



Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update – Oct 20, 2021

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Pastor's Message

during the prayer of honesty this past sunday, i invited all people to **step back** from the immediacy of your thinking, and **observe** your mental landscape. what kind of thoughts happen in your mind?? often, our thoughts are filled with things that have happened in the past, or, what might happen in the future. this directly impacts our availability to be present in the **now** moments of our lives. i asked you to assess a percentage--how much is your thinking is about things from the past or in the future?? and i say i would ask you again, **now**, as you observe your thinking from **today**--what percentage are your thoughts about the past or the future?? has it changed at all?

in the sermon, i also talked about deepening the epc values of **trust**, **connection** and **belonging to each other** as we read about james, john and the rest of the disciples (mark 10). then came another invitation to observe ourselves--do we have open and trusting relationships with others within the epc community? are there any holdovers of misconceptions or mistrust in any person? the buddhist practice of metta loving kindness prayer gives us a way to first pray for ourselves, and then to extend this prayer for another. often, the person we avoid or are making judgments about is probably the *exact right person* to extend in this prayer. let us practice this together this week, offering kindness and compassion to ourselves and others:

May I be happy.
May I be well.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful and at ease.

May you be happy.
May you be well.
May you be safe.
May you be peaceful and at ease.

in joy!! pastor luna ✨

October Mission

The Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and across the world. This annual offering is allocated using the apportionment of 25% for local use. This year EPC has designated **A Mothers Love** (<https://www.amothersloveinitiative.org/>) organization to receive the local portion. 25% of the offering goes to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies; and 50% to support work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

A Mothers Love (AML) is a grassroots organization of African American Mothers and Fathers in Minneapolis whose members have been directly impacted by gun violence. AML's Vision is to strengthen families by giving them a village for moral support. They recognize that "family" comprises a multitude of different family types. AML'S Mentors Program works to strengthen families academically, socially, emotionally and financially. A Mothers Love's motto is: "Save the Mother, you save the Child. Save the Father, you save the Family. Save the Family, you save the Community".

Certainly AML's activities and focus promotes peace in our own community. Please consider contributing to this month's mission.

Audit Assistance Needed

The Audit Committee (aka Eleta Pierce & Meredith Holt) is looking for a couple of people to assist us with the annual audit. This will be a short-term commitment of about two or three days (2 - 3 hours per day). If you are interested, please contact Eleta at eleta.pierce@gmail.com or the church office.

Prayer List

- Please hold **Leslie Snow** and her son, **Tim**, in prayer, as he was just diagnosed with colon cancer to his already diagnosed leukemia.

Spiritual Show and Tell

Everyday, God's grace and love reveals Itself to us...if you have an experience, a photo, a poem or a prayer which allows you to encounter Christ in your life, and you would like to share it with the community, please reach out to Pastor Luna. Below, are reflections from a weekend retreat that Elder Jay McGregor attending a few days ago.

Reflections on Silent Retreat

Luna asked if I would be willing to share my experience of a three day silent retreat some of us recently shared in, which was sponsored by [Minnesota Contemplative Outreach](#). The retreat was hybrid Zoom/and in-person at Christ the King Retreat Center on beautiful Buffalo Lake in Buffalo, MN. The presenter was Vincent Pizzuto, Professor of New Testament Studies and Christian Mysticism in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the (Jesuit) University of San Francisco. He has written a book entitled, "Contemplating Christ, the Gospels and the Interior Life."

I was grateful to enjoy the hospitality of Christ the King staff, who provided comfort, peace, and nourishment in every way! Our rooms each had large windows that faced west over Buffalo Lake and sunset. *[See photo at top]* The facility is filled with beautiful wood, stunning iconography, and artwork. There are plants everywhere, including in a large atrium area where a fountain is a trickling reminder that the Spirit flows through us and around us. In a word, the setting was idyllic.

I was surprised with how quickly I was able to fall into the rhythms of silence, reflection, learning, walking, eating, and sleeping. I felt my breathing loosening, and my resistance relaxing.

Fr. Pizzuto declares, "The incarnation has made mystics of us all. Like water into wine, we can never be separated from God." My heart burned with an inner knowing as he said this! Fr. Pizzuto's words also resonated deeply saying, "We don't know God with the mind. We apprehend God with the heart."

Another impactful theme within his presentation was that God pursues us. He shared the example of Adam and Eve hiding from God in the garden after they became aware that they were naked. God went looking for them. God called to them and when they answered, God found them. He also offered the example of the father in the story of the prodigal son, having seen his returning son in the distance, running toward him, embracing him, crying joy tears. As I am writing this, I am filled with gratitude for the many ways that I have witnessed God running toward me and toward those I love.

In describing how God emptied himself, becoming the Son of Man, Fr. Pizzuto shared that Jesus, through his walk, his crucifixion and resurrection, fell so low that now, all falling is into the arms of God. God's incarnation embodied in Jesus descended so that even in death, we are in the arms of God and death has no hold. Now that's good news!

Finally, Father Pizzuto shared a message that I have consistently heard and experienced in my church home: that Christ is revealed in three ways, Through prayer and inner work within the living word, through the sacraments, and through the life and heart of every member of the body. Fr. Vincent writes, "The gospels are not only told to us but, more importantly, told through us. The gospels can never be fully understood from the outside looking in, because they were written for participants, not spectators, and thus to apprehend their deepest meaning, we must allow them to draw us in and inward." We were given an exercise which drew upon the Walk to Emmaus experience of encountering Christ within our walk with others. We were paired-up with one another and instructed to begin by sitting or walking in silence together. Then, one shared on "How do I encounter Christ in my life? In what or whom do I encounter Christ, and/or how do I recognize Christ? What feelings, thoughts, convictions, experiences signal am in the presence of God?" We were encouraged to listen deeply as the other shared. After each sharing, we responded to these questions; Speaker: How did it feel to be listened to? Did you gain any insights or perspectives from speaking yourself into clarity, and Listener: At any point in the story you heard, did your own heart burn with recognition, affirmation, or a sense of shared "knowing" as you listened to how God is at work in your Emmaus partner? My heart was burning! I felt deeply connected and the air was very thin between us. We sat quietly and talked for almost two hours. We agreed that we were brother and sister! This intention-filled way of speaking, listening, and encountering the gospel of the living Christ as expressed through our walks together is nourishing, comforting, encouraging, and in all ways...life giving!

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experience of this weekend. I love my church home and all that it has opened to me. The mountains, the valleys, the prairies, the desert, the rivers, lakes, and oceans, all the animals, the birds, and the fish, and all the people are held in the loving arms of God! Love and gratitude, Jay

Old Trash Bins Available

Our new system of Trash, Recycling, and Compost is now set up and working throughout the church building. Because we have new bins, several of our old trash containers need to go. In the narthex, right outside of the Sanctuary, you will see the old bins--please feel free to take any of these bins if you have a place or a way to use them. Thank you!