



Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update *Nov 4, 2020*

In this issue: Unlearning: Anxiety, Fun Things, Finance, Zoom, RJAM, Youth!

Unlearning: Anxiety

Most people I know struggle with anxiety at least some of the time. For some, anxiety is an almost-constant companion; for others it is an occasional and perhaps based on a specific situation in your life or in the world. Today's question is this: How do you unlearn anxiety? I have three suggestions. [By the way, this has nothing to do with the photo of Fred lifting crazy amounts of weights. For that, see the next article.]

Unlearning Anxiety Option 1: Just tell yourself to cut it out. This almost never works. But it seems worth a try. Give it a shot and see if works for you better than it works for me. Variations on this option are: Shaming yourself mercilessly for feeling anxious, blaming others for your feelings, or comparing yourself to the less-anxious.

Unlearning Anxiety Option 2: Go outside. In case the control - shame - blame - compare strategies of Option 1 don't work out, then here is a simple next step: open your door and exit. Anxiety by its very nature is mentally constricting. Nature by its very nature (catch that?) is expansive, freeing, dynamic. Kathy Young and I were both working outside at church yesterday and afterward Kathy wrote me, "...being outside makes me focus just on what I am doing and clears my head of all the anxious stuff." * Well said, Kathy! When God himself / herself made the world, she / he took a walk and noticed how fantastically Good it all is. Let us do likewise. [**Quote used without permission; it was too good to resist; sorry Kathy; you're the best.*]

Unlearning Anxiety Option 3: Forgiveness. Even though I spent most of yesterday outside, I was still feeling anxious this morning. I took a walk with Luna (see Option 2) but still felt anxious--the election, an argument with my daughter, uncertainly about all

my kids, unnameable ennui and dissatisfaction with the state of the world and my soul, you know--all bouncing around in my mind and tightening my guts. I tried telling myself to just cut it out and man up. Did not help at all. I told myself to go outside, but I already was--rats! Then a word popped in mind: FORGIVE. So I tried it--What could it hurt?. I held our politicians our political system in my mind with forgiveness. I held all the people I disagree with in my mind with forgiveness. I added Lydia and my boys and Luna and the cracked sidewalk I was tripping on and bad drivers and potholes...all held with forgiveness. I noticed immediately that my gut relaxed and I became more present to myself and to Luna and to the environment I was walking through. Anxiety was replaced by peace.

As anything else came up to trouble my mind or heart or guts, I tossed that person or thought into the forgiveness bucket too. Sometimes--does this happen to you?--I don't know what I'm anxious about! What works best then is to forgive myself. That is harder than it sounds (Or maybe it sounds hard? It is.) But give it a try. Say something to yourself like, "Self, I forgive you, for being you, for struggling right now, for not knowing everything, for blowing it sometimes, even for being anxious. Self, I offer you grace and encouragement and hope. Be at peace. I love you--always have and always will." Say whatever you need to say to yourself. Be embarrassingly loving to yourself. What do you have to lose (apart from the neighbors looking at you a little funny)?

Holy Spirit, I am willing to unlearn anxiety and to relearn how to love and forgive. Please give me courage and show me the way.



Fun Things to Share

- **Belinda & Fred Clary** both won world championships in weight-lifting in Chicago on Oct. 24--in both their Masters category (age) and Open (weight class), which is an astounding achievement. Belinda lifted 1,272 pounds in her three lifts and Fred squatted 810 lbs (!!) almost reaching his own Masters record of 854 lbs. Congrats to you both! We are proud and a little frightened.

- **Dorice VanVorst** writes the congregation this lovely note: *Dear Pastors Phil and Luna and to all the staff and members of Edgcumbe Presbyterian: Many thanks for all the good wishes and prayers over these past many months. I feel very honored and loved! Know too that I keep your all in my prayers as well. With much gratitude, Dorice*
- **Heather Marschinke** has moved to Arizona. Yowza. But do not be afraid: Zoom works in AZ too. Here is her address (feel free to send both cards and prayers);

12502 W MESA VERDE DR
Sun City West AZ 85375

Financial Update

The Session will begin the 2021 budgeting process this month. It is essential that we have an accurate estimate of income for the year as we proceed. I have asked Krysta to send out pledge cards to all members and to non-members who contribute. Please return the pledge cards as soon as possible.

Also I would like to remind everyone that we have a small special fund to assist those who have an acute financial need. If a need arises for you, please talk to me or either Pastor or Elder Connie.

Thank you, Ron Eggert, Treasurer

Zoom Schedule & Recordings

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

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

Racial Justice and Me (RJAM)

This Wednesday (tonight) at 7 PM the Racial Justice and Me (RJAM) team will host a continuing discussion of possible Racial Justice actions for us individually and as a church. Two weeks ago we started this conversation. See the summary at http://www.epchurch.org/documents/RJAM_discussion-of-actions_Oct_21_2020.pdf.

This Wednesday we will have team readouts and conversations related to Land Acknowledgement, Prison Ministry/Healthy Communities, Barriers to getting State IDs and Driver's Licenses, and Actions/Opportunities to work with Existing Local Agencies. I know that some teams are finding a lot of web information to support their learning. I am looking forward to a great discussion.

I find myself wanting to jump in to DO SOMETHING. However, finding actions that will result in SYSTEMIC CHANGE for the better does take time, discussion, continued learning, and some prayer. I am encouraged by the fact that we are finding information from other groups that can help us forge a path that can lead to positive change. So, for now, my DOING SOMETHING is focused on learning from those who have gone

before us with similar goals and some PRAYER. I invite all of you to participate in these every-other-week Wednesday night conversations as we each continue on this journey toward Racial Justice. --Rich Schiferl

Intro to Centering Prayer Meditation

Our Pastor Luna and Rev. John Keller are co-leading a 4-week introduction to Centering Prayer Meditation, offered by Minnesota Contemplative Outreach via ZOOM. The class will be from **9:00am to 10:30am, Nov. 10, 17, 24 and Dec. 1**. Centering Prayer is a receptive, deep method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

[LINK](#) to more information for Intro Class

By clicking this link you will be taken to a description of the class; there is a Zoom link and a link to RSVP at that site.

[LINK](#) to Flyer PDF

Youth Contact

It is a difficult and stressful time to be a young person in our world. Covid-19 has up-ended years of educational norms and the ways that we socialize and make friendships, technology has revolutionized media and communication, the job market is changing rapidly, and spiritual support is hard to find or understand. Would you believe that there are 14 youth who are members of EPC or are associated with our congregation? I am 98% certain that they don't read this EPC Update. So it is completely possible for us to surprise them with love and kindness. You could send a card or text or care package or gift card. You could send something to everyone on the list or just pick one or three or six. Except for those with notes below, the current EPC pink directory has up-to-date contact info for all these lovely humans:

Josh LeClair (mail to Clary's home)

Isaac GebbenGreen

McKenna Reedquist (75 N Woodward Ave #64580, Tallahassee, FL, 32313-4580)

Sami LeClair

Micah GebbenGreen

Cora Fett

Christopher Powell

Chloe Clary

Lilly LeClair

Lydia GebbenGreen

Tierra Hunt (or Ollie)

Cali Clary

Vincent Hogen

Zack Humphrey