

# 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

February 2018

## PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker  
Pastor

### WE HAVE TO BEGIN AGAIN

*"The Long Walk: A Story of War and the Life that Follows"* is the title of a "gripping, contemporary opera" recently performed by the Pittsburgh Opera Company on the stage of the theater of CAPA High School. "Gripping" only hints at the intense emotion and drama we experienced for over two hours with the others in the sold-out auditorium. The opera is a deeply personal exploration of a soldier's return from Iraq where he served as an officer in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit and his battle with what he

calls "the Crazy" as he tries to reintegrate into his family life. The opera is Based on the novel by the same title written by Brian Castner. (go to <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/show/the-long-walk> if you want to view an exemplary three-minute clip from the opera).

As the opera comes to a close, the shattered Castner family determinedly sings a piece that demonstrates the resolve and resiliency of the human spirit – *"we have to begin again."*

Brothers, sisters, and friends of FPCE, those words could be sung by us, and mainline congregations across this country. The elderly, wise theologian Walter Brueggemann says something I have been attempting to talk about, preach, and teach for the past four years; *Everyone now agrees that we are at a new season in the life of the North American church, a new season that is starkly different from what was but that has almost taken us by surprise. That new season of dislocation is surely to be seen as a profound challenge to the church."*

## Worship Schedule for February

### February 4

This Sunday we will be joined by the Boy Scouts from our own Troop 23. The young men in the scout program spend hours being trained, mentored, and encouraged by the scout leaders to become responsible adults. In this morning's readings, we disciples of Jesus are reminded of an often over-looked lesson, which is modeled by Jesus in Mark 1: 29-39.

### February 11

Transfiguration Sunday. The living God encountered Jesus, Peter, James, and John and transformed their lives. That same living God will be with us on this Sunday. Two spiritually enriching experiences will form the heart of this service. We will be ordaining and installing officers for the class of 2010 and we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on this Transfiguration Sunday. The Gospel of Mark gives us a glimpse of what the future holds for those who place their trust in the Risen One. See Mark 9: 2-9 for details.

### LENT BEGINS

The theme of Lent: *"Spiritual Depth Development"*

### February 14 – Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Please join us in the lounge for an intimate and meaningful service that leads us into the season of Lent. Scripture and song will prepare us to receive the Imposition of Ashes.

## STAFF DIRECTORY

120 East Swissvale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15218  
Phone: 412-241-4613  
www.fpcedgewood.org

Pastor:  
The Rev. Michael P. Rucker  
mprucker@fpcedgewood.org

Pastor Emeritus:  
Dr. Gerald Hollingsworth

Minister of Music:  
Shaun Cloonan  
music@fpcedgewood.org

Organist & Pianist:  
Sunny Sakai  
sunnysakai4@gmail.com

FROGS Director, Office &  
Cleaning Manager:  
Judy Mysels  
frogs@fpcedgewood.org  
office@fpcedgewood.org

Building Manager:  
Rob Mysels  
building@fpcedgewood.org

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 (cont'd.)

There are many explanations for how we got to this stage in American church life, but the dislocation is unmistakable.

At times, I sit on my back-porch rocking chair and consider all these tectonic shifts across the American landscape. I recall what I thought my ministry would be like when I started seminary in 1980 and what has emerged here in 2017. There are times when I am discouraged, disheartened, and lost.

But, as the Castner family learned, ***we have to begin again.*** In some ways, we do, too. I turn once again to Richard Rohr, an author, retreat leader, and teacher who has worked with the mainline church for longer than I have. He writes, *"There is something the church has learned throughout its history that gives me hope. The word 'change' normally refers to new beginnings. But transformation more often happens not when something new begins but when something old falls apart. The pain of something old falling apart – disruption and chaos – invites the soul to listen at a deeper level. It invites and sometimes forces the soul to go to a new place because the old place is not working anymore."*

In other words, *we have to begin again.* The season of Lent is a good time to do just that. An exciting adventure lies ahead of us.

