

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update – December 7, 2016

### Advent Humility

This Advent we are studying the “Twelve Degrees of Humility” from *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. The two movements from this past week were:

1. The discovery that obedience to God results in our highest potential. Your highest potential does not rest in protein powder or making a lot of money or having shapely legs. Instead, when we let go of our need to control (or escape) ourselves and the world around us, then and only then do we see God’s love and life all around us.
2. The discovery that life’s difficulties are our greatest teachers. Isaiah says it this way: “A shoot shall grow from the stump of Jesse.” Jesus lived it this way: “He became obedient, even death on a cross.” We do this by accepting the truth that life is difficult and embracing the dark night as part of our spiritual journey.

This coming Sunday, we explore the next two points of *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, and we will be reading Isaiah 35:1-10, about the blooming and water-soaked vision of the desert—followed by a CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-A-LONG afterward around the piano. Hope to see you there.

### Session Update

Session met last Thursday. See their report at the end of this Update.

### Christmas Flowers

To buy flowers for yourself or the church, this Sunday, Dec. 11, is the final deadline. Fill out the bulletin insert or call the church office to get your order in.

### Mission Opportunities This Advent at EPC

We have several ways to give this holiday season.

- A. **GIVING TREE FOR PROJECT HOME:** Bring new pajamas or slippers for all ages and new or gently used books to the tree in the narthex.
- B. **CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING:** Our offering this year will go to support Lutheran Social Services’ Metro Homeless Youth Program, where Faith has been helping out this fall.
- C. **JOSEPH’S COAT:** For years we have collected clothes for the very busy and needed ministry of Joseph’s Coat on W 7<sup>th</sup>. The EPC members who used to deliver these clothes on Tuesdays (when needed) are no longer able to do so. Is anyone willing to help out in this way?

### Christmas Cooking Baking-Dec. 17

Isaiah 7 says that the coming Messiah will eat butter and honey. Yum. So what better way to celebrate Christmas than to gather for cookie baking? This will happen on Saturday, Dec. 17, from 2-5 pm in the church kitchen. Bring dough and needed implements or just come to roll and bake and enjoy each other’s company.

## New Member Class

Are you interested in exploring membership at EPC? With several young people making profession of faith and joining the church, we will have an opportunity for both those young people and any adults to have a class together in January to prepare. Talk to Pastor Julie or Phil or Elder Fred if you want to take part.

## Prayers, Or: Anyone want to be Prayer Maven?

Congregation, I (Phil) am realizing (after nine years) that I am not good at keeping a prayer list. I love to talk to people about their deepest cares and hurts and desires, and I like to pray with and for people. But after I talk to someone, I never, ever (or almost never) think to say, "Would you like to be added to the congregational prayer list?" Then, because I haven't asked, I really don't feel comfortable telling you all about others' concerns or about what I am praying for. I have a couple suggestions. One, is there anyone who wants to be the keeper of the list, the Prayer Maven, the Master of Prayerfulness (we can give you whatever title you want?) Two, if you have other ideas about how we could be a people of prayer together, please feel free to share.

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

Here are some dates to put on your calendars:

- December 11 – Christmas music sing-a-long
- December 17 – Christmas cookie baking on Saturday afternoon, 2-5pm
- December 24 – Christmas Eve worship at 4:00pm
- December 25 – Merry Christmas with no worship on Sunday morning!
- January 1 – Happy New Year! Session is discussing taking off on this Sunday as well. If you were really hoping for worship on this day, please talk to any of the Elders.

May the peace of God and the warmth of the Spirit surround you today!

Pastor Phil

## *Here is the December 2016 Session Report from Elder Eleta:*

Session met this past Thursday, December 1, for our regularly stated meeting. Over the 3 ½ hour meeting, many items were discussed, prayed on and some things were even decided upon. Here are items from our meeting that you should be aware of.

The Elders voted unanimously to receive into membership via confirmation, the six youth who expressed their faith and desire for membership. A seventh youth is still working on their statement of faith and will hopefully be joining this group of wonderful people. We will sponsor a new member class for youth and adults and then set a date for a Confirmation/New Member Sunday in early 2017.

Finances and the 2017 budget were discussed. We discussed the items to be thankful for, including the number of pledges we have received, and recognized that long-term solutions are needed. Session

started a discussion on moving the pastors from an 85% shared position to a full-time shared position (adding approx. 6 hours to their work week). Session decided to table the discussion until next month so that we can both prayerfully and practically consider the option, as well as hear feedback from others. The 2017 budget will be finalized in January and will be made public at the Annual Meeting.

A motion was defeated to move undesignated memorial funds of approximately \$2,100. from the savings account to either checking or our Vanguard investment fund. It was decided that instead of tracking each individual memorial, they will be merged into one “undesignated” memorial fund and tracked collectively. Memorials for individuals whose families designated a specific use for their loved ones memorial donations will continue to be tracked individually. The need for a policy surrounding finances and memorials was again discussed and stressed, something the Sessions for many years have also discussed, but never acted on. Eleta Pierce offered to work with the finance team to come up with a draft of a financial and memorial fund policy as a goal for 2017.

**Other business:**

- This year’s Christmas Eve offering will be given to Lutheran Social Services to benefit their “Metro Homeless Youth Services” program.
- Our membership roll was discussed and some members were moved to the inactive roll, with just one full removal.
- Session approved the formation of a Membership Growth Team.
- Montreal High Rise was discussed in regards to a desire to reach out to the residents there who are in need of spiritual care and connections. Nothing was planned, but it was clear that there was an interest amongst us.
- Session agreed to a daytime leadership retreat in February.

If you have any questions or comments on the above, feel free to contact any elder.

Blessings to you all,

Eleta Pierce, elder