

# news from the EDGE

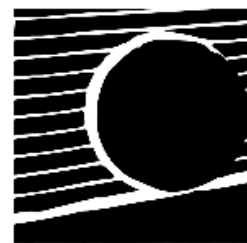


First Presbyterian Church of  
**EDGEWOOD**  
The Community Church

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

**April 2015**



## HOLY WEEK & APRIL WORSHIP SERVICES @ F P C E

### MAUNDY THURSDAY

**April 2 @ 7:00PM**

*"Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me..."*

Please join us in the Gathering Place to remember the heart-rending events of Maundy Thursday. We will read the story, immerse ourselves in the events, celebrate communion with our Lord and sit in darkness as we confess how much we rely on the grace of our strong, loving God.

### GOOD FRIDAY

**April 3 @ 1:00PM**

*"From noon on, darkness came over the whole land, until three in the afternoon."*

We will meet in the Lounge for up to an hour. We will stand before the cross with those who stood before the dying Jesus (and the two crucified with him) thousands of years ago. We will gather to worship, to pray, to sing, to grieve, and to hope. We will gather to remember God's sacrifice. We will gather knowing that the darkness is still too much with us. Please come, pray with us.

### EASTER MORNING

**April 5 @ 11:00AM**

*"I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen..."*

Surrounded by the beauty of our sanctuary, we will sing, shout, rejoice and give thanks for the resurrection of Jesus. This is the heart of our faith. It's where it all begins.

Come with your hearts, voices and spirits ready to praise with passion;  
we will soar as we worship.

#### **APRIL 12**

When we take a look at Acts 4:32-35 and discover what "living in community" can really mean. Become part of our worshipping community—you will find love and support—and hope.

#### **APRIL 19**

On this Emerging Worship Sunday the Praise Ensemble will lead us. We will face down what is within us that keeps us from the new life the Risen Christ gives us.

#### **APRIL 26**

INSTALLATION SERVICE  
FOR PASTOR MICHAEL  
Details to be announced  
in a separate mailing.

## STAFF DIRECTORY

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Office Hours:  
Monday–Friday  
9:00AM–2:00PM



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.

## PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker  
Pastor

Greetings my Brothers and Sisters of the Resurrection!

**CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!**

Resurrection. I misunderstood it for a long time. *Maybe* I understand it a bit better now. After all, it is a mystery. **"Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not die, but we will all be changed!"** (says Paul in I Cor. 15:51.) I have learned that resurrection is not about getting into heaven (although that is part of it.) Resurrection is not a miracle we experience after we die. I've learned that *we do not wait* for our new life to begin. Resurrection is happening! Here and now. In this world. In our lives. As sure as the sun is shining and the universe is expanding - we are being raised. Our resurrection is underway!

As Paul says—resurrection is about change: all of creation will be liberated from the hopelessness and dying that we are immersed in; you and me will be transformed into the children of God we were created to be. But we are not mere passive recipients of God's grace. Resurrection means change. It demands our participation. Resurrection calls on us to let go of our past so that God can do a new thing. We are being changed from the inside out. So let's go for it! (If you will kindly bear with me, I'll share what I'm learning about my resurrection.)

By nature and nurture I am:

A PEOPLE PLEASER. I care what others think about me and I aim to please. Being a people pleaser has served me well for many years. It's how I initially reveal myself to others.

A CARE GIVER. Simply by accident of birth. I am the oldest of five, my mom struggled with health issues, dad worked many hours to make ends meet. As the oldest and (sometimes) healthiest one at home, I learned how to take care of my mom, dad, brothers and sister early in life.

Michael, the people-pleaser and care-giver. That was my old life. Things are different now. I am being resurrected. I am being changed. The old Michael is passing away - the new Michael is being born - again. Resurrection is happening. Right now. Right here. In this life.

