

## **Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church**

**Midweek Update – March 15, 2017**

### **Love, Not Judgment**

The famous sayings of Jesus in John 3:16-17 remind that God is all about love. Most of life and much of our religious training has tried to teach us that the right thing to do is to judge first and then love. We believe it is our job to decide who are good people and who should be avoided, what are the smart decisions and which are questionable, what is good about myself and what is shameful. Amazingly, God rejects this whole judgment system. God says: I act out of love alone. I'm not about judgment at all. So go ahead and trust me, and I will lead you love and generosity and peace in every moment.

John 3:1-17 is such a powerful text that we are going to take one more Sunday to learn from it. Pastor Julie will be preaching on it this week.

### **Bible Study Reboot**

The EPC Bible Study will be starting up again next week. We will meet on Monday, March 20, from 6:30-8pm at the home of the Eggerts (1868 Simpson St, Falcon Hgts 55113). We will look at the lectionary texts for March 26: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; and the preaching text, John 9:1-41. This is a fun, engaging, and spiritually deepening group. If you ever thought about joining a Bible Study, this is a great time! Please come on Monday.

### **Storytelling in the Community**

We have two storytelling events coming up.

- Storytelling workshop at the Montreal Hi-Rise at 6pm on Monday, March 27. Not only will this be super fun, but we could use some EPC treats and folks who are willing to participate for relationship building and support.
- Good Friday worship – a joint worship again with Humble Walk, this year on April 14 at Art House North, time to be determined. This year we will have music and hear congregational stories based on the theme, “Life-Death-Life, Repeat.” If you have a story you might like to tell, please talk to Pastor Phil.

### **News from Highland Park High School**

We received a note from Brian Nelson, the HPHS teacher who used the EPC library for two weeks in February for the testing of his IB English students. Here it is:

Dear Phil and Julie,

I would like to once again thank you for your space, patience, generosity, and overall kindness over the years. I think the peacefulness that Edgcumbe offers on these days is extremely important for helping students who are already stressed (sometimes to the brink) prepare for an extraordinarily high-stakes examination.

These exams I have conducted over the years are just one part of five. For many students, especially those in the most need, this IB curriculum and examinations provide not only the needed rigor to excel in college but also to earn the financial support to attend college.

What you have provided for our students has been very generous and I cannot thank you both enough--

Brian Nelson, English Teacher, Highland Park Senior High

Also, tomorrow night is the Friends of the Highland Arts art showcase at Highland Park High School. Doors open at 6pm, and it begins at 7pm. More info can be found with this link: <http://friendsofha.org/events/schools/>

### **Enneagram Class**

Pastor Phil will be teaching an introductory Enneagram class at Humble Walk Lutheran on Saturday, March 25, 9am-Noon. For me, the Enneagram has been a wonderful tool to learn about myself, to grow in maturity, and to improve my relationships. Whether you have done some Enneagram work, or this is all new to you, this would be a great class. The cost is only \$20. If you are interested, talk to Phil or see this web page: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/humblewalkchurch/events/>

### **March FoodShare Campaign**

Did you know 1 in 5 families in St. Paul struggle with hunger every single day? Food insecurity continues to be a critical issue affecting many in our neighborhood including adults, children and seniors. Neighborhood House, the multi-service non-profit agency who runs our local food shelf, Francis Basket, has a goal to raise 225,000 pounds of food/dollars during the March Campaign, and EPC is making an effort to help them achieve this goal. With our help they can continue to provide healthy and culturally appropriate food to the more than 16,000 families who come to Neighborhood House on their journey to a more stable and rewarding life. Together we can take a stand against hunger by helping us bring comfort to Saint Paul's most vulnerable families. Donations of non-perishable food can be placed on and around the food shelf in the Narthex, and cash donations can be made out to EPC with "food shelf" in the memo line.

### **Pastor Julie Anniversary & Retreat**

Congratulations to Pastor Julie who is marking 25 years of sobriety on March 20! As she celebrates this milestone and contemplates what this means for her, Julie will be taking most of next week off to spend some alone time at Lake Superior returning to worship with us on March 26.

### **Church Directories**

In the next few weeks, Lois will be printing some new directories. Please contact her if either of the following applies to you ([secretary@epchurch.org](mailto:secretary@epchurch.org) or [651-698-8220](tel:651-698-8220)):

1. *You have any information to update in the directory.*
2. *You would like a directory.*

### **Prayers**

- For Doris Howe, the mother of Connie Spear, who recently fell and broke her hip. Doris is now moving to transitional care after hip surgery.
- We pray that we might see our congregation as God sees it—as a place that it exactly the right size and has exactly the right people to do what God wants us to do. Open our hearts, God, to the community and world around us that we might share your love and be your children.

Finally, here is the report from our last Session meeting on March 9:

Your Session met this past Thursday, March 9, for our monthly stated meeting. The meeting opened with a devotion and discussion on John 3, specifically on versus 16 and 17. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.' We had a wonderful conversation about judgement and love. We all seemed to admit that although we try not to be judgmental people, it can be very hard not to judge at all. How would it look in our world if every one of us were to try to love instead of judge, like God?

**Items that we discerned (not judged – wink, wink)...**

- 1) Treasurer, Ron Eggert, presented a much-needed financial policy that was put together by the Finance Committee over the past couple of months. Session approved the policy with a couple of slight word clarification changes. Prior to this policy, EPC didn't have an official written document (or if there was originally, it was long lost), so I personally am grateful for this finally coming into fruition.
- 2) We decided to put our Elder Retreat on hold and instead put an idea on the table for the congregation to decide: Would you be interested in spiritual growth with the possibility of creating a Spiritual Growth Team and/or possibly having a congregational retreat outside of the church, like a weekend at our denomination's camp in Northern MN, Clearwater Forest?
- 3) The Outreach & Growth team is meeting, coming up with some great ideas and connections in the community AND taking the steps to make it happen, like events with Montreal Highrise and Humble Walk Lutheran Church. It is worth noticing that the team is made up of both adults and youth, which is a blessing to have all those different views.
- 4) Another church may be looking for space to rent. We briefly discussed the pros and cons of adding another renter to our facility. More questions would have to be answered by this other church in order for us to determine if it would be worth the consideration.
- 5) The Session unanimously agreed to place an "All Are Welcome Here" sign on our front lawn and a couple of the decals on the windows of our doors as a way to convey our love to everyone in our neighborhood, everyone who enters our building, and of course all of God's children. This is not a political statement, it is a Biblical reminder, and we hope to expand on it by creating artistic ways to express that in and around our building. Anyone with creative ideas is welcome to share!
- 6) Mission reported that the drive for hygiene items for the homeless through Caring Hearts went well and that March FoodShare drive for our local food shelf is going well and was gratefully kicked-off by my Josh LeClair and his Eagle Scout Ceremony. The plans are beginning for an all-church service project to happen this year. Eleta plans to talk to some of the youth to see if they would be willing to join the team, since many had shown a passion for helping others in their faith statements.
- 7) Pews that had been removed from the Sanctuary have been finding new homes. Recently, a start-up church was interested in pews and needed a couple more than we had previously removed, so they were removed from the Sanctuary. This made room for adding more chairs to the Sanctuary from the stock that we have stored.
- 8) A congregational meeting was set for May 21, for the purpose of electing officers (Elders/Session and Deacons). The Nominating Committee (Eleta, Lorenz, Todd Barnes, Julie and Phil) will meet to discern possible candidates. Our plea to you, the reader, is if you have ever given either of these roles a thought, please prayerfully consider taking it on and talk to either pastor or a member of the committee.

Peace and love to you all, Eleta Pierce