

Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

Sept 16, 2020

In this issue: Devotion by Elder Meredith (!), New Members and New Officers, RJAM, Zoom, Plants & Posts, Mini-Concert Thurs, Session Report



Unlearning: Rocking the Boat

In this season of **unlearning**, elder meredith shared with session a devotion she wrote in response to jesus' invitation to peter to "get out of the boat." meredith speaks to one aspect of unlearning, which is to acknowledge what it is that we are even thinking of in the first place. becoming aware of our habited thinking, beliefs, and actions allows us to gain not only **perspective** (these items are **of** us, they are not us), while also allowing us **to be honest**--both critical dimensions of unlearning. with her permission, we share meredith's reflections here:

Note from Meredith: This devotion based on Matthew 14:22-33 includes information from biographies and a devotion from CrossRoads Church.

Matthew 14:22-33

Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people away. After sending the people away, he went up a hill by himself to pray. When evening came, Jesus was there alone; and by this time the boat was far out in the lake, tossed about by the waves, because the wind was blowing against it.

Between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to the disciples, walking on the water. When they saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and screamed with fear.

Jesus spoke to them at once. "Courage!" he said. "It is I. Don't be afraid!"

Then Peter spoke up. "Lord, if it is really you, order me to come out on the water to you."

"Come!" answered Jesus. So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he was afraid and started to sink down in the water. "Save me Lord!" he cried.

At once Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him and said, "What little faith you have! Why did you doubt?"

They both got into the boat, and the wind died down. Then the disciples in the boat worshiped Jesus. "Truly you are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

As we were studying this passage in worship at EPC, a song from the Broadway musical Guys and Dolls kept running through my head. The gambler Nicely dreamed he was on a boat to heaven. When he began to move around the boat, the people all said, "Sit down, sit down, you're rocking the boat. The people all said, "Sit down, sit down, you're rocking the boat."

I wondered how the other disciples felt about Peter "rocking the boat" as he stepped over the edge into the water. Today this phrase means: to say or do something to disturb an existing situation. The origin is attributed to American statesman, lawyer and politician William Jennings Bryan, who said, "The man who rocks the boat ought to be stoned when he gets back on shore."

We know from the story that they were sent out alone on a lake with a strong wind buffeting the boat; they think they see a ghost; and one of their members rocks the boat by getting out and trying to walk on water.

I don't know how I would have reacted to this terrifying scenario. I'm not sure that I would have even gotten in the boat, much less gotten out of it in the midst of a storm, but I began to see "getting out of the boat" as a metaphor for all the people who have made a difference despite everything against them.

John Lewis said, "When you pray, move your feet." Ordinary people have moved their feet, gotten out of the boat and had faith that their actions could change peoples' lives. Like Peter, however, they sometimes doubted their ability to bring about change.

Mother Teresa, who founded the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poor, was a nun in Skope, Macedonia, when she received the call to go to India. "She is one of the greatest humanitarians of the 20th century, combining profound empathy and a fervent commitment to her cause with incredible organizational and managerial skills that allowed her to develop a vast and effective international organization of missionaries to help impoverished citizens all across the globe." In 2003, the publication of her private correspondence caused a wholesale re-evaluation of her life by revealing the crisis of faith she suffered for most of the last 50 years of her life. (biography)

Martin Luther King Jr. was a scholar and Baptist minister who led the civil rights movement. Through his activism and inspirational speeches, he played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of African-American citizens in the U.S., as well as the creation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In his younger years, he had questioned religion in general and felt uncomfortable with overly emotional displays of religious worship. Later in life, his advocacy of non-

violent confrontation was questioned by some of his contemporaries as being a process that was too slow. (biography)

A 9 year old girl and her friends from Chanhassen, who made and sold bracelets to help black owned businesses in the wake of the riots after the death of George Floyd, have raised over \$40,000.00. I'm sure that these girls and their families had no idea that making thread bracelets would bring in so much, but they wanted to help in even a small way.

As you have heard me say in the past, I don't like change. The familiar is comfortable and non-threatening. Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, and the Chanhassen girls all left their comfort zones to step into the water and have faith that their actions could bring about change. Their goals may have seemed beyond reach to others, but they gave 100% of themselves and refused to let the fear of failure stop them. Now we all are being called on to embrace change in the aftermath of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. We need to consider how we can step out of the boat and to have faith that God will support our actions.

