



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



news from the  
**EDGE**

The Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood

May 2021

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

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR IN-PERSON  
AND ONLINE WORSHIP**

WWW.FPCEDGEWOOD.ORG

## May 2021 Worship Schedule

We continue our Sunday morning worship in the socially distanced in-person and online formats. Worshipers attending in person at 11:00am are reminded to follow the established safety protocols (temperature check upon arrival, proper mask wearing, sitting socially distanced, etc.). Those watching from home may watch live on Facebook, later on-demand on YouTube or in an audio-only format on our SoundCloud channel.

**May 2 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter.** We celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper this morning. A reminder that for those who are participating from home, we have pre-packaged communion elements that can be picked up at the church during regular office hours. Pastor Tony will preach a sermon focusing on John 21:15-25 titled "Peter, do you love me?"

**May 9 – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter.** On this Mother's Day, Pastor Tony delivers a sermon titled "The Influence of Godly Motherhood" based on 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-17.

**May 16 – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter.** "The Promise That Will be Kept" will focus on Acts 1:9-11.

**May 23 – Pentecost.** The "birthday of the church" when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles like fire and wind. Pastor Tony reads from Acts 2:1-13 and asks the question: "What does this mean?"

**May 30 – Trinity Sunday.** On this Memorial Day weekend, we consider "The Challenge of the Resurrection: An Empowered Church" as Pastor Tony preaches from Ezekiel 27:1-14 and Acts 2:1-20.



120 East Swissvale Avenue  
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www.fpcedgewood.org  
412-241-4613



*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.*

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Pastor

**The Rev. Anthony Rivera**  
pastortony@fpcedgewood.org

Office & Cleaning Manager  
FROGS Program Director

**Judy Mysels**  
office@fpcedgewood.org  
frogs@fpcedgewood.org

Building Manager

**Rob Mysels**  
building@fpcedgewood.org

Minister of Music

**Shaun Cloonan**  
music@fpcedgewood.org

Pianist

**Sunny Sakai**  
sunnysakai4@gmail.com

**LOVE GOD  
EACH OTHER  
OUR NEIGHBORS**



A thought from the pen of George Swinnock (c. 1627-1673), on the topic of prayer. It is based on Psalm 50.15, where we read, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

"God is so gracious that He condescends to converse with poor, sinful, dust and ashes. Prayer is one of the most pleasant ways He has appointed for children of men to walk with Him. His children whisper to Him in the ear, and open their minds and hearts as His intimate friends. Prayer is our chief duty and brings heaven down to man. There is no duty that has so many promises attached to it, gives more honour to God, or which receives more honour from God. It is a guard to secure the fort of the heart, a porter to keep the door of the lips, and a shield to protect the hands. It perfumes every relation and profits every condition. No one can deprive you of this privilege. You can pray with Peter on the house top, with Jonah at the bottom of the ocean, walking in the field with Isaac, and with our Saviour on the mountain, or in a prison with Paul. Every saint is God's temple and may pray anywhere. Every house is a house of prayer. Prayer is pouring out the soul to God in the name of Christ, crying, 'Abba, Father!' A prayer in a moment can fly to the highest heavens. It is a sweet savour to God, a terror to the devil, and a shelter to a Christian. Bernard calls it the conqueror of him who is invincible, and Luther says that it is omnipotent. By prayer fire has been quenched, water divided, the mouth of lions stopped, iron gates opened, the windows of heaven opened, the course of nature overturned, diseases removed, health restored, sin subdued, grace bestowed, kingdoms supported, enemies scattered, the blind restored, and devils cast out. Prayer is the midwife to bring mercies to the believer that were conceived in the wounds of promise. God commands His people if they are in any perplexity to call upon Him in the day of trouble and He will hear."<sup>1</sup>

Let not your heart be troubled.

Glory be to God!

Rev. Anthony Rivera

<sup>1</sup> Richard Rushing, ed., *Voices from the Past: Puritan Devotional Readings* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 315.



# Session Notes

At their April meeting, the Session:

- Agreed that the community summer dinners were not possible during the Covid pandemic.
- Voted to budget \$2,000 to support the community dinners when Covid subsides.
- Voted to add Mr T. Hoffman's name to the list of people who can co-sign FPCE checks.
- Approved the use of the side lawn or Gathering Place on June 12, 2021 for a memorial service for Nancy Anderson.