Michael, the PEOPLE PLEASER, is learning that I am not called to please people - I am called to please God. And there are times when pleasing God is not pleasing to other people. Our God, who is love, and the Son of God, who embodies love, are not focused on pleasing people. They are focused on resurrecting what is lost and decaying and dying. I am, we are, called to that same focus. God needs me - and you - not to please people, but to live the into our resurrection.

Michael, the CARE-GIVER, is learning that I cannot care for other people until *I learn to be cared for by God, by other people and by myself.*

(continued from page 2)

I became a care-giver before I learned to be cared for. (I am blaming no one ... mom and dad did more than the best they could.) As my resurrection unfolds, I am learning that I have a lot to learn about caring for myself.

I'm also learning that caring for others does not mean their lives will be all peaches and cream. God was caring for his only begotten Son when Jesus was facing opposition from the powers that he confronted. God was caring for his Son as he was dying on the cross. God was caring for his Son when He raised him from the tomb. In the same way, and with the same tough love, God will care for me, you and all creation. We should not be naïve, as God raises us from death to life, there will be joy and celebration, and their will be pain and sorrow.

I know, this is not an easy message. I used to think resurrection would be a dramatic *bursting* from death into new life, *bursting* from sadness into gladness. I thought resurrection would be dramatic, instantaneous liberation....like a magician pulling a rabbit from a hat.

I was wrong.

God is not a magician. The resurrection road is not an easy one to travel. As Paul puts it, **“For if we have been united with him (Jesus) in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6: 5)**

A caterpillar does not become a butterfly in a burst of change—first comes the crawling and climbing and cocoon spinning and the changing and then the winged flight. There are no short cuts to resurrection. Resurrection takes time. Resurrection is gestation. Resurrection is about taking one uncertain step at a time; it's about remaining faithful. Resurrection is being born again.

One of my favorite spiritual writers, Joyce Rupp, says it much better:

*“(Resurrection life) is moving on slowly. Days and months may go by, with a kind of plodding along, of just going on, getting through doing what you have to do. Occasionally, flickers of hope rush through our spirit like fireflies on a hushed summer's night. Briefly we feel good; we feel a bit of coming home to ourselves and then the feeling is gone again. Slowly, though, we do come back to life; new country is revealed to us. A quiet resurrection happens in us. Finally, there arises in us the desire to move ahead. Life will never be as it once was because we are changed. The first green shoot has pushed its way through the dark soil. (from Praying Our Goodbyes, pg. 79)*

CHRIST HAS DIED;  
CHRIST IS RISEN;  
CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN.  
  
WE ARE DYING WITH CHRIST;  
WE ARE RISING WITH CHRIST;  
WE ARE BEING BORN AGAIN.

*Pastor Michael*

**“I WAS  
HUNGRY  
AND YOU GAVE  
ME FOOD”**  
*The Bible*  
Matthew 25:35



## SPECIAL OFFERINGS ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Across the world, millions of people live on less than \$1.25 a day and have to survive on very little to no food. By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you're supporting programs working to provide those in need with food and safe water, relief for those affected by crises and catastrophic events, and the tools necessary to improve their lives.

**THREE WAYS TO GIVE**



Through your congregation



Text OGHS to 20222 to give \$10



[presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs](http://presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs)



## P.W. Corner

By Sallie Monk  
Presbyterian Women Secretary

Presbyterian Women have been very busy the month of March and look forward to many upcoming events in April:

On March 22, we celebrated Florence Pickel's 100th birthday. She was presented with a lifetime membership to Presbyterian Women (the first and only for FPCE). She was adorned with a beautiful corsage during worship, recognized with "Happy Birthday" sung, followed by a wonderful luncheon in the Social Room. She had many surprises that day, starting with her granddaughter and family being here, plus seeing many faces she hadn't seen for quite some time. We all hope this very special lady enjoyed "her day".

We will be decorating the sanctuary for Easter when the flowers arrive on Good Friday, April 3. Usually Ruth Miller and Florence Pickels are the "arrangers", but hopefully a few more volunteers can help?

