

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

October 2019

PASTOR'S POINT OF VIEW



Michael P. Rucker
Pastor

Grace and peace to all!

The gift the church of Jesus Christ has to offer the world, especially these days, when it feels like we are teetering on the edge of chaos—we are people of hope. (see Isaiah 40:31)

**those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.**

**They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.**

As a church and as a nation, we are being tested and pushed in ways we never have endured before. We can allow our disappointment that church is not what it

used to be swallow us up in its despair. We can give in to the anxiety that is sweeping across our nation and feel the fear. Or, we can choose to live in the hope that has empowered the church for generations. Brothers and sisters, trust that even now God is preparing us for something new, and good, and right, and true.

Even now, seeds are being planted that will grow into our future lives. This morning one of my devotionals read, *"All situations present seeds of new understanding, if we are open to them."* Let us be open and trusting.

Yes, as a church and nation we are facing scary questions. We have not been here before, there is no roadmap to be our guide. But, thanks be to God, we have every reason to hope that even now God is leading us toward something that is good. May the wise words of the mystic Julian of Norwich become yours: *"All will be well and all will be well and every kind of thing shall be well."*

Pastor Michael

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

October 6 – World Communion Sunday

"Take and eat. Take and drink. Do this in remembrance of me." These words of Jesus resound through the centuries. On this World Communion Sunday we will join brothers and sisters from every nation, gather around one, great, big table of communion with our savior and brother, Jesus. Please join us and share in this mystery of faith.

October 13

God saw all that he had made—and it was very good! And then God handed it all over to us. So, how do you think we are doing with God's very good creation? On World Communion Sunday we communed with Christians around the world, this morning we will focus on our communion with the earth.

October 20 – Emerging Worship

We will read the story of how a poor, weak widow found justice where there had been none. Her story leads to a haunting question: **When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?**

October 27

In spinning a robe of your own righteousness, before the sun goes down you will find it all unraveled. (Curtis Hudson) Yes, God calls us, encourages us, and empowers us to live righteous lives. Awesome. But are we trusting God, or our own goodness. See a wonderfully simple and powerful story in Luke 18: 9-14

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.

REPORT FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

We have been reaching out and making contacts with neighboring Presbyterian Churches. One recent development is the communication with the Upper Room Church in Regent Square. They are a small church of young devoted folks (oldest is 40 years old) who hold their worship services in the Wilkins Community Building in Regent Square (<http://www.pghupperroom.com/main/>). They have some qualities we do not have and we have some that they do not have. We are in the very early phases of our affiliation. (Pastor Michael is having coffee and conversation with the pastor of Upper Room, Brendan Ashley, on Friday, October 4.) By finding ways to collaborate, perhaps something good will happen.

For those of you who may have missed it, here is the summary of our Congregational Discussion from August which provides the context of this brief report.

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

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Our Church Community



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Saturday, October 5 Noon – 1:00 pm

on the side lawn (weather permitting.)

Please plan to stop by with your loved furry friend; invite your friends too!

Allow us, also, to be inspired by the pet you know and love.

“Be the person your dog thinks you are.” – C.J. Frick



WE ARE

HAVING FUN!

Adult Sunday School at 9:45 in the lounge

A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in its World for our World

I know, to many of us having a fun Sunday School class is an oxymoron. In this case it is not.

We, the people of the Sunday morning adult class, will listen to you, share our stories and thoughts, and find joy in the new things we learn! Join us whenever you would like: any Sunday will do.

SESSION NOTES

Over the Summer Session approved:

The use of the Sanctuary on Sunday, August 18, at 2:00 P.M. for an Edgewood Symphony rehearsal.

The use of the kitchen by Dr. Amy Andrews and her group, to prep for Picklesburg, on July 24-25 from 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

The use of the Sanctuary on Saturday, August 17 at 7P.M., with set up at 5P.M., for a concert by Voces Solis. The Gathering Place may be used for a reception following the concert.

The use of the Social Room one Monday/month by a group of girls who meet at the same time as the Boy Scouts.

Session also met with three elders from Waverly Presbyterian Church, to compare our churches, in an attempt to get to know each other better.

In September Session had a combined meeting with the Deacons to review the calendar for the remainder of 2019. Session had their first look at the proposed 2020 budget.

