

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update – February 7, 2018

BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

I recently saw an article that pointed this out: since the 1950s, the average number of close friends that Americans identify has been steadily declining. During the same time period, the amount of square space in American homes has been steadily increasing. In other words, we are choosing floor space over friends, roominess over connection. As I look at political polarization or the opiate crisis or the majority of people around me walking around glued to their little screens, I wonder if we are in a society-wide community crises—a lack of the healthy relationships that sustain and nurture us in good times and hard times.

As an act of rebellion against the creeping isolation of our age, Pastor Julie and I are suggesting a simple and fun challenge for our church community during Lent (now until Easter, April 1). Here's the challenge: On TWO separate occasions, share a meal with another individual / couple / family from EPC. That's it. You could play it safe and share a meal with someone you know well. Or you could be brave and set up a meal date with someone you don't know at all. You can invite someone over to your home or apartment, or meet at a restaurant, or share a picnic in a snow-covered park. You can be the invitee or the inviter. Get the idea? As Jesus said, Let us break bread together!

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

We had a lovely worship service and Annual Meeting this past week. Everyone present shared ways that we had experienced God in the past year at EPC. Some themes of gratitude that emerged were:

- for meaningful worship, music, and preaching, including youth-led worship.
- for the back woods project.
- for new members and a friendly, supportive community of faith.

In our one voting item on the agenda, the congregation approved the Session recommendation to bump Pastors Julie and Phil up from an 85% position to a 90% split call, with the goal of moving this to 100% when possible. Phil continues to work two-thirds of the time with Julie covering the other one-third.

Annual reports are still available in the narthex or office. If you have any questions about any area of our church life, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the church Elders: Fred Clary, Meredith Holt, Eleta Pierce, or Carol Schweickhardt.

MISSION TRIP TO LOUISIANA

Our Presbytery is sponsoring a mission trip to the Baton Rouge area to assist in disaster clean-up in early April. The total cost of the trip is only \$150. If this opportunity might interest you, see the information on the table in the narthex, and talk to Pastor Julie, who would be interested in going with other EPC folk.

INVITATION FROM BRYAN KINGSRITER & ELAINE ALLEN

Elaine and Bryan are inviting the EPC congregation to their home on February 18. They live at [1236 N. Victoria Street](#) in Saint Paul, just north of Lake Como. Here is the invitation:

We would like to invite you to our home for food, and a celebration of our time with Edgumbe, on Sunday, February 18, after church. Please let us know if you can make it. There may even be a little hymn singing, (if I have any say in it)! Thanks to all, Bryan

PER CAPITA

Each year we have the opportunity to support a wide variety of ministries that are provided by the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and our denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA). Edgumbe does this by paying \$34.50 per member to the local Presbytery. This year we will pay \$1,276.50 to cover the cost of our membership. The Session strongly encourages all members of EPC to pay their portion of per capita early in the year. As we combine our gifts with hundreds of other, we can have a powerful impact together. Please mark any offerings for this purpose as “per capita.” Thank you.

CHURCH DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The new directories are finished and will be in the narthex on Sunday. Please take the copy with your label on it. If you need an extra copy, we are happy to print you another one, just contact the church office.

PRAYERS AND PASTORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ongoing prayers for the Barnes, Fett, and Pierce households, who all lost a parent and/or grandparent in past two weeks.
- Eleta’s dad died at the end of last week. A Celebration of Life for Montell Pierce will be held on Saturday, February 24, at First Presbyterian Church in [South St. Paul \(535 20th Ave North\)](#). 10 am visitation, 11 am service. The celebration will continue at Eleta’s parent’s [house \(468 Ohio St, St. Paul\)](#) following the service with food and drinks, stories and laughs.

THOUGHTS ON GRIEF

With several parental deaths in our congregation, let me say a few words about grief.

1. I just talked to a grief counselor who said that most calls for grief support come in about 2-3 months after the death of a loved one. In other words, grief takes time. If you have experienced a major loss, give yourself time to

grieve and process and rest and adjust. Just taking care of the huge number of details following a death often takes weeks to sort out. It is very typical for new grief to emerge after the busy-ness of funeral and estate planning calm down.

2. Everyone grieves differently. Just as every relationship is unique, so too is grief. Maybe you will be chuckling one minute and be weeping hard the next. Most people feel unpredictable combinations of emotions like sadness, anger, humor, panic, calm, trust, fear, confusion, despair, gratitude. Some respond to grief by avoiding their emotions and staying busy. Others become inactive or tired. All this is completely normal.
3. Grieving can be lonely. If you are grieving yourself, remember to reach out to your community of love and support. If you know someone who has experienced loss, then reach out to that person. Are you wondering whether or not to call or write a card? Wonder no more—do it. Obviously we need to respect the person's space and requests, but it is better to err on the side of too much support. Again, unless you hear differently from the bereaved themselves, it is almost always comforting and helpful to talk about the person who has died, sharing stories or memories or reflections.
4. Finally, remember our faith. In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we remember that death does not hold power over us. Rather, in life and in death, we belong to God and to each other.

May God's peace surround you all today! Pastor Phil