There will be a Spring Gathering to be held April 18th at Westminster Church for any Presbyterian Women who would like to attend. Deadline is April 8th. Lori and Sallie plan to attend, as well as perhaps others. This will be the first year we will be able to attend because it is to be held the week before our Flea Market.

The Flea Market is fast approaching...April 24, 25 and 26. We are in need of people to help with sorting, setting up, working the Flea Market, cleaning up, soup and bread donations for the sale, etc. This year, we are trying something different and opening up the sale Friday night, April 24 to church people, Saturday's time is 10AM to 2PM, then again Sunday, April 26, following worship, sales will continue. Watch for continued info, sign-ups in upcoming bulletin inserts, emails, etc. Questions and/or comments, contact Sallie Monk, 412/371-4344.

**HE IS NOT HERE;**  
*He is RISEN!*

## DEACONS' DOINGS...

Deacons made up/delivered Easter baskets to our friends of the church on Palm Sunday, March 29 with a special craft made by the FROGS afterschool kids.

During Finals time, we will be sending our college students gift checks for all their hard work and tall studying this year. To ensure your son/daughter receives theirs, contact the Church Office or a Deacon.

We will be hosting fellowship for Mothers Day, May 10, so bring your mom, grandmother, aunt and/or sister and join us for worship and fellowship (muffins and fruit).

Our food panty has been used quit often and we thank all who have helped us to be able to help those in need.

Applications for the Melford Douglass scholarship fund will be available soon for those looking to further their education. Watch for bulletin inserts and further information.

Have a Blessed Month,

Mary Ann Hartman,  
Moderator, Deacons

### THE INSTALLATION SERVICE for The Reverend Michael P. Rucker

It is customary for a congregation to install the person they call to be their Teaching Elder (Pastor). At the January congregational meeting, we elected Michael Rucker to serve us as pastor. The installation service will take place during the morning worship service on **Sunday, April 26, 2015**, with a reception to follow. Look for more details in an upcoming mailing.



# BLOCKS

## Believing Little Ones Can Know and Serve

The Christian Education committee is pleased to announce a new program for our youngest members and friends. BLOCKS will be piloted this spring, one evening a month. Through this program, we aim to present a well-developed and age-appropriate opportunity based on the needs and interests of our youngest members and friends. Thematically centered on “building blocks”, we will work to build the foundations for Christian beliefs and practices, with understanding the importance of play. Through stories, songs, crafts, and – of course – play time, we hope to offer a fun and meaningful “Introduction to Sunday School”. This program is open to any FPCE member or non-member and will be promoted within the larger local community. Please contact Emily Lilly ([EmilySLilly@gmail.com](mailto:EmilySLilly@gmail.com)) with any questions.

**Ages:** 6 months to kindergarten, with caregiver. The set-up is “Grown-up and Me” and a caregiver or parent is expected to attend with the child. We cannot provide unaccompanied child care.

**Date and Time:** The first program will be Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. We will announce a May date soon.

**Location:** FPCE, Gathering Place

**Sign-ups:** To ensure adequate resources for all children, RSVPs are appreciated. Sign-up by emailing Emily Lilly at [EmilySLilly@gmail.com](mailto:EmilySLilly@gmail.com).



FROGS have been hopping during the month of March, even though we didn't meet twice because of weather/school cancellations. When we did come together, we did homework, played some new games, made Easter crafts for the Deacons to be included in their baskets, learned about stamps from Ranger Tim, etc.

Would like to extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers: Flo Raisig, Mary Ross, Connie Black, Dan Mielke, Ruth Miller, Nozomi Sakai, Rick Masten, Ed Masten, Ranger Tim, Pastor Michael. These are a very special group of people who really enjoy the kids and care about them. The program is thriving because of them!

FROGS are in need of snacks such as: individual juice boxes/bag, individual snack packages such as peanut butter/cheese crackers, fruit roll-ups, pretzels, chips, Rice Krispies bars, etc. Thank you!

