



Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update – Nov 17, 2021

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PASTOR'S NOTE: My oh my, there is a lot going on at EPC this fall! This is the longest Midweek Update that I can remember. Make yourself a nice beverage to keep hydrated and then behold all the ways that the Spirit is moving and shaking in our community of faith.

Preacher Heather's Reflections

Greetings Beloveds in Christ! I was so blessed to become part of your community (officially) this past Sunday. Some of you may have heard my story, but for those who haven't, here's a brief overview: I'm Heather Grantham, in the process for ordination and currently in the Associate at Hamline Church United Methodist just up Snelling Ave from Edgcumbe. I would love to have coffee/tea/cookies with you and hear YOUR story of God in your life – and if food isn't your thing, let's go for a walk! Feel free to reach out (contact info below).

This past Sunday, I was one of the first people to arrive at the beautiful church and grounds. Since it was the first snow, I decided to walk the path around the backwoods. Oh how alive those backwoods are my friends. I was reminded of the Mary Oliver poem titled "Starlings in Winter." [LINK to poem here](#)

Mary Oliver is by far one of my favorite spiritual guides and the last stanzas stuck out to me that morning and continues to bear fruit for me:
Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,

*even in the leafless winter,
even in the ashy city.
I am thinking now
of grief, and of getting past it;*

*I feel my boots
trying to leave the ground,
I feel my heart
pumping hard. I want*

*to think again of dangerous and noble things.
I want to be light and frolicsome.
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,
as though I had wings.*

My dear ones at Edgumbe, your welcome, attention, and love to my story has been such a blessing to me, as if you have gifted me wings for this season we are together. I pray that as we get to know one another more fully, that we can be light and frolicsome even as we are going in and out of grief in different ways.

November Mission

Union Gospel Mission's Thanksgiving Bag Drive

The drive kicks off to provide Thanksgiving meals to people around the Twin Cities through Union Gospel Mission! Instead of collecting bags of Thanksgiving groceries, we will be collecting money so that the Mission can purchase those items instead. Thousands of hungry families will come to the Mission for bags of free Thanksgiving food just prior to the holiday. Each bag contains enough food for a family of 5 and costs just \$25. This year we have pledged 20 bags worth from our church. Donations can be either mailed to the church, or use our online giving platform, and note "Union Gospel Mission" in the memo. Thank you!

2022 Stewardship & Pledges

The Stewardship Team has asked EPC folx to write three sentences that tell us how Edgumbe Presbyterian Church is meaningful to your life and why you feel it is important to support the community financially. Here are last Sunday's sentences on what Edgumbe Church means to us and why we support it:

**This community loves.
We are open.
We learn, grow, share.**

**Music
Community
A safe place to be and return to.**

EPC is a vital community. There is support for all and every thing. Lot of wisdom. I can support EPC thru money, service, and participation. I am grateful for EPC & all it has to offer.

I love Edgcumbe because the welcome
& beauty
& music

- The pastors are so approachable and loving.
 - Jenya is amazing! We are so lucky to have her.
 - The people are welcoming and open.
 - The back woods!! How fortunate are we?!
-
- We get to receive each other with grace and share life together.
 - The world is hurting and hungry for good news.
 - We challenge ourselves to notice God's presence in all.

Edgcumbe is love. Edgcumbe is family. God led me to EPC almost 16 years ago and I am so glad that I followed because I have learned and grown so much. What started out as a job turned into the faith community that I was seeking and meant to be. I have said it many times and I believe it to be true: If God's intention is for our church to continue, Their will be done.

That's it so far. We would love to hear from all of you! You may email your sentences to Connie at spear011@umn.edu or Ingrid at ireggert@gmail.com OR simply write the sentences out and leave them in the collection plate at church.

A financial pledge form for 2022 is attached to this message. Pledge form hard copies will also be available at worship on Sunday (or could be mailed to you at your request). Turning in all pledges by November 28 will help our Session plan next year's budget! You are also always welcome to email your pledge into the church office at epchurch2149@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Note

Once again it is pledge season. The purpose of making a pledge is to allow your Session to know approximately how much money is available for next year's budget. Planning is difficult if the Session does not have a reasonably accurate estimate of income. So I urge all of our members to pledge. In addition I urge us all to consider increasing our 2022 pledges at least a little from 2021. The cost of everything from snow plowing to base salaries has gone up or will go up. Thank you, Ron Eggert