## Moment for Stewardship

Stewardship may be approached from a wholistic point of view. It not only concerns money but involves many other aspects of our lives. As the saying goes, time is money. In the book, *Five Things Every Christian Needs to Grow*, the author, pastor and theologian, R.C. Sproul mentions the following life experiences that enhance spiritual growth:

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Worship
- Service
- Stewardship



This small book is readily available in Amazon and I encourage all faithful to study it.

Stewardship is a spiritual matter and a matter of our life priorities.

*- Paul Ohoi, Stewardship Committee Chair*

## Treasurer's Report: March 31, 2021

As of March 31st the income and expenses for FPCE are as follows:

Total Income - \$53,108.20	Actual YTD Budget - \$52,516.03
Total Expense - \$48,862.30	Actual YTD Budget - \$54,402.19



Income exceeds expenses by \$4,245.90. Congregation donations are \$27,786.03 which is on-budget year to date. Expenses are under budget due primarily to a mild winter and the church still not operating at 100%. All expenses items are within the YTD budget.

We are fortunate to have a congregation that generously supports the mission of the church.

*Tom Ochs, Treasurer*

## Nominating Committee Update

We are looking for 1-3 individuals willing to serve on the 2022 Nominating Committee. This is the committee responsible for seeking members to fill leadership positions on Session, Deacons, Auditors, and the next year's Nominating Committee. Tom Hoffman will be our chair. Sallie Monk will serve as the deacon representative. If interested, please contact Rhonda Apeossos (412-496-1642). This is my last task as the 2021 Nominating Committee Chair. Thank you!!



## PW Picnic?

In regular times, this would be when our Presbyterian Women's Joy Circle would advertise their end-of-year summer picnic. Our Circle has not met in person for over a year, but we would like to attempt some sort of gathering in June, outdoors. If you would be interested in hosting this event and have the outside space to do so, please contact Sallie Monk to discuss details and possible dates.

## F.R.O.G.S. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

**FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF**



First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood FROGS' program staff is missing their tadpoles so badly!!! We are trying to organize a FROGS reunion mid-May (week of May 17: Monday, Tuesday or Thursday, Friday) on our side lawn (weather permitting). All of the volunteers have been vaccinated. Most of our volunteers are available that week but are still waiting to hear back from our tadpoles and their families? Please look at your calendars and figure out which day might work for you and your family? Tentative time would be around usual pick up/dismissal time: 3:30PM until 5PM? Would love to catch up with the tadpoles and their families since the shut down last year? Once we hear everyone's responses/requests, we will figure out a consensus from responses received. If you have any questions/concerns, please don't hesitate to call 412/241-4613 or email: [frogs@fpcedgewood.org](mailto:frogs@fpcedgewood.org). Thank you, Judy Mysels

## Outdoor Service Planned for June

The worship committee is planning an outdoor worship service on **Sunday, June 6**, with a rain date of June 20. We're going to try something new for the set-up this time, however. Rather than meeting on the side lawn (which is always hit or miss with rain and possible soft ground/wet grass plus the pain of dragging out the sound system, setting it all up then tearing down), the service will take place in the back of the building in the alley behind the Gathering Place.

We've figured out a way to use the sound system that is already in the Gathering Place from when we previously held our summer services there, and have a sort of built-in staging area with the ramp and stairs leading to the GP entrance. The congregation would be seated on the street facing the building, with the GP speakers in the windows facing outside. The hope is to get at least some of the Emerging Worship Ensemble back together for the first time since February 2020 to lead music for this service.



We hope this will allow greater attendance. In this regard, we will need help moving chairs from the Gathering Place to the street before the service and back inside afterward. As always, more hands will make for less work so any help will be greatly appreciated! If you are able and willing to come at 9:45am, please contact the church office.

## Strawberry Festival

There are some very preliminary discussions taking place about how to possibly hold the Deacons' annual Strawberry Festival in a safe manner, such as take-out only, grab-and-go, or even a drive thru. Deacons should look to hear from moderator Mary Ann Hartman in the coming weeks, and details will be communicated in next month's newsletter if confirmed.