*In Christ's service,  
Pastor Michael*

### PREPARING FOR LENT

Most of us wait till the last minute to decide what we will do for Lent to deepen our faith, and we wind up doing the usual: giving up chocolate, etc. (fasting). But Lent calls on us to take part in praying and giving, as well as fasting. We have 2 weeks until the start of Lent; perhaps this will be the year we take on new activities in all three disciplines: read each day's gospel or a new publication (e.g., Upper Room), make a charitable contribution each week, fast from a bad habit...and if you can do it for 6 weeks, who knows?! Lent could be the start of new habits and new blessings.

### Worship Schedule for February (cont'd.)

#### **February 18**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent will take us into the wilderness. A dry, dark, intimidating place to be. But that is where God does his best work within us. Read Mark 1: 9-15 and Psalm 107 to begin the wilderness journey. We celebrate an Emerging Worship Sunday.

#### **February 25**

One of the most courageous decisions to make is the decision to take the voice of God and Jesus seriously. When we do, an incredible adventure unfolds. Read Romans 4: 1-3, 16-22 and Mark 8: 31-38 – do we have the courage of Abraham and Peter?

# The Church Community



## **ASH WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14, AT 7:00 P.M.**

For this informal yet meaningful service, we will gather in the lounge. Sunny and Shaun will lead our singing, and Pastor Michael will lead our praying and worshipping. The service concludes with the "Imposition of Ashes" on the foreheads of worshipers. On this evening, we will begin our spiritual journey through the season of Lent.



## **RENOVATION UPDATE**

As of Friday afternoon on January 26, 2018, I was informed that we can get Edgewood Borough permits for both phases of the renovation. I am out of town until March 3, 2018 so details such as cost of permit or any drawing comments will not be known until I return, but a permit will be issued for the HVAC first phase. No contracts will be issued until there is a Session review. FPCE has a line of credit for \$200,000 approved and ready to make withdrawals immediately. More next month.

*Tom Ochs*

## **HOSTS/HOSTESSES NEEDED**



Are you willing to take a turn hosting Social Hour after worship services? Lorraine is happy to make sure we have social time to visit after services, but some weeks it can be challenging to

manage the set up (especially on 1st Sunday Communion weeks.) Please consider signing up to Host; brew the coffee, provide a couple dozen snacks and set up/clean up. Detailed instructions for where to find things and how to work the coffee maker are posted in the lounge kitchen. The sign up sheet is on the table outside kitchen. Thanks.



## **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** **Sunday, February 4**

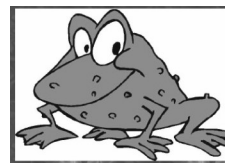
**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY:** In 1990, a Super Bowl Sunday prayer inspired a group of young people to do something more than celebrate a football game. They created the Souper Bowl of Caring, and have mobilized youth across the country to raise



more than \$71 million since '91 for people in need. **ALL THE MONEY RAISED** goes directly to a charity of our choosing—no administrative costs are deducted. Please drop at least \$1.00 in a soup pot that will be at the exits of the sanctuary this morning.

## **The Bulletin Board**

- ♦ Travis Allabon, representing his school, Trinity Christian, was on Hometown HighQ on television on Jan. 27.
- ♦ Sympathies to Florence Pickels, in the passing of her sister Marjorie (101 years old), and also to the McCrady family in the passing of Eddie McCrady.
- ♦ Congratulations to Emily Lilly on her engagement to Ryan Pocratsky.



**F.R.O.G.S.**  
**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**  
(FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF)

The FROGS After-School Program is hopping along nicely. We had some snowy, cold days, with a few school delays, but we still met and tried to stay warm.

Our volunteers are wonderful! Flo Raisig, found a recipe to make snowflake wontons. She bought all the supplies; the kids cut the wontons into snowflakes; Ruth Miller fried them in oil, and then they were sprinkled with powdered sugar. So cute!!! Then on Jan. 23 (National Pie Day) pudding pies were made and eaten by our FROGS.

