

# 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

**Summer 2019**

## PASTOR'S **POINT OF VIEW**



Michael P. Rucker  
Pastor

It's time to turn the page!

I am grateful to the session and congregation for supporting my trip to an annual event called the Festival of Homiletics (preaching.) The Festival always inspires me and gives me an opportunity to talk informally with pastors of large and small mainline congregations. Here is what I learned:

We are not alone. The reality is mainline churches across the country are becoming smaller. (Note: even many mega-churches are experiencing losses in membership and donations.)

The mainline church fulfilled meaningful and fruitful

ministry for decades all across our nation. But those traditional ways of being and doing are no longer connecting with our communities and the younger generations.

It is not time to sit back, mourn, cling to traditional ways, wonder what happened or point fingers of blame.

It is time to **turn the page!** A meaningful chapter in Christian life across the country is coming to an end. The end of a chapter is not the end of the book! If anyone watched the movie and television series, *The Everlasting Story*, the story of life – including church life – is always being written. It is time, past time, to begin writing the next chapter.

FPCE has a strategic planning committee (Paul Otori, Tom Ochs, Jim and Lisa Segedy, Tyler McGuigan, and Pastor Michael) who will help us begin writing that new chapter. We will meet regularly beginning this summer. Your ideas, encouragement, and prayers are most welcome.

*Pastor Michael*

## Summer Preaching Plan

### **Sunday, June 9 – Pentecost Sunday**

Christians are called on to colonize this world with the coming kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit gives us the inspiration and power to carry on.

### **Sunday, June 16 – Trinity Sunday**

The Church worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – one God or three gods? A mystery to enter before we can really understand.

### **June 23 – September 1.**

As the gospels tell us, God spoke directly to Mother Mary and the Apostle Peter – “Drop the plans you had for your life and follow me.” Both accepted the call. How they learned to follow will be the inspiration for a sermon series this summer. Oh my, the stories they have to share – what is your story?

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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.

## DEACONS DOINGS

Hello Everyone!

Join us on **June 16**, after worship immediately following worship for Donuts for Dad Father's Day celebration. Bring your Dad, Grand-Dads, Uncles....to help us celebrate the men in our lives.

**Then come for our Annual Strawberry Festival on June 19 from 6—8 p.m.** It will be held in the Gathering Place. Delicious strawberry desserts, hot dogs are on the menu. Hope to see everyone at the Strawberry Festival. Bring some friends and neighbors. Help spread the word.

**Melfard Douglass Scholarship deadline is Sunday, July 28.**

This is a scholarship in memory of Melfard Douglass, who was a valued Deacon who was tragically killed in a plane crash. Applications are in the Church Office for those going into college, trade school, grad school, etc.

Have a wonderful summer. Be safe! I know we can get pretty busy during the summer months. Just remember we all need fed—that is, fed with the Word of God. God's blessings to all!

Mary Ann Hartman, *Moderator*

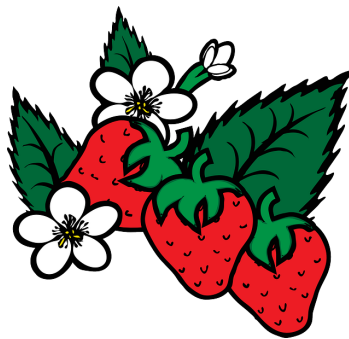
## WILKINSBURG COMMUNITY MINISTRY

A MINISTRY WITH HUNGRY CHILDREN – IS IT A CALL FOR YOU? Wilkinsburg Community Ministry is looking for volunteers this summer. WCM provides free lunch for children living in Wilkinsburg, June 17 through mid- August from 11:30 AM-1:00 PM. Lunch is served at the South Avenue Methodist Church. Volunteers would help sign in the children. For more info, or to volunteer, contact Flo Raisig 412-371-1182.

WCM Giving Update:

I sent an email to the congregation seeking support for WCM's Critical Needs Giving Drive. If you were able to help, thank you! The drive netted \$1470 according to the last report I saw. A \$1000 match from Pittsburgh Foundation will add to that total. Additionally, the ministry received a \$600 gift that will enable the ministry to purchase a much needed new refrigerator.

Thank you for your prayers and financial report for this valuable mission. – Pastor Michael



Strawberry Festival

Weds., June 19th

6—8 p.m.

\$3.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children under age 12, \$2 for second helpings, \$1 for

# Our Church Community



## SESSION NOTES

**Submitted by Flo Raisig, Clerk of Session.**

At their May 7 meeting Session:

Heard a presentation by Rev. Alex Ruzanic about the East End Youth Ministry. He asked for volunteers and donations. (see article by Pastor Michael in this newsletter)

Nominated Ms. Ernst as chairman of this year's nominating committee.

