

news from the **EDGE**



First Presbyterian Church of
EDGEWOOD
The Community Church

Believing we are called together
by God's love through Jesus Christ, our mission as
the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood is to
love God, to love each other and to love our neighbors.

The monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

September 2019

PASTOR'S **POINT OF VIEW**



Michael P. Rucker
Pastor

I looked it up. The answer is 37...if I looked more closely I bet I could find it 40 times. Forty times God spoke to his people and said "I am with you." Or "I will be with you." Or the people knew, "God is with us." Another quick look through their situations uncovered more hope; nearly every time those confident words of faith were uttered, the people were in a difficult place: being pushed hard, hurting, overwhelmed by caregiving, overwhelmed by need, on a scary, new path, getting older and more frail, facing enemies within and without – sometimes the flood waters just keep on rising!

In every difficulty, the words that got them through were – God is here...God is with me...God is with us...right now. Maybe that is what Paul means when he

writes, "**in God we live, we move, we have our being.**" God's presence in our lives is as certain as the waters surround the fish of the sea. Brothers and sisters, trust in the presence of God! Move forward, or fight the good fight, or receive the peace of God. All will be well.

A number of the brothers and sisters among us are walking a rocky road. Disease, a barely balanced budget, grief, utter weariness, uncertain futures. We all face times like these – but for some, these frightening times await them every single morning.

Remember what the Apostle Paul bravely triumphantly acclaims, "**If God is for us, who is against us...who will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Distress? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Peril? The sword? No way...we are more than conquerors.. nothing will in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.**" Let's be strong for one another...let's stand firm together... God is with us.

"Making sense of painful experiences is sacred work. It asks us to respect our own time, space, and language. These are the unique fingerprints of our own healing."

- Rebecca Ray; author and clinical psychologist

Pastor Michael

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

On Sunday, September 8, we will return to the sanctuary and to the 11:00 a.m. worship hour.

September 1 (still in the Gathering Place at 10:00 a.m.)

The Sacrament of the Lord's supper will be celebrated in word and song. You are invited.

On this Labor Day weekend we will find our place at the table. The good news is that there is room for everyone; but, we may not get the best seat. And that is as it should be. See Luke 14: 7-14 for clarification The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be served.

September 8 (11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary)

Psalm 139 is one of my favorites. **O Lord, you have searched me and known me...you know when I rise up and when I sit down. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.** Or – "Lord, I hope you got this because I don't!" We are like clay being formed and reformed. Always being prepared for what lies ahead. Will we yield? that is the question.

September 15

The Praise Ensemble will lead us in song on this emerging worship Sunday. You know how it is, when we lose our car keys or cell phones...there is no cushion left unturned, no pocket not turned inside out. We are feeling lost: who do you think is searching high and low for us? See Luke 15: 1-10.

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News from the Edge is the monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood. If you have information you would like to include in the next issue, email Judy Mysels at office@fpcedgewood.org by the 15th of the prior month. Sponsorship is available for \$40 per month.

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE (cont'd.)

September 22

“If God were small enough to be understood, God would not be big enough to be worshiped.” (Evelyn Underhill) Or, as we read each communion Sunday – “great is the mystery of faith.” Join us as we worship a very big God who chooses to remain mostly a mystery to be honored, not feared.

September 29

So you are walking down the sidewalk in downtown Pittsburgh, or Squirrel Hill, or Oakland and there is another one of those “street people” asking for money. The person is every bit as important in God’s eyes as anyone else. What should we do? Jesus has a story to tell about that. It isn’t an exact parallel to the homeless we meet on Pittsburgh city streets, but check it out anyway. See Luke 16: 19-31.

Looking Ahead to October...

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS: October 5, 12 noon on side lawn

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY: October 6

It’s not about us. It’s about the world. On this Sunday, Christians in every nation and time zone, ethnicity and race will gather around the table of our Lord. A table large enough to accommodate everyone.

CROP WALK: October 13

On Oct. 13, the Pittsburgh East community will celebrate its 42nd year of walking to end hunger one step at a time. The oldest walk in the country is sponsored by Church World Service (www.churchworldservice.org). 25% of what we raise is returned as grants to East End Common Ministries and Wilkinsburg Community Ministry. Youth and adults from this congregation will gather at the South Avenue United Methodist Church at 1:00 to gather in preparation for the 10K loop through Squirrel Hill and back. The walk distance is 6.2 miles. Walking time is approximately 2.5 hours.