Special thanks to Emily Lilly, who came in Jan. 30 to teach the FROGS (see next page for more information).

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 Krispy bars, cookies, etc. Thank you!

*Judy Mysels, director*



# Christian Depth Development

If there is one thing that all of us, regardless of faith commitment, church affiliation, political persuasion, economic status, educational background can agree on it is this: *these are challenging times for churches, communities, and our nation.*

We can do three things when the going gets a bit rough. One, bury our heads in the sand and pray for things to just get better. Two, address the current challenges in the same way we did in the past. Three, remember that **God is our refuge and strength a very present help in times of trouble.** Together, we can turn to the God who is our refuge and strength to help us now – *in these challenging times.*

Throughout the season of Lent, I invite you to join us for two promising opportunities to grow and deepen our faith together.

## ON SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:45 IN THE LOUNGE:

*The Journey to Jerusalem: A story of Jesus' Last Days.* In this imaginative retelling, author John Pritchard, a Bishop of Oxford from 2007 – 2014, explores the gospel of Luke by looking through the eyes of the disciple John. *The Journey to Jerusalem* provides weekday readings for Lent from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, along with a poem for each Saturday.

## ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 7:00 IN THE LOUNGE:

Last year's Wednesday evening classes proved to be a source of inspiration and fellowship for all participants. I anticipate that we will have the same uplifting experience this year. *Holy Solitude: Lenten Reflections with Saints, Hermits, Prophets, and Rebels* by Heidi Haverkamp, a writer, preacher, and retreat leader whose focus is spiritual development. Our faith is full of heroes who experienced God powerfully in solitude. Heidi Haverkamp offers their inspiring stories, thoughtful daily reflections, and practical spiritual disciplines to discover how time apart can open our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts to the still, small voice of God – and transform us for a life of faith and service.

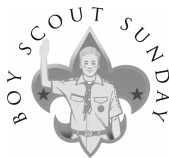
## AN ON-LINE LENTEN COMMUNITY?

I am a novice at social media, but a novice who is willing to learn. I am looking for a way to open the above two discipleship opportunities on-line. Most all of us have access to email, the FPCE website, or Facebook page. I am sure we can develop a way for you (and your friends?) to deepen their faith using the social media technology that is all around us.



### FROGS GUEST EMILY LILLY

On Tuesday, Jan. 30, the non-profit organization PACES (Pittsburgh Assistance Center for Educators and Students) will again visit the FROGS program. PACES is run by FPCE member Emily Lilly. Emily always looks forward to visiting FROGS for PACES's "After-school Connections" programs. This time, the students will complete a program on Winter Safety. They will focus on how to stay safe during cold weather and flu season. PACES thanks Judy and all the FROGS volunteers for continually welcoming us and for all they do for FROGS



### SCOUT SUNDAY, FEB. 4TH

This tradition has been part of the program of Troop 23 and First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood since Scout Sunday was first developed. Scouts and Leaders have participated in the service over the years. It is also a time for the Boy Scouts of America to recognize its partnership with the church. Annually the church and troop must apply for a new charter with the Boy Scouts of America and the charter is presented at Scout Sunday. Boy Scout Troop 23 leaders and youth are grateful for the relationship we have with the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood and welcome all members of the congregation to get involved with us.



# February



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SCOUT DAY/ SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY  9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class  11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Scouts(SC)	10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS  7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Scouts(SC)	10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS  7:00 Session 7:00 AA	ASH WEDNESDAY    7:00 Service	3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	OFFICE CLOSED  7:00 Scouts(SC)	10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS  7:00 AA		3:45 FROGS	8:00 AA	8:30 AA
25	26	27	28			
9:30 Choir Reh. 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7:00 Scouts(SC)	10:00 Book Club  3:45 FROGS  7:00 AA				





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

120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218

*Lent begins Feb. 14th!*

