

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update - August 5, 2020

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The Gift of Grief

this past sunday, pastor phil wondered, how are our hearts? this feels like an important question to discern, because having an open, unguarded heart is essential to walk a spiritual path of trust.

my own heart has been holding a large portion of grief. i have been walking alongside my mom for ten years as she has been descending into dementia, being one of her essential care providers. later this month, my siblings and i will be helping her move into an assisted living facility near my brother in eau claire, wi. in addition to this, i have just learned that a close girlfriend, micah's godmother, has been diagnosed with stage 3 aggressive uterine cancer. and, isaac will be moving away again to begin another year at gustavus adolphus.

as we were talking about my mom's upcoming move, phil--knowing this was going to be a big deal for me--lovingly told me i had better prepare myself. i knew instantly that trying to "prepare myself" was simply a false way of trying to control the events i had no control over. i knew that what i really needed, more than anything, was to **be present**. when i am in the moment, i have the best chance of moving through experiences with the least amount of reactivity.

being present with grief is not something our larger culture knows how to support, but it is vitally important to our spiritual and emotional health. what we do not deal with or process ends up locking into our bodies and unconscious and will prevent us from living in freedom and strength. grieving is a part of our body's wisdom which actually leads **to healing**. it is also essential for our communal health. paul writes in romans 12, "rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

there are certain actions that can help the grieving process resolve. included in this list would be:


- gently following your breath

- feeling the various feelings which come with grief, such as anger, denial, sadness
- coming into silence, walking in nature
- resting

There are certain behaviors that can hinder the grieving process. Included in this:

- keeping oneself busy and distracted
- denying the presence of grief
- dismissing the impact, and “moving on” to whatever comes next

where is your heart these days? the past 6 months have brought unprecedented change and transition and impact to each of us. how has grief crossed your path? how has you been able to support yourself to move through grief?

please know that whatever is true for you is welcomed here in edgumbe presbyterian. being honest and truthful is one of the essential qualities for spiritual health. we know that we don't fix each other, but that **god is the true healer**. both pastor phil and i would welcome opportunities to listen to your heart--please reach out when that would be helpful. and know that we hold one another in prayer in these days. may the holy spirit enfold you in grace! 

Worship Schedule

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare for and present the outdoor worship service this past Sunday. The Zoom room didn't work out this time, but there is an audio recording of the service that should be on the website soon.

The weather has been so cooperative this year, and it is so great to get together in person that we are considering **another outdoor service on Sunday, August 16**. Check out this space next week for an update!

Pastors Celebrate 13-year Anniversary at EPC

The first Sunday that Pastor Luna and I led worship at EPC was August 1, 2007. We give thanks to God for those thirteen years and ask the Spirit's blessings on our journey ahead together!

Racial Justice and Me

You can access the resources the RJAM team has compiled by first going to the EPC homepage and then clicking on the 'Racial Justice' link in red on the left. That will take you to a page with links to our list of resources and some definitions. The definitions come from one of the books on the resource list "How to Be an Antiracist". I had expected that the words around racist issues would already be well defined, but the author, Ibram X. Kendi, has modernized them and, I think, simplified them.

Kendi defines biological racism as the idea that the races are meaningfully different in their biology and that these differences create a hierarchy of value. I am struck with the phrase "hierarchy of value", and how much that resonates with the messages from our recent church services. It has made me think deeply about my own racist thoughts, which is one of the goals of the RJAM project. I hope you can make time to take a look at some of the resources on our list and think about a specific area you might want to learn more about.

--Liz Schiferl on behalf of the RJAM team (Luna, Connie, Leslie, Eleta and Rich)

Prayers

Special prayers today for **Kathy Pedersen**, whose breathing has worsened and is close to death. We pray that God's love will surround her, as it always has, and bless her with peace as she prepares to leave these earthly shores for the heart of God. We also remember daughter Ann and the rest of Kathy's family in God's grace.

Zoom Schedule!

We have four Zoom meetings scheduled for our congregation for each week. All of these meetings are open to you and to everyone. They are:

- Sunday morning Worship at 10am
- Sunday evening Bible Study at 6:30pm
- Tuesday Centering Prayer at 3pm
- Wednesday evening Gathering at 7pm

If these gatherings are meaningful to you, then why not invite a friend?

Updated links for each of these meetings are on the church website at

<http://www.epchurch.org/>