# The Bulletin Board

## Sharing the Joys & Concerns of FPCE

- Apologies for the sad-looking Easter flowers that were purchased from Bob's Market and those we didn't receive. We are looking for another vendor to buy both Christmas poinsettias and Easter flowers.
- Thank you to Flo Raisig for arranging the Easter flowers in the sanctuary
- Speaking of the sanctuary, have you noticed the new banner hanging in front of the organ? Our crafty Lorraine Douthett was at it again and created the image of Jesus that says "He is Risen" from fabric she procured from her mother's house. Thank you, Lorraine, for continuing to make our already beautiful sanctuary even more so!
- Thank you to Paul Otori, Rhonda Apossos, and Bethany Rivera for joining as readers during our Good Friday evening worship service.
- Congratulations to Spencer Lehrian for his role of Benny in Central Catholic's rendition of *Guys & Dolls*
- Jon Apossos will graduate from Winchester Thurston on June 3. He will be attending Purdue University in the Fall to study engineering.
- So happy to announce that my granddaughter Alyssa and her boyfriend Eddie were engaged on January 2, 2021. The wedding is planned for September 3, 2022 and I can't wait for their big day...Ruth Miller
- Karen and I are blessed to celebrate our 33rd anniversary on April 23 ...Paul Otori

### Sakai news...

- Inori studies at Rice University in Texas, pursuing a master's degree in violin performance.
- Hibiki graduated with two master's degrees, social work and public policy from University of Chicago last year. He lives in Chicago, works for a company specialized in supporting vulnerable populations – from creating policy all the way to ground level, hands-on work.
- Nozomi is an OB-GYN resident at University of North Carolina Medical Center.

## Health Update from Pastor Michael

Before I update you on my progress, I must extend a word of gratitude. My heart is warmed and my spirits lifted to know how many of you are praying for me, thinking of me, sending cards, messages, and phone calls expressing your concern and support throughout my recovery. My woe-begotten left ankle was finally amputated on January 26. An infection had settled into the ankle fusion hardware and subsequently moved into the bone. Upon reading the X-ray, the doctor's decision to amputate was immediate. I joyfully received the news. I had grown very weary of the discomfort and limping.

The day after the surgery I talked enthusiastically about being able to walk pain-free. My nurse turned to me and said, "You still have a way to go before that happens. You will not simply slip a prosthetic ankle onto your leg and walk away. You are looking at weeks of recovery and physical therapy." Boy, was he right! Yet I will readily admit to loving every one of the physical and occupational therapists I have worked with. Each one patiently has walked at my side as I relearn how to walk alone.

But my most patient, helpful, and encouraging healer is a woman you all know – my wife, Heather. For the past three months she has been my feet and legs and steadfast support. God led me to an incredible woman the day I met her.

As for my progress, during this morning's rehabilitation session, I walked without assistance. No walker. No cane. My own two legs and prosthesis. The therapist followed me step by step, encouraging me and instructing me. "Move through your hips, bend your knee, straighten your leg and rock let your foot rock you forward. Take it slow. Don't stare at your feet. Head up. Eyes forward. Keep your balance." She has a half dozen more exercises for me – steps, ramps, striding sideways, walking backwards. I think this was easier when I was nine months old!

This walking without pain or a limp will happen soon! Thanks be to God and the dozens of health professionals who made this possible. I am officiating for my nephew's wedding on May 22. I will do it on my own two feet. I have offered to walk the bride down the aisle, but I think she has some other guy in mind.

God bless all of you – and walk on!  
Pastor Michael

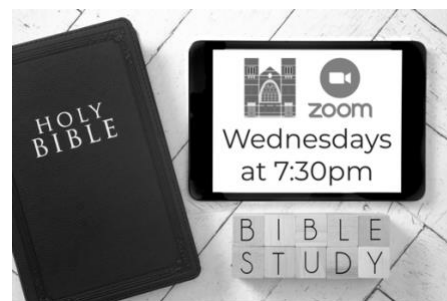
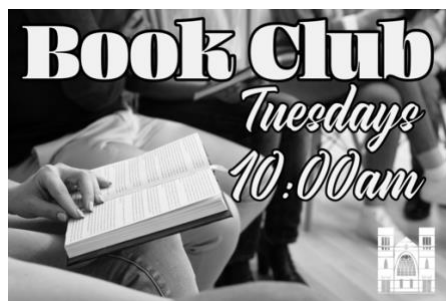
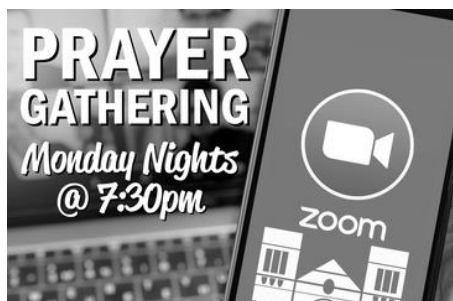
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## Weekly Zoom Meetings Continue

Join one of our weekly gatherings on Zoom for prayer, discussion, and study.

