We are happy to welcome several new pledgers for the coming year! If you have not returned your pledge card, Session is meeting on December 1, to begin discussion of next year's budget so if you possibly turn your info in this coming weekend, that would be great.

Looking Ahead (It's starting to look a lot like Christmas!)

Here are some dates to put on your calendars:

- November 27 – 1st Sunday of Advent and communion
- December 11 – Christmas music sing-a-long
- December 24 – Christmas Eve worship at 4:00pm
- December 25 – Merry Christmas with no worship on Sunday morning!
- December 28 -- 2016 tax year donations are due by this date in the church office.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and all your loved ones! May God absolutely drench you with blessings today.

Pastor Phil