You can participate by either walking or sponsoring a walker. You can also go to their website: <http://www.crophungerwalk.org/pittsburgheastpa> to electronically send money or sponsor a walker. Watch for upcoming bulletin inserts, emails, and/or announcements.



Our Church Community



COMMUNITY DINNER

What has become our signature summer outreach program, our monthly community dinners, ends this month. Weather dependent, we will always try to be out on the side lawn to show our hospitality to the community. Dinners run from 6:00-8:00PM, and each time ***we welcome help for set-up, donations of side dishes, and clean-up.*** Please join us for this last meal on—

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 AT 6:00 PM

NEWS AND NOTES

- ⇒ Sympathies to the family of Jim Haley, who passed away on August 5
- ⇒ Abbey Lehrian graduated in May 2019. She is going to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. She was President of the Debate team at Oakland Catholic, Jr. Council Member for Edgewood Borough Council, and was awarded the Platinum Award from the US Figure Skating Club for holding a GPA above 4.0 combined with her skating accomplishments.
- ⇒ Happy birthday to Allie Horner, August 13, and Sallie Monk, August 15
- ⇒ Many thanks to Jim Segedy and Tyler McGuigan in hosting the Community Dinners throughout the summer, plus those who provided side dishes, desserts, etc. that fed many community people.
- ⇒ Our Edgewood Community Day presence thanks to Judy and Mariah Mysels, Michael Rucker, Jon Apossos and Spencer Lehrian for “manning” the FPCE booth.

RALLY DAY FELLOWSHIP on SEPTEMBER 8TH

Is it just me, or did the summer go by even more quickly than last year’s did? Here at FPCE we are turning our attention and energies to the fall start up events – a gathering we call Rally Day. The event will take place in the lounge immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Join us for coffee, cookies and conversation. Bring your ideas, requests and enthusiasm for fall and winter CE, mission, stewardship and more!

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Saturday, October 5, 12– 1pm

Walking in the way of St. Francis, a visionary lover of all creation, Pastor Michael will be Blessing the Animals who come his way. He will be on the side lawn (weather permitting) from Noon to 1:00 p.m. All creatures great and small – and their guardians – are welcome.



Fall FROGS Hop Back into Action, begins

Tuesday, September 3

Our after-school program operates Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:45-6:00pm in the lower level of the church building. Students are walked over from Edgewood Elementary School. The program includes snack, homework, reading, craft, outdoor play or games, and dinner. Currently we have 10 students returning from last session and 2 new ones. The cost is \$25/month, with 6 full-time volunteers and many part-time helpers.

Volunteers find participation a rewarding experience and really make this program possible. ***If you are interested in volunteering or visiting to share a craft or special interest, we’d love to have you join us.*** For information on registering or volunteering, please contact me at frogs@fpcedgewood.org or call at 412-241-4613. All the info about the program, as well as application forms, can be found on the FPCE website.

F.R.O.G.S. serves the children a snack and dinner. We get the dinner from the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry. **We will gratefully accept donations of juice, boxes or juice bags, as well as individually wrapped snacks such as peanut butter or cheese crackers, fruit rollups, chips, etc. for snack time.** The children enjoy doing crafts. If you like crafts too, we'd love to have you visit and share your talent with us. Of course we can always use help at homework time too!



DEACONS DOINGS

Stephanie Ogori was awarded the 2019 Melfard Douglass Scholarship. Stephanie will be attending Chatham College, majoring in Exercise Science.

CONGREGATIONAL DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FUTURE OF FPCE

What is our current status?

In the recent decades, the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood has experienced a decline in membership, church attendance, and giving. Over the last 25 years, our membership has decreased from approximately 400 to the most recent count of 90. Weekly Sunday worship service is averaging in the 30's. Along with the decline in membership, the giving by the congregation has decreased. And yet, our beloved church building remains and along with it, the expenses for maintenance. In running our church, personnel and building maintenance are the most significant expenses and for 2019, we are running a deficit budget of close to \$20,000. While we may be able to sustain ourselves under the current operational model for a few years, the Strategic Planning Committee believes that the time is ripe to look for new ways to better serve our Lord.

What is missing from our church?

The greatest element missing from our church is the next generation of young adult members (i.e. people in their 20's, 30's, and 40's). Even if our finances had been in better order, without the next generation, the FPCE is at risk of further decline. How can we make faith and religion relevant to Generation X and the Millennials?