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 Wilkesburg 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 FPCE walkers. You can also go to their website: <http://www.crophungerwalk.org/pittsburgh-east-pa> to electronically send money or sponsor a walker under FPCE's name or Judy Mysels. Other walkers this year are Rhonda and Jon Apossos. Offering envelopes marked "Crop Walk" are also accepted.



FROGS began its Fall session on September 3 with 10 returning tadpoles and 4 new ones. We also have a fantastic group of volunteers: Flo Raisig, Dan Mielke, Ruth Miller, Mary Ross, Rick Masten, Ed Masten and Sallie Monk. We have been getting acquainted and re-acquainted so far in September and have been trying to take advantage of the last nice weather, playing on the church side lawn. A huge thank you to Wayne Dean and the Board of Deacons for donating snacks and drinks. We should be set for awhile! They are all truly appreciated!

If anyone is interested in sharing their talents/jobs with us, please contact Judy Mysels at frogs@fpcedgewood.org or 412-241-4613. Also, volunteers are needed to help with homework, 4:00 to 4:30PM or 4:30 to 5:00PM, since we have more FROGS. Clearances are needed. Anyone interested, please call or email.

Judy Mysels, Director

Strategic Planning Discussion Report (cont'd. from p. 2)

Presbyterian Church attended 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 Otori, on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee



A LETTER FROM WILKINSBURG COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Dear Friends,

This year, as we give thanks for our blessings, please remember those who are not as fortunate. For 51 years, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry has served the hungry, the homeless, and the underserved.

You'll hear more about our activities this year in the upcoming Well, which should reach your mailboxes in a couple of weeks. In summary, though, I can share that we provided over 20,000 meals to children and youth through our childhood nutrition program. We also provided meals to the Wilkinsburg senior center meetings. During the year our food pantry served close to 1,200 families. Our congregational partners have collected back-to-school knapsacks for Wilkinsburg kids. This Thanksgiving we will distribute 100 meal kits to families in need; at Christmas, we will distribute another 100 meal kits, plus supplemental food for breakfasts and lunches, and hygiene kits for families.

Your donations play an important part in this mission. Pennsylvania supports a portion of our efforts to feed kids; this amounts to only 22% of our income; the rest is generated through congregational and individual gifts and donations from businesses, organizations and foundations. As a participant in this effort, you are an important part of this Wilkinsburg mission, and we thank you for your ongoing generosity.

I hope we can count on your generosity again this year.

Blessings!

Ruth A. Kittner

Ruth A. Kittner, Ph.D.

Executive Director

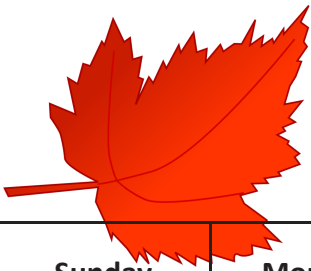
AND NOW FOR SOMETHING NEW...

Heather Wilson wrote a short form of lectio divina (reading scripture and responding) for the publication *Living Faith* for a number of years. Now, she is publishing a blog with some of those writings, as well as a number that have never been published. The website is :

www.ALampUntoMyFeet.net

She hopes it will occasionally provide a light on your path.





OCTOBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Weds.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	2	3 3:45 FROGS	4 8:00 AA	5 12Noon Blessing Of the Animals 8:30 AA (SR)
6 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	7 7:00 Scouts	8 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA 7:00 Session Mtg.	9	10 3:45 FROGS	11 8:00 AA	12 8:30 AA (SR)
13 9:30 Worship En 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Emerging Worship 12:15 Fellowship CROP WALK	14 OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 Scouts	15 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	16	17 3:45 FROGS	18 8:00 AA	19 8:30 AA (SR)
20 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	21 7:00 Scouts	22 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	23	24 3:45 FROGS	25 8:00 AA	26 8:30 AA
27 9:30 Choir 9:45 Adult Class 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship	28 7:00 Scouts 7:00 Joy Circle	29 10:00 Book Club 3:45 FROGS 7:00 AA	30	31 3:45 FROGS		



120 E. Swissvale Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15218



Sunday Mornings

9:30 Choir Rehearsal

9:45 Adult Class

11:00 Morning Worship

Tuesday Mornings

10:00 Book Club at Apessos' Home

4th Monday:

7:00PM Joy Circle (church lounge)

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