Welcome New EPC Member, Heather Grantham

We warmly welcome new member, Heather Grantham, as we received her into membership in the EPC community this past Sunday!! Thank you, Heather, for your thoughtful and spirit-filled preaching among us! Please update your Member Directory with Heather's contact information:
2289 Priscilla St, St Paul, MN 55108

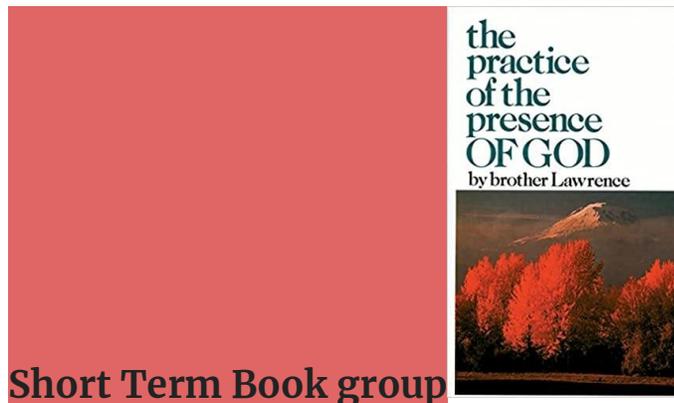
918-520-3362

heatherlygrantham@gmail.com

We have learned that Heather is scheduled to come before the Committee for the Preparation for Ministry in December, so we hold her in our continued prayers on this next step toward ordination of Word and Sacrament.

New Member Exploration Class

As we welcomed Heather Grantham into EPC membership this past weekend, Session expressed interest in having a New Member Exploration class for anyone who has been a part of the Edgcombe Church community, and might be interested in becoming a member of the church. If you are curious about this conversation, please communicate with Pastor Luna (pastorlunagg@gmail.com).



Short Term Book group

In her sermon this past week, Heather mentioned a book, Practice the Presence of God, by Brother Lawrence. Would you like join with others to read this book? Time to be determined by the schedules of the participants. This also might be a virtual group. Please reach out to Pastor Luna by Sunday (Nov 19th) if you are interested.

Take Care of Our Plants

We are in need of an attentive person who would be willing to care for the potted indoor plants EPC has been given. They are located in the parlor, sanctuary and entry/narthex. The watering container is in the narthex coat area to use for the seven plants. Please let Pastor Phil know if you would be willing to check the plants on Sundays to see if they need water.

Once-per-Month Zoom Worship

As you can see in the Session Update below, we are exploring the possibility of meeting one-Sunday-per-month on Zoom over the winter. The primary reason for this is accessibility and inclusivity--meeting on Zoom puts us all on equal footing on a regular basis. It is an expression of our value of belonging to let our virtual members know, "You are not simply an observer but a full participant in our worship and communal life." Other advantages mentioned in the conversation:

- The ease of staying at home sometimes
- The opportunity to see and connect with folx who cannot join us in-person
- Seeing each other face-to-face, like sitting in a circle without masks on
- Increased intimacy and group conversations after worship
- The reminder that church is the people and not a building or place

Of course we would miss singing and being physically together on those Sundays, and of course we would design good signs to let any visitors know our plans. This switch would add some complications for the choir, and Jenya assures us that she and the choir are flexible and ready. If you have input about this possibility, please talk to any pastor or elder.

Relatedly, if winter weather is threatening, check your email on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings for updates about whether worship would be in-person or on Zoom. No news would always mean no change of plans.