On the condition of the receipt of the appropriate forms, approved the use of a room by Yvonne Bruckner for a wake.

Heard a presentation by Dr. Ohori regarding per capita.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mark your calendars: Saturday, June 29, 1 p.m. Memorial service for Florence Pickels, followed by a light luncheon in the Gathering Place. Come, honor and share stories of the life of this wonderful icon of FPCE.

## P.W. PICNIC

All women of the church are invited to Summer Picnic on Saturday, June 15, 1-4PM at the home of Lisa Segedy, 160 Lloyd Avenue, Edgewood.

## COMMUNITY DINNERS RETURN!

Mark your calendars for our free Community Dinners:

**June 5, July 10, August 7, Sept. 4.**

Grilling hot dogs, hamburgers, etc., plus sides, desserts provided. Come mingle with members of the Edgewood community. Side dishes and volunteers to set up and clean up are MOST WELCOME!!!

## MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

We are responsible for God's gifts and making proper use of them. Our lives, families, and church are some of His great gifts. Let us pray continuously and ask for His guidance in times of change. *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* - the Church reformed is always reforming. Do we need change? If so, how? Let us pray.

## VOCES SOLIS in CONCERT

### At FPCE

Some of you know that Shaun Cloonan, Minister of Music, is one of the voices in an emerging choral chamber ensemble known as Voces Solis. We are still working on the details, but plans are being made for the 70 singer strong Voces Solis to perform a concert in our sanctuary this summer.

**Save the date:**

**VOCES SOLIS in CONCERT at FPCE  
on the evening of Saturday, August 17 at 7:00 p.m.**



May 30 was our last day of FROGS for this session. During this last month, we made special crafts for Mother's Day. Between the raindrops, we did walk down to Koenig Field to play. We were also able to play on the church's side lawn when weather permitted. On our last day, we had a pizza party and sundae bar with some of the parents/grandparents. Thank you to all the volunteers: Flo Raisig, Mary Ross, Ruth Miller, Dan Mielke, Rick Masten, Ed Masten, Emily Lilly, Bing, Sallie Monk, Mary Ann Hartman, Michael Rucker— without them, the FROGS program would not exist.

*Judy Mysels, Director*

## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!!!

- ◇ Stephanie Ohori will be graduating from the Ellis School on June 6, 2019. She was captain of the tennis team and received the MVP award for her role on the team. Stephanie will attend Chatham University in the fall and she will be studying Exercise Science.
- ◇ Inori Sakai graduated with a Bachelor of Music from Juilliard and will continue on for a Masters in Music at Rice University Shepherd School of Music.
- ◇ Nozomi Sakai received her Doctor of Medicine from Pitt Medical School and will begin a residency in OB/Gyn at UNC Chapel Hill.



**Obituary: Florence Pickels launched Forest Hills bus service for those who needed a ride**

March 16, 1915 - May 21, 2019

Florence Pickels, whose passion for her neighborhood of Forest Hills and its residents helped launch the Flivver transportation service, died last Tuesday. She was 104.

Born in North Braddock, Mrs. Pickels was a lifelong resident of the region who also lived in Edgewood and Wilkinsburg. But it was in Forest Hills where she and her late husband, George, raised their family and committed their time.

“When she was young, she was a homemaker,” said Margaret Smith, of Tory, Va., one of the couple’s four daughters. “She also worked for the Internal Revenue Service. Then we girls got involved in the Girl Scouts, and she was our Girl Scout leader and served on the board of directors. That was from 1960 to ’65.”

“She was very community-oriented, and she tried to make us very involved,” Ms. Smith said. “I remember in the summer, we would have the troop over to our house on Avenue F, and we would lie out in the backyard at night looking up at the stars and she would point things out to us. We were little girls, but we were very busy, very active.”

During the 1970s, Mrs. Pickels became concerned that people with special needs had difficulty getting transportation, especially for doctors’ appointments, grocery shopping and church services. So she and a handful of concerned citizens organized Flivver — early 20th-century slang for an automobile — in 1974. A single bus driven by volunteers would provide rides to Forest Hills residents.

“I first heard about it in the newsletter we have here in Forest Hills,” said resident Don Newcomer, who has been a driver for about 10 years and eventually took on the task of treasurer on the Flivver’s board of directors with Mrs. Pickels.

“She was a very sharp lady,” Mr. Newcomer said. “She loved serving people. She helped get the Flivver off the ground so the seniors and the handicapped people had rides. They had a bake sale the first year to try to fund it. “That was her vision and it is still being implemented today. I know people who actually moved into Forest Hills to take advantage of the service.”

“She got it started,” said Forest Hills resident Sam Maksimchuk, who also has volunteered as a driver. Mr. Maksimchuk and his wife, Theresa, lived near Mrs. Pickels and worked with her on the borough elections board. Mrs. Pickels was the judge of elections.

