

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

December 18, 2019

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FROM SURVIVE TO THRIVE

Because Julie and I and our kids will be traveling to Michigan to see my Mom on Christmas Day, next Wednesday, this is most likely the final EPC Update of the year. Looking back right now, it feels like 2019 was a big year in our congregation. We learned together about Forgiveness and Community. We planted a bunch of trees. Our Centering Prayer and Bible Study groups grew and deepened. We sang and listened and prayed and cried together. More and more we noticed that the Holy Spirit is not just a nice concept but a dynamic presence in our lives, leading us and changing our hearts and minds.

Session talked about this past year at their meeting last week (see article below), the theme that emerged was: *Moving from Surviving to Thriving*. When you see friends and family this holiday season, try talking about your experience at Edgcumbe Church. Feel free to be surprised at what you say.

Finally, may the blessings and love of the Creator of the Universe splash into your life with abundance today, and may your Christmas season be filled with miracles and gratitude and legions of angels singing into reality the glory of God. Even in the most unexpected of places, like stables and Aldi's and all alone in your living room.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Here are the wonderful worship opportunities coming up at EPC:

- Sunday, Dec. 22: **Worship** at 10am, **Music rehearsal** afterward, **Bible Study** at 6:30pm.

- Tuesday, Dec. 24: **Christmas Eve Worship** at 4pm. Invite friends and family to this candlelit service of wonder and music and communion. We will have guest musicians and the choir will sing and we will circle in the dark with candles in our hands and prayers in our hearts.
- Sunday, Dec. 29: Christmas **hymn-sing** (carol-sing?) at 10am.
- Sunday, Jan. 5: Worship & Communion with guest preacher **Rev. Jodi Houge** from Humble Walk Lutheran Community, who will begin our January series: Why Church?

PASTORS OFF TWO WEEKS

Pastors Phil and Julie will be gone from Christmas Day through January 7, 2020. If any emergencies arise during this time, please contact one of the church Elders (Meredith, Jay, Eleta, Fred, Connie).

NEW MEMBER EXPLORATION CLASS-JAN. 19

If you are interested in exploring membership at Edgcumbe Church, please talk to either Pastor or any Elder. The date for the class is currently scheduled for Sunday, January 19, after worship.

ADVENT GIVING GRATITUDE

Thank you to everyone who gave to the collection for Project Home and those staying with them. In total we gave 20 sheets and blankets, 16 pairs of pajamas, and 28 pairs of socks. The children, parents and grandparents who are currently calling a church basement “home” will be so grateful to receive these gifts. You have one more opportunity to support this important outreach—our Christmas Eve offering will go to the Project Home Day Center.

PRAYERS

- For LaGretta Lunde as she continues to recover from foot surgery and her husband John who threw out his back!
- For the Clary family on the death of Fred’s mom in Baltimore.
- For Sylvia Nolte, who had emergency pacemaker surgery at the end of last week. If you would like to send Sylvia a note, her address is: 525 S Lexington Pkwy Apt 406, Saint Paul 55116
- For Dorice Van Vorst as she struggles with pain and nears the end of her life.
- For peace on earth and goodwill to all people. (Linus, er, Luke 2)

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Songs of the Season, sponsored by the Schubert Club—FREE! TOMORROW!

December 19 at 7pm at Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
Featuring PETER MAYER (and Leslie Snow will be in the choir of back-up singers for Peter!)

DECEMBER SESSION NOTES

The Session, made up of the elected Elders and the Pastors, is the governing board of our church, overseeing both the spiritual and practical health of the congregation. We met on December 12 with Deacon Ingrid Eggert. The first thing we did was look back at EPC in 2019 with three questions from Pastor Julie: What are we GRATEFUL for? What are we PROUD of? What is something we DESIRE or LONG FOR looking ahead? Here are some of the responses we heard.

What are we GRATEFUL for?

- Our unique worship and congregation
- Phil & Julie's sermons and leadership
- Jenya, who has done such a great job with the choir and music
- Jay and his recording the services
- Our style of worship & for communion (like serving each other)
- We have a healthy congregation in all areas (emotional, spiritual, financial)
- That Julie & Phil stuck it out and are still here
- The spiritual depth and willingness of this congregation
- The amazing Bible Study group

What are we PROUD of?

- Healthy and open communication
- Evolving, coming into ourselves: We are not just surviving, but thriving!!
- Our choir: small but powerful!
- The theme of Community: this was really internalized and is becoming an incubator for new ideas
- The Backwoods—a place where people are finding peace and support
- The reaction of new people when they come to church—they come and they love it!
- How we treat each other, especially in times of disagreement; that relationships are more important than opinions
- That new folk are being integrated into the community

What do we DESIRE / LONG FOR?

- More connections / interaction / meals together / mission in community
- That we have the confidence that we are better than we think we are
- To turn outward, do the inner work and then share with the world
- To foster community, to work together
- Deepen in our trust for God
- Hold generosity and compassion for each other, even when there are bumps
- More play! Games, interaction and fun all lead to connection and creativity
- More people that the Holy Spirit sends to us
- More outreach—kids, young people. We have a great thing going here.
- That we move from a Surviving mindset to a Thriving mindset

Other Session decisions from December 12:

1. Approved the Highland AA Lease through 2022.

2. Approved the first draft of the 2020 EPC budget, including raises for all staff and a \$600 mission gift to Selian Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania. Noted the general financial health of our books at this time.
3. Reviewed ideas for more fellowship and communal meal opportunities.
4. Set a date for the Annual Congregation Meeting of Sunday, February 9, 2020, after worship.
5. Celebrated the number of people planning to attend the New Member Exploration class.
6. Set the next Session meeting for January 9, 2020, at 6:15pm.