

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update – March 29, 2017

What Are You Willing to Give Up?

Why do we give up something for Lent? A popular but mistaken idea is that we give something up to increase our suffering and connect to Jesus' suffering—as if suffering itself is redemptive. Amazingly, God can use absolutely anything to bring us healing and love, even suffering! But suffering itself does not have any special or salvific qualities. Mostly it just stinks.

The reason we give up something is to make room to listen to God. In 1 Samuel 13, the prophet Samuel talks to God in every moment, and God gives Samuel all the guidance and help he needs to live with fullness even in the face of fear and failure and success. If we have any chance of hearing God talk to us, we've got to be listening. We asked the congregation last Sunday to list some things they would like to give up this week in order to spend some time listening to God. Here were some of the things individuals offered to give up:

- Sugar
- Comparisons and Judgment
- Social Media
- Focus on politics
- Complaining

Imagine, just for a moment, giving up all comparisons for one hour each day. Every time you feel a comparison arising in your mind, you could say, "God, please show me how you want to see [that person, this situation, that group]?" Or think about taking just a little time off from surfing the web or looking at social media and instead checking with God: "Holy Spirit, what do you want me to spend my time doing right now?" If you spend any time at all talking to and listening to God, then God will respond with grace and power and guidance and love in your life.

Readers Next Sunday

Our text this coming Sunday is the long and exciting story of Lazarus in John 11:1-45. Pastor Julie is looking for six people to help read it from a prepared script. Readers would gather at 9:35am on Sunday morning to practice. If you want to help out in this way, please contact Julie at pastorjulie@epchurch.org.

Holy Week is Almost Here!

Here is our Holy Week schedule:

- Sunday, April 9 – Palm Sunday
- Friday, April 14 – Good Friday worship with Humble Walk Community at 6pm at Art House (793 Armstrong Ave, St Paul), a service of stories and music around the theme: Life-Death-Life, Repeat
- Sunday, April 16 – EASTER
- The next Sunday, April 23, both Pastors will be attending a conference and we will have a guest pastor.

Storytelling at the Montreal Hi-Rise

Wow, we had a good time at this event on Monday. We had seven people from the Hi-Rise and five folks from EPC and good treats and fantastic stories. The Hi-Rise folks like the event so much that we scheduled another story workshop for April 27—details and times to follow. Thanks to everyone who attended and those who provided the very popular treats!

Bible Study – April 3

The EPC Bible Study will meet on Monday, April 3, at 6:30pm again at the Eggert's home (1868 Simpson St, Falcon Hgts) with food and scripture and fellowship. We will be looking at the Palm Sunday texts—Matthew 21:1-11 and Psalm 118—and if there is time, the Passion texts as well—Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31, and Philippians 2:5-11.

Special Worship Services

I suspect that most of you realize that we as a church community are happy to help out with special situations like marriages and funerals. We also celebrate events like baptism, confirmation, becoming a member, ordinations, etc. What I would also like for you to realize is that other services and rituals are available to everyone in this community. Let me give some examples.

- If you are dying, we could have a service of support and celebration of life while you are still alive, so you could join in the reflection and learning and joy.
- If you are sick or hurting in body or soul, we could surround you with prayers in a service of healing.
- If you are going through a big change or transition, we could create a service to mark that change—helping you mourn parts of your life that you are leaving behind and step forward into the next steps.
- If you have a big and difficult decision to make, we could support you with a service of discernment.
- If something is weighing you down, we could celebrate a ritual of confession and forgiveness.

Do you get the idea? Any of these services could be big or small, public or private, with music or without—the possibilities are endless and flexible. One of our goals as a community is to surround each other with honesty and love. If any of these ideas is appealing to you, please talk to Pastor Phil or Pastor Julie.

Church Directories

Lois will be printing some new directories in time for pick up on Easter Sunday, April 16. Please contact her if either of the following applies to you (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 copy of the new directory.*

Prayers

- For Connie Spear, whose mother died last week. Doris Howe died after falling, breaking her hip, having surgery and getting pneumonia. There will be a service for Doris at First Presbyterian Church of White Bear Lake on Thursday April 6th in the evening. Visitation will be from 6-7 and the service will be at 7:00 with refreshments afterwards (all at the church). The EPC congregation is welcome to attend.

April Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to:

Cali Clary – 4/17

Faith Dietz – 4/19

Happy Anniversary to:

Annie and Ray Quintana – 4/14/2012

Meredith and Tom Holt – 4/22/1967

People of God, your life is a beautiful story. Live it with gusto and grace today! And remember to check in with God. Pastor Phil