Session Update

Here is a brief summary of the last Session Meeting (11/11/21) - Rich

- *Ingrid led devotions in which she talked about last week's Worship song: "In Christ there is no East or West." The lyrics state that there is one fellowship of Love throughout the whole wide earth. This seems to contrast with world events where conflict leading to massive refugee displacement is occurring across the earth. Ingrid concluded with a World Peace Prayer encouraging courageousness in working toward peace and harmony since a Humble Voice can change the World!*
- *We met with Heather Grantham to discuss her journey toward ordination in the PC (USA). See the November 10th EPC Midweek Update for more information about Heather who is asking EPC to be the local congregation that will assist her to complete her journey through ordination. Heather described her wide range of experiences in ministry with recent focus on Spiritual Formation at Hamline Church United Methodist.*
 - *Phil reminded us that Ministry and Ordination is a gift that comes from God. The PC (USA) ordination process has three components: The Individual (Heather), the Individual's Presbyterian Congregation (Heather has chosen EPC), and the Denomination.*
 - *The first step in supporting Heather is to bring her into our congregation as a member. Session started this process by approving her membership (actually the transfer of membership from her current home church).*
 - *You all had a chance to meet Heather at the November 14 EPC worship service where she introduced herself and provided the Scripture Reflections. The congregation welcomed Heather with our blessings and prayers.*
- *The current budget status was still being reviewed by Ron. As we are reaching the end of the year, it is important for each of us to review our 2021 pledges to make sure that, when possible, we fulfill those commitments. Anyone can contact Krysta (epchurch2149@gmail.com) to see what their year-to-date contributions have been compared to the pledge that was made in November of 2020. The 2022 budget will be drafted, reviewed, finalized, and approved by Session in December. Individual 2022 pledges will be requested in the next couple of weeks.*
- *The hybrid worship (combined Zoom and in-person) technology funding grant request was approved by the Presbytery in order to pay (about \$4000) for a new laptop*

computer and a controllable camera. The camera has been purchased and the computer will arrive within a week. The goal of this first step is to improve the Sunday worship experience for those who join by zoom. A future goal would be to improve everyone's worship experience by allowing zoom participants to interact with worship participants in the sanctuary.

- Session is considering having once per month zoom-only worship services. There was positive feedback from Session members for this idea and it will be discussed further with the congregation in the coming weeks.
- A year-to-date mission giving summary was reviewed. Mission giving totals through September are \$5130; \$900 from the EPC budget and \$4230 from individual contributions to the monthly missions. 86% of the \$5130 went to local, Twin Cities organizations. A detailed summary of monthly mission totals, including the list of organizations that were supported by mission giving will be included in the end-of-the-year financial report to the congregation.
- The Lease Agreement with Highland AA is in negotiation. They have been paying less than their current lease amount during Covid. EPC has asked that in 2022 the monthly rent value be returned to the amount indicated in the current lease (which runs through the end of 2022). We are awaiting feedback from Highland AA regarding this request.
- Rehoboth Church has agreed to start their Sunday Worship service at 12:30 PM (previously it was 12 noon) in order to prevent possible overlap with EPC Sunday worship service when our worship and fellowship activities extend beyond our normal worship time. Session discussed the possible insurance-cost issues with Rehoboth using the sanctuary without a formal lease agreement. This will be investigated through a discussion with our insurance provider.
- Luna is attending meetings with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities (PTCA) with the goal of fostering connection and weaving of the larger Presbytery into our community. She mentioned that each worshiping community is also invited to have two elder commissioners attend Presbytery meetings to represent the community as the larger church does the business and mission of the PTCA. It has been some years since EPC elders have attended, and encouraged session to hold in discernment whether this is something that might have interest now in our community.
- Phil and Luna and the personnel committee continue to discuss Sabbatical plans for 2022. The tentative plan would be for this to occur late summer to early Fall of 2022. Nothing has been finalized, however, yet.
- The Pastors reports included celebration and gratitude for missions, music, scripture, art, engaging and amazing bible study discussions, backwoods tree trimming and possible discussions regarding urban forestry with an arborist, journeying with Heather toward her ordination. All as we move from Summer into Fall and Winter.
- **Christmas Eve service is planned for 4 PM on Dec 24th (Friday).** There will be no Sunday Worship service on December 26. January 2nd (Sunday) worship service will be without Jenya, who will be on vacation.

Art at EPC

Hello all artists and lovers of art. Carol and I would like you to help us decorate the sanctuary with your favorite Advent art please! We are asking each person to bring one or two pieces of art that speaks to them, that they love, or that they would like to share with a wider audience. This can be art that you created, or art that someone else created. Photography, paintings,

fiber art, quilts... anything goes. It can be Advent-inspired, but really it can be just about anything that you like.

Please continue bringing in! We'll hang it as it comes in. Thanks! It's going to be lovely.

-Lisa and Carol



Order Christmas Flowers

The poinsettia cost this year is \$11.00 per plant for the red and white ones and \$15.00 per plant for the 2 blue ones. If you wish, you may order one or more plants, or make a donation to the decorating fund. Those who purchase plants may take them home following the Christmas Eve worship service. **Orders will be taken until this Sunday, November 21.** Please make checks payable to Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church for plants or donations. **Send your check with the attached order form to the church office or place in the offering plate.**