

Edgumbe

Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

March 17, 2021

In this issue: March Mission, In-person Worship Forum, RJAM, Zoom, Prayers, March Session Report

March Mission Focus: MN FoodShare

2020 March Campaign Hunger Facts

- After years of steadily declining food insecurity rates, it was projected that food insecurity in Minnesota in 2020, impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, could rise to 13%.¹
- 9% of Minnesotans had incomes below the poverty line (\$25,926 for a family of four) in 2020. This included 11% of Minnesota's children.
- A record of over 3.8 Million visits were made to food shelves during 2020.
- More than 400,000 Minnesotans receive nutrition benefits via SNAP each month. 71% of those served by SNAP are children, seniors and people with disabilities.
- Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves and food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, making it critical to focus on creating a more just and equitable food system that meets the needs of all Minnesotans.

Donations to help stock our food shelves can be given through our online giving or checks can be made out to EPC with "March Food Drive" in the memo line. If you would like to learn more about Neighborhood House's Food Markets, or would like information on obtaining food for yourself, visit <http://neighb.org/>

In-Person Worship Conversation & Forum

Last week, the Session began talking about what in-person gatherings and worship might look like. We want to share some of our conversation with you all, and then invite your reflections and questions as well. To that end, our post-worship gathering on Zoom **this Sunday, March 21**, will be dedicated to an open forum about your hopes and dreams and questions about meeting in-person.

Right now the Session does not have a proposed timeline. We are simply starting to talk to each other. Below are some of the reflections that came out of the Session meeting. We will probably start with these same prompts on Sunday and see where the conversation goes. You are always welcome to contact one of the Pastors or Elders with your input or questions, and we hope you can join us for the post-worship forum this Sunday! --*Elder Jay & Pastor Phil*

I WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE GOING BACK TO IN-PERSON INDOOR WORSHIP WHEN...

- We can all sing together again
- We can all eat together
- Everyone is vaccinated
- We know about the transmission of the virus by vaccinated folks
- We know more about Covid variants
- In-person worship clearly outweighs the benefits of Zoom worship

WHEN WE DO WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY, I HOPE...

- We have a way for everyone to participate -- including those who can't be in-person
- We can keep some Zoom experiences
- We can see each other's faces, so we may need to rethink pews and seating possibilities

- We keep communal sharing (like on Zoom!)
- That multiple people lead and participate
- We share good food, brunches and communion around tables

OTHER THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, IDEAS

- What if not everyone wants to get vaccinated?
- Mucho outdoor worship - as soon as possible and as often as we can

RJAM

We are reading the book "So You Want to Talk About Race" by Ijeoma Oluo. Last week we discussed the chapter "Why Can't I Say the 'N' Word". One of the key learnings of this chapter is how powerful words can be. Currently, very few words carry as much power as the N word, yet several of us could recall relatives or community members using this word in a way that indicated they did not realize its power and negativity. This is likely because they did not know the word's history - so similar to many things about racial justice. "From the 1700s on, the word "nigger" was used almost exclusively to express hatred" says Oluo. "Nigger was a word shouted at black men, women, and children by slave masters as they lashed their backs with whips. Nigger was a word repeated by men in white hoods as they got ready to burn a cross on the lawn of a black family. Nigger was a word spat at hanged black bodies". Nigger is a word that embodies judgement and contradicts the oneness of the body of Christ. Once we know this history we know why we can't say the N word.

-The RJAM team (Eleta, Leslie, Connie, Luna, Liz & Rich)

Zoom Schedule

We have four Zoom meetings scheduled for our congregation for each week. All of these meetings have been updated and are open to you and to everyone. The links can be found on our church website homepage. 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

Prayers & Card

- Prayers for Ruth Andersen as she prepares for a medical procedure this Thursday.
- Card received from Joan and Watson Fearing:

"Watson and I are so grateful for all the cards and messages we have received from members of the Edgcumbe community! I hope you will pass along our fond greetings and thanks to our Edgcumbe friends, who were some of the first people we met when we moved here in the 1970's."

March Session Report

Meredith offered the devotion, during which she shared that the word unprecedented was chosen as the People's Choice "Word of the Year". She asked what session members experienced as unprecedented and what we hoped would be the word for the year 2021. A lovely list that included many unexpected gratitude's and some hopeful aspirations for the coming year. Thank-you Meredith!

A discussion of Committees included this list:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Personnel
- Racial Justice and Me
- Worship-Music -Art

- Backwoods
- Mission
- Covid Response
- Rich suggested Sustainability be added as a possibility

Session also talked about neighborhood outreach (i.e., Pie Social!) and how involving our church neighbors might be included in committee work. Pastor Luna asked that we pray and listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance regarding committee work and asked that we explore the spirits nudging the topic during our next session meeting. Pastor Phil suggested that some might be moved to take leadership and/or provide direction within a committee.

Session discussed what conditions may need to be met to enable us to return to in-person services. A related question about what we imagine in-person services would look like was also discussed by session. Pastor Phil and Elder Jay will provide the congregation with a summary of our discussion and invite the input of the congregation.

Pastor Phil offered a brief financial summary saying, "Our finances are in good shape."

We each shared one thing from the day that we are grateful for, which provided a very nice interlude.

Pastor Luna discussed the Care Teams and said that she would send out a list of ten people for each session member's list. This list will include our younger members. These will be folks for whom session members will pray and look for ways to show caring.

Pastor Phil reminded us that the young people within our community have had an extremely difficult experience during the last year and maybe the congregation could find ways to show them some love and caring.

Pastor Phil shared how amazed he was with last Sunday's service, citing the depth with which people are moving in trust. He offered that there are so many ways in which we support each other even during this time in which we are challenged by not being able to just walk over and hug someone.

--Elder Jay McGregor