Prayer: Dear Lord, guide us ordinary people to extraordinary acts in your name. Give us the courage to step out of the boat and do your will. Amen

New Members & New Officers

This fall we will hold both a New Member Exploration Class for anyone who wants to consider being a member of Edgumbe Church. At the same time, we are looking for new Elders and Deacons to lead our community of faith. If you are interested in either of these opportunities or just want to talk more, please contact either Pastor Luna or Pastor Phil.

Racial Justice and Me (RJAM)

We had a wonderful turnout and conversation at the first RJAM reflection time last Wednesday and invite everyone to join us again this week Wed at 7:00 pm using the link in the EPC Home Page. **Even if you haven't signed the pledge, you are welcome to participate!**

Tonight's focus will be on books that people are reading that have helped them to understand themselves and our world in new and transformative ways.

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 (RJAM) 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/>

So Many Plants! And 4x4 posts!

Besides Cora's new pollinator garden (she plans to add a sign soon), another group of people worked on both Sunday and Monday to transplant a whole bunch of plants given to us by Heather Marshinke. On Monday evening, Lorenz looked at the backyard of the church and said, "It's starting to look almost civilized around here." Yes, indeed. Thanks to everyone who helped out: Heather and Kathy and Meredith and Connie and Ron and Ingrid!

This Saturday I (Phil) plan to rent a gas post-hole digger and set the posts for the granite signs for the 12 stations. If you are available to help for even a short time, let me know, I'll put you on the list for email updates.

One More Mini-Concert at EPC on Thursday

Five of us from EPC and a couple of community folks enjoyed the mini-concert by the Edgumbe Church front entry overhang on Monday evening. All are welcome to attend another 15-minutes of music **this Thursday at 7:30pm with Adrianna O'Brien, playing cello.**

Music brings love, peace, and joy. These concerts are sponsored by the Bach Society of MN. They hope to bring the gift of music to the community in a safe, masked, socially distanced, and accessible way. Look for more info on their mini concert schedule at <https://bachsocietymn.org/>.

Session Report - September 10, 2020

Session convened at 6:15pm with Meredith leading devotions. Meredith reminded us that when (Matt 14:29) Peter got out of the boat to walk on the water like Jesus. He had to have Rocked the boat first. And he must have caught some grief from the others in the boat. Meredith mentioned that she and many of us may not have gotten in the boat in the first place. "Hey, look at those clouds--there's a storm coming. I'm not getting in that boat!"

The first item of the agenda was a discussion on new members and a New Members Exploration Class. In the past we have run these classes right after Sunday Worship. But with the current pandemic changes at the church we could do a Zoom meeting at

a date and time that is convenient for the potential members. The members of Session will be contacting potential new members over the next couple weeks to get feedback.

The next agenda item was the Financial Report. We are 2/3 through the year and are actually on track with income vs. expense when compared to our written budget. Highland AA, although not meeting under our roof (a few groups have been meeting in the backwoods) continue to be engaged with EPC and actually continue to support EPC with cash donations. Pledges have been slightly down probably due to our current Zoom meetings vs. Live meetings. There is an on-line giving button located on our web page.

We have received bids on work on our disintegrating shed and some block/brick work at the school entrance. Work will begin soon. These projects have been paid in full by separate donations. We are organizing a staff check-in so Session can determine how our staff is handling the changes in the church since March. Discussions have begun on having a full Congregational Meeting to elect new officers and how that would operate with Zoom and our current restrictions.

Session reviewed the results of the Church survey and 87% have chosen to stay with Zoom meetings rather than reopen. The Building Use task group will reconvene this fall to evaluate where we are and look ahead to 2021.

In the Pastors' report, Pastor Phil is going off the leadership team at our presbytery and going onto a new team called the "Discernment Team" to assist churches in our community with large decisions such as staffing changes, church closings, etc. A review of the Church services during the pastor's vacation was completed. Pastor Julie discussed a new focus of Sunday services where we will be 'unlearning' some spiritual practices and beliefs and learning some new ones that bring real life and change.

--Respectfully, Elder Fred Clary