“She was very smart,” Mr. Maksimchuk said. “When you’re doing the elections, there’s a lot of paperwork, and everything has to be exactly right, and she was so accurate. She was in her 90s and she was amazing.”

Mr. Newcomer said Mrs. Pickels also volunteered at the library and, after retiring from the IRS, helped seniors in Forest Hills prepare their taxes every year until she was 100.

“She was very outgoing, very optimistic and looked out for the good of people,” he said. “A very positive person, and I’m blessed to have known her.”

Survivors include a sister, Betty Jane Cline, of Elizabeth; two daughters, Mary Jasper, of Ross, and Margaret Smith, of Troy, Va.; three grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations may be made to the Flivver, checks payable to Forest Hills Community Service, 4400 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh 15221.

*We will remember Florence at First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood with a Memorial Service on Saturday, June 29, at 1 p.m. Light luncheon to follow.*

## FIVE UNCOMFORTABLE ISSUES THE CHURCH NEEDS TO START TALKING ABOUT

An article by Christian blogger, Zach Perkins – does it speak to us?

*It has been said that the church is not a museum to saints, but a hospital for sinners. Yet, most of us would much rather pretend to be an “I’m good!” saint than call for an ambulance.*

*Week after week, many of us walk into church, sit by people we have known for years and would never dream of sharing our innermost struggles with. While a large part of it is our pride, another factor is a church that seems unwilling to talk about certain uncomfortable issues. Choosing to ignore them rather than bringing them up.*

*In Galatians 6:2, Paul urges the church to “bear one another’s burdens” so maybe with more grace and love we can turn on the light in the darkened rooms of each other’s heart and let our churches become safe havens for the uncomfortable things we have to deal with. This is not a comprehensive list. And it is very true that a sermon, Sunday School class, or coffee time conversation will not address the issues as much as is needed – but talking about these things will open us to these uncomfortable issues until, one day, they are not so uncomfortable for us.*

*SINCERE DOUBT. We spend time singing the songs, affirming the creeds, reading the Bible and nodding knowingly about Christian tradition. But not everything about faith is obvious. That is particularly true today. Faith issues are rarely black and white. We all have doubts – and we should! I contend that doubt is a stepping stone to deeper faith. Is the Bible literally true? Is evolution or scripture to be trusted? What does it mean for Jesus to be the way, the truth, and the life? Is the United States a Christian nation? Are all other religions just plain wrong? How can I share my faith without being unbearable?*

*ADDICTION. I would submit that our culture is overwhelmingly addicted. Our addictions certainly include, but are not limited to, alcohol, drugs, and sex. Can the church become a safe place to talk addiction? Or is that an AA thing? Will a sense of shame and blame keep us from sharing, growing, understanding, and showing compassion to one another? If our church is a family, isn’t there room for everyone’s struggles to be shared in a non-judgmental community?*

*SEXUALITY. This is a scary one because the church has been rent asunder by our endless debates about homosexuality. We cannot afford to be timid. Trust me on this – homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender people, bisexual people are accepted, embraced, and loved by our young people. Science is showing us that sexuality is a fluid characteristic. It is no longer only male and female. Meanwhile the church turns a blind eye, or judges, the sexuality of those who are not like us.*

*MENTAL ILLNESS. Depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behavior, trauma. These tremendously difficult emotional struggles plague the lives of most people. But too often the church is not able to “be there” when our brothers and sisters are caught in the clutches of these debilitating illnesses. How can we learn to be a safe haven, a sanctuary for those whose mind are darkened and distressed?*

*LONELINESS. There are droves of lonely people walking our streets, malls, and through the aisles of our grocery stores. Loneliness. Alienation. Isolation. “No one understands me!” are feelings that occur across ages, races, and genders. A lonely person may walk in to a church alone and leave alone – even if he or she is a member. The church is called to love, to listen, to accept, to give room TO EVERYONE. No exceptions.*

I believe our willingness to talk about these issues will help us to become more the community church we claim to be. What do you think? *Pastor Michael*

*“Imagine if every church became a place where everyone is safe but no one is comfortable. Imagine if every church became a place where we told one another the truth.*

*We might just create sanctuary.”*

**- Rachel Held Evans**

**Rachel has been a powerful and meaningful “voice from a millennial” who loves Jesus and his church. Tragically, Rachel died at the age of 37 after a short illness. Her husband, two young children and the church will miss her.)**

## THERE IS AN EAST END YOUTH MINISTRY

Pastor Michael



There is a new ministry for young people in our community. Like many other congregations, FPCE finds itself unable to fulfill a meaningful ministry for our young people. But several congregations working together? That ministry is beginning to unfold.