What do we need?

The traditional church formula is not working and we are in need of change. Perhaps what we need is a new Christian identity or niche that would make us stand out. If we are successful in advertising our worthwhile cause, people will come from miles away. In this regard, the concept of community reaches out to the greater Pittsburgh East End, not just Edgewood.

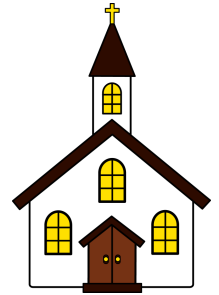
What is the solution?

There is no clear solution yet and our eventual decisions may not be to the liking of all. Nonetheless, the Strategic Planning Committee believes that it would be to our best interest not to be insular. We can benefit from building stronger relationships with nearby East End Presbyterian churches. To this effect, we have reached out to Waverly Presbyterian Church, Second UP Presbyterian Church, Forest Hills Presbyterian Church, and Swissvale Presbyterian Church. Of these churches, Waverly Presbyterian Church and Second UP Presbyterian Church have expressed interest in working with us. We have invited representatives from Waverly Presbyterian Church to attend our August session meeting to open our lines of communication. While no concrete plans have been made, possible outcomes include merger, yoked congregations (with a shared pastor), converting parts of our church building to office spaces or other types of rental units, etc. We have hope that through meeting our brothers and sisters in Christ at neighboring churches, the Spirit will guide us. In this time of trial, we ask all of you to pray for answers to better serve our Lord and our community.

Peace, Love, and Hope,
Paul Ogori, on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee

Renovation Building Fund

The Building Renovation Fund was approved by Session in 2017 to help fund the church building renovations of which the HVAC upgrade has been completed. It is a three year fund and there are 27 donors that pledged support. The total pledged by the congregation donors is \$78,810 and to date the cash receipts against those pledges is \$61,708.33, so there is a remaining balance of \$17,101.67. An additional \$7,925 was received from donors that exceeded their pledge or did not pledge. Total receipts to date are \$69,633.33 and that is considered a very successful Building Renovation Fund event. The remaining balance in the Building Renovation bank account is \$60,535.90 and that will be used to continue payments on Pittsburgh History and Landmark's loan balance of \$193,029.15. Thank you to everyone that has participated in this important fundraiser.



Tom Ochs August 23, 2019

dates to Remember

Sunday Mornings

9:30 Choir Rehearsal

9:45 Adult Class

11:00 Morning Worship (begins 9/8)

Tuesday Mornings

10:00 Book Club at Apossos' Home

4th Monday:

7:00PM Joy Circle (church lounge)

September

1: Last 10AM Summer Worship in the Gathering Place

Planning Meeting after Worship

2: Labor Day: Office Closed

3: FROGS Begins

4: Community Dinner

9: Communion, 11AM Worship Begins

16: Emerging Worship

October

5: Noon – Blessing of the Animals on side lawn

6: World Communion Sunday,

13: Crop Walk

November

3: All Saints' Recognition/Communion Sunday

24: Hanging of the Greens service

27: Thanksgiving Eve Service

DO NOT BE DAUNTED
BY THE ENORMITY
OF THE WORLD'S GRIEF.

DO JUSTLY NOW,
LOVE MERCY NOW.

WALK HUMBLY NOW.

YOU ARE NOT OBLIGATED
TO COMPLETE THE WORK.

BUT NEITHER ARE YOU FREE
TO ABANDON IT.

The Talmud



SEPTEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 Worship 11:15 Worship Comm. Mtg.	2 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 Scouts (ScR)	3 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	4 6-8 Community Dinner	5 3:45 FROGS	6 8:00 AA (SR)	7 8:30 AA (SR)
8 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:45 C.E. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	9 7:00 Scouts (ScR)	10 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 Joint Board Meeting (GP) 7:00 AA (SR)	11	12 3:45 FROGS	13 8:00 AA (SR)	14 9:30 WCM Board Mtg. 8:30 AA (SR)
15 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:45 C.E. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	16 7:00 Scouts (ScR)	17 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	18	19 3:45 FROGS	20 8:00 AA (GP)	21 8:30 AA (SR)
22 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:45 C.E. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	23 7:00 Scouts (ScR)	24 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA (SR)	25	26 3:45 FROGS	27 8:00 AA (SR)	28 8:30 AA (SR)
29 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:45 C.E. 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	30 7:00 Scouts (ScR)					



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