## Congratulations, Travis!

We have known Travis Allabon, Helen Ebken's grandson, for some time. He is a wonderfully committed young man to the life of our congregation. What we might not know is the level of proficiency Travis has achieved in the cutting edge field of *robotics*. Travis and his robotics team at school will be attending the International Robotics competition for Junior High students in Louisville, KY from April 15-18. Pastor Michael interviewed Travis recently:

### Travis, where do you go to school?

*I attend the Pittsburgh Urban Christian School in Wilksburg. I've been going there since kindergarten.*

### When did you start studying robotics?

*In 6th grade.*

### WOW! What about the field of robotics interests you?

*I am drawn to the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (aka the STEM program).*

### What did you and your team do to earn the invitation to the International Robotics competition?

*We were awarded the top grade of "4" in a competition with other Pittsburgh junior high schools,*

### So, this is an international program?

*Yes, there will teams from countries like India, China, Japan, Puerto Rico and others as well as the United States.*

### What kind of contest or activity will the robotic teams be asked to do?

*The goal is to use robotic technology (STEM skills) to drag a group of multi-colored blocks from one end of the grid to the other and then to robotically construct a tower with the multi-coordinated blocks.*

Wow! Dude!! You are living and thriving in a world most of us do not understand. But know this: we are proud of you, Travis!



At the January 25 annual congregational meeting, the session presented a proposal to renovate the first floor level of the church building. The session is very open to hearing questions, concerns and comments. We are thankful for the people we have heard from. Below is an article from Tom Ochs that responds to these questions.

We will be having open Q and A sessions in the near future. (The last one was cancelled due to poor weather keeping attendance very low on that Sunday.) Please note that there are drawings available on a table inside the side door entrance that give a visual representation of what is being proposed. Keep the questions coming!

### Renovation Questions

#### What is included in the renovation project?

**Answer:** The renovation covers three areas. The first is to reconfigure the program area (offices, choir room, lounge, gathering place, nursery) so all programs for the church will be in this first floor area. This primarily means moving the social room and kitchen functions to the first floor program area, but as part of the improvements we will upgrade the bathroom facilities and add handicap access from the Sanctuary. The social room will be a multipurpose room that will seat 120 for a meal, can be reconfigured for stage productions, or partitioned for smaller groups. This area will be new and inviting and readily accessible from the Sanctuary.

The second part of the renovation is replacing the steam heating system with a forced air heating and ventilating system with air conditioning for the program area and Sanctuary. The steam system is inefficient, expensive to maintain and heats unevenly. The 100+ year old supply and return piping and antique controls are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and operate. This will actually provide an annual savings in utility costs and maintenance.

The third part is changes to the front of the Sanctuary. Over time the Sanctuary has been changed, including removing pews from the front and narthex areas. The choir never sing from the choir loft or uses the organ as accompaniment. The piano is used more frequently and Sunny makes several trip each service between organ and piano. It is proposed to extend the pulpit area to be a large stage to make the front more adaptable.. The organ console will be moved to the floor of the Sanctuary. This is the more difficult part of the renovation and could be a separate project completed at a later date.

#### How much does it cost?

**Answer:** Because we don't have a detailed plan from the architect, we can only estimate the cost. Presently we have two estimates, one done by Lami Grubb Architects and one by a general contractor. Both estimates are about \$500,000.

#### Has Session made any decision to proceed with the renovation or have any funds been committed?

**Answer:** Session discussed these changes and decided it should have a better handle on space configuration, i.e. would the space in the first floor be sufficient to house all the programs of the church, and what was the estimated cost to make the changes described in the first question. Lami Grubb Architects was hired and paid \$5,000 to complete the study that resulted in the layout drawing and the estimated cost. Without this information there was nothing to take to the congregation. Other than the architect's fee, no other funds have been authorized. Session felt that this was not just a project of the Session, but one that needed full discussion and support of the whole congregation.