Alex Ruzanic is the Director of Youth and Missional Outreach at Beulah Presbyterian Church. Alex, and the Beulah congregation, understand the need for youth ministry and are very well aware of the limited resources a single congregation has. Alex and a team of adult volunteers have started an East End Youth Ministry that includes kids from Beulah and the east end of Pittsburgh.

I met with Alex for coffee, liked what heard and, even more, the enthusiasm that Alex brings to this fledgling ministry. I invited Alex to meet with the session in May. Session encountered that same spirited approach that Alex brings to his work. We will be learning how to connect with the East End Youth Ministry over the coming months.

Briefly, the East End Youth Ministry exists to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to youth and families in the community through intentional, incarnational relationships with caring adults. The ministry desires to create a space for all students to become more whole, belong in community, and participate in the peacemaking way of Jesus. The ministry meets with young people on Wednesday evenings through the school year.

During the summer the ministry will meet with the young people beginning Tuesday, June 11, for service projects and Wednesday, June 12, for fun. The session and I will stay in touch with Alex and find out how we can be most helpful.



### “Come Share the Lord”

Shaun Cloonan, Minister of Music

“Come break the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.” Those words to a favorite communion anthem come to mind as I share this story.

About 3 or 4 summers ago, while strolling through the booths at the Three Rivers Arts festival downtown, I noticed a beautiful handmade chalice by one of the pottery vendors. It was a sort of washed/worn reddish-pink color, and I immediately thought it would look good in our sanctuary with the deep red carpet and curtains along the chancel area. One problem, there was no matching plate.

I asked the potter if getting a matching plate was an option. He told me he didn't have any plans to make plates, but gave me his card and told me to send him an email so that he could let me know the next time he was planning to make them so we could order one. I did that, and then life took over and I sort of forgot about it.

## COME SHARE THE LORD (cont'd.)

A few weeks ago, Lorraine and I were talking while changing the banners and paraments (did you know that's what the colored pulpit scarf and communion tablecloth are called?) with the change from Lent to Easter, and I asked what ever happened to that chalice? She pulled it out from a top shelf in the Lounge kitchenette and we decided to put it out on the table, both commenting that it would be nice if there was a matching plate.

Well, if you know either Lorraine or me well, when we get an idea in our heads, good luck getting it out of there! Mandy and I went to lunch after the service and continued talking about how to find a match, and I was feverishly searching on Amazon and Google and anywhere I could think of to find a pottery-style plate that might match that specific shade of reddish-pink. No luck...deep reds, red and black, red and purple, nothing close.

Then I came across an artist on the website Etsy, a site where artisans sell their own creations. Monica Sommerville works out of New York (but originally Allentown, PA). I sent a message via Etsy to this random person whose plates I liked, attaching a photo of the chalice and asking if there was any way she might be able to make something comparable. Within a half hour, she replied that it's very difficult to match another potter's glaze exactly, but she thought she had a mix of red and cream that she could overlap to get close. "I am glad to make a plate and send a photo. If you think it matches, we can take care of payment and shipping then. If not, no obligation." I responded anything she could do that would be close would be better than what I was finding. Then on to life for the rest of the week...

About a week or so later, I got a message saying she was going to throw some plates that weekend, and a day or so later, got a photo that looked to me to be almost an exact match. I replied that it was perfect and we'd love to have it at FPCE for our communion services. I replied with my address and asked about the price. The response was "Please accept it as a gift. You can repay it by passing on some kindness to someone in your community this week!"

So, thanks to this lovely woman's talents and generous spirit, we have a beautiful matching set for communion that was made just for us! The next time you're in the sanctuary and walking past the communion table, take a look at the chalice and plate. If you didn't know any better, you'd swear they were made as a set and not by 2 different potters! And if you're looking for someone to do some custom pottery for you, go to [www.Etsy.com](http://www.Etsy.com) to find Sommerville Pottery or visit [www.sommervillepottery.com](http://www.sommervillepottery.com).

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** **EDGEWOOD COMMUNITY DAY, AUGUST 24**

It's that time of year again when we are looking for FPCE people to volunteer to run a game booth (usually the duck/crocodile pond) at Community Day, Saturday, August 24. Starting at Noon, the booth will be set up, sign hung, etc. by Judy and Mariah Mysels, but will need helpers to "man" the booth from **1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5PM**. Please call the Church Office at 412/241-4613 or email: [office@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:office@fpcedgewood.org) if interested or have any questions.



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120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218



**TOOLS OF HOPE**  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 16**

Honor your dad by giving the gift of love and hope in their honor or memory. Church World Service (CWS) and FPCE's Mission Ministry Team is sponsoring "Tools of Hope". Your donation of \$5 per tool will help provide tools and the knowledge that someone cares to refugees, victims of natural disasters, and many others across the world. Fill out a bulletin insert or form below through June 9, or call the Church Office.

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

My name: \_\_\_\_\_