On Mondays at 7:30pm, we gather for intentional prayer focusing on our members, community, and world. Tuesday mornings at 10:00am is the weekly Book Club meeting. The group decides on a book that they read together and discuss the week's portion. During March, they focused on Lamentations as a Lenten study. And Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm is a Bible study led by Pastor Tony.

An e-mail invitation is sent out weekly with Zoom links, meeting ID and passcode. To be added to the email list, contact the office. And if you don't use Zoom on your device, you can call in to the meetings to participate by voice. Call Judy in the office to receive the number, meeting ID and passcode to participate if you don't receive the email.



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## Reminder of In-Person Worship Guidelines

- everyone must wear a mask properly
- there is a 50-person maximum capacity in the sanctuary, including the pastor and worship staff
- refrain from singing, handshaking, and hugging
- please move personal discussions after the service outdoors to avoid inside gatherings
- please observe social distancing in the pews - space apart from each other in the marked pews

We understand that each person is different with the possible risks he or she may have. Live-streamed online worship will continue to be available on Facebook and YouTube for those who choose to stay home until they feel safe to rejoin in person.

## How open is your congregation to the winds of change?

By Chip Hardwick | *Presbyterians Today*

*Acts 2:1–21 is a lectionary text for May 23, Pentecost Sunday.*

God wants a church where all people can hear directly that they are loved.

That was my most important takeaway from a trip to Ethiopia in 2008. A group of us traveled through the part of the country where the Arsi Oromo live. The Arsi Oromo is one of the main branches of people inhabiting the Arsi, West Arsi and Bale Zones of Ethiopia. We were there to learn about evangelism from the PC(USA)'s partner denomination, the Mekane Yesus Church. The Arsi Oromo speak another language and have different customs from most Ethiopians who identify as Orthodox, a Christian tradition associated with the country's Amharic language and culture. With most of Ethiopia's Christian songs and rituals rooted in Amharic, the Arsi Oromo never quite felt at home in worship.

The Mekane Yesus Church, however, created a space where the Arsi Oromo people could worship in their own language and embrace their cultural traditions. The Arsi Oromo would no longer overhear the Gospel from their Amharic siblings. They would know directly that God loved them. You can imagine how meaningful that was!

Something tells me that the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians and all the others visiting Jerusalem at Pentecost had a similar reaction when the Galilean believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, began speaking in all of their languages. All of a sudden, these outsiders felt at home and were able to hear and understand the good news of Christ. Seeking to rationalize the miracle, the crowd accused Jesus' followers of being drunk. Peter counters that they can't be drunk as it's only 9 a.m. (Clearly, Peter did not go to the same college, or pledge the same fraternity, that I did!) He then reminded the crowd of Joel's prophecy that said the Holy Spirit in the last days would pour itself out on all people.

My experience in Ethiopia traveled back with me to the church in central Illinois where I served at the time. Like many congregations, we were taking baby steps to become more diverse. And, like many, we were frustrated by the lack of progress. My time with the Mekane Yesus eventually helped me realize that part of the lack of progress was that our church environment was undeniably white and upper middle class, not just in the style of architecture of the new sanctuary built alongside an already lovely fellowship hall, but in our leadership (myself definitely included) and practices. We needed the Pentecost vision of creating a place where people of varying backgrounds could hear the Gospel directly. We were not purposefully excluding others, but we also (again, myself definitely included) had not wrestled with what it would mean to change so that others could feel at home.

I wish I could tell you that our baby steps turned into leaps and bounds. It is certainly a God-sized task to change a church so that others can hear the Gospel spoken directly to them. But the good news of our Pentecost passage is that it can be done, because it is the Holy Spirit who enables that change, rather than our own amazing insights or teeth-gritting hard work. The Holy Spirit inspired the chef on staff (didn't I tell you it was an upper-middle-class white culture?) to partner with the local homeless shelter to create a Culinary Arts Training Academy. Suddenly, five days a week, several non-upper-middle-class, non-white students were in the kitchen learning job skills. Sometimes suddenly and sometimes gradually, the members of the church embraced the students. I'll never forget one day when several other clients of the homeless shelter arrived to eat lunch, and the students welcomed them to their church — the church where they had heard the Gospel spoken to them directly and the church whose vision was beginning to expand to truly welcome them.

*Chip Hardwick is the transitional synod executive of the Synod of the Covenant, which includes presbyteries in Michigan and Ohio.*



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# Join us for worship



In-person, socially distanced



Facebook Live Stream



YouTube channel