### Can we afford this?

**Answer:** \$500,000 is a lot of money for a smaller congregation to spend. On the other hand we have inherited a beautiful but expensive building that is showing its 100+ years old age, so we need to make decisions on how we will use and maintain the building in the future. Doing nothing is just as much a decision as proceeding with the renovation and none of us knows what the future holds.

We presently have \$560,000 in investments. We use the income from the investments as general fund income each year and it totals about \$7,000.00. The renovations would save \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year in utility and maintenance costs, and possibly much more since the steam heating system is old and utility cost will certainly again start to increase. A capital campaign will be necessary in the order of \$100,000 to be raised over 5 years. With the church's 100 giving units, this is an average of \$16.67 per month per unit. A loan would also be recommended to keep from using all the investment principal.

### What happens to the basement and second floor space?

**Answer:** The basement and second floor space will not be changed, except for the forced air HVAC. Possibly this space would not be air conditioned. The basement social room, kitchen and Scout's room will not be improved. All church programs would be held on the first floor. The Social room would continue to be used by the AA and any community groups approved by Session.

### Why should we do this?

**Answer:** As a congregation we need to look forward with optimism. We have a building that is sized for a much larger congregation. Over the years, we continue to use both the basement and the first floor even though all programs can be contained on the first floor. Take a walk from the Sanctuary to the Social Room in the basement and you see that the church is worn and needs to be updated, and there is no easy handicap access.

Secondly, the steam heating system is old, inefficient and highly likely to require more maintenance in the coming years. There is no air conditioning and, yes, we can get through the summer months without it, but the fact is that A/C has become a standard requirement in buildings and our home.

Finally, the Sanctuary is majestic but if you look around you will see that it has been changed over the years. The pulpit/platform that uses the space where pews were removed will make the Sanctuary much more friendly to the congregation and more functional for other Sanctuary activities.

With these changes we position the church for the future. Without the changes we gamble that the existing structure and building mechanics will not become increasingly expensive in future years.



*Sharing in the  
joys and concerns  
of our family &  
friends at FPCE*

- Brian McGuigan will graduate April 26 from University of Pittsburgh's Industrial Engineering Program.
- Charlie Baldwin will graduate in May from Lehigh University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies. He has been involved with two humanitarian missions in Nicaragua and the Social Entrepreneurship trip to India this past spring break. He was a Resident Assistant for two years and currently an Orientation Leader this senior year. Charlie is the Vice President of the Yes Plus Art of Living Club and an assistant in the interview panel for prospective students. He will play the Prince of Verona in the school's production of Romeo and Juliet in April. He plans to stay at Lehigh for a Masters Degree in Management.
- Continued 100th birthday wishes for our own Florence Pickels! Her birthday celebration on March 22 was a nice day of remembrance with many people coming together for such a special lady!
- Was great to catch up with Doris Hamilton while she was here for a visit.



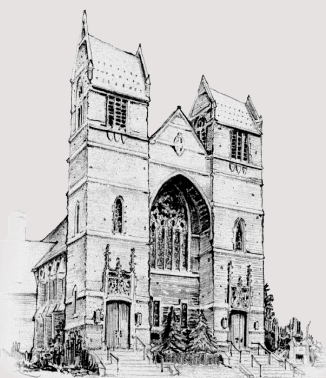
First Presbyterian Church of

**EDGEWOOD**

*The Community Church*

120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218

**A monthly support group  
for people surviving the  
loss of a love**



First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood  
Rev. Michael Rucker, Pastor  
120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

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## GRIEVING SPACE

at the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

Here, we understand that finding the  
space to grieve can sometimes be every  
bit as challenging as the loss itself.

Should you need us, our support group is here.

Meetings: every third Thursday of the month, 7pm

Call us to let us know you are coming: 412-241-4613

Individual support with a certified grief counselor is also available through:



**Edgewood Psychological Services**

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