



ELMHURST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2020

Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PASTOR'S + CORNER

REV. TRACI SMITH



Dear Elmhurst Presbyterian Members and Friends,

This month's Pastor's Corner is an excerpt from a sermon I preached in January on salt and light. Let me know what you think about being the salt of the earth. The passage I'm referring to here comes from the book of Matthew, chapter 5, verse 13: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot."

Salt is something that is so important, even to modern times, that we sometimes forget everything it did in the ancient world, before some of our modern technology. Not only does it make food tastier and preserves food so that it doesn't spoil, it has healing properties, and even was used, right around the time of Jesus, as currency. In the book, *Salt: A World History*, we learn: "The Roman army required salt for its soldiers and for its horses and livestock. At times soldiers were even paid in salt, which was the origin of the word *salary* and the expression 'worth his salt' or 'earning his salt.' In fact, the Latin word *sal* became the French word *solde*, meaning pay, which is the origin of the word, soldier."

So hearing the phrase, "You are the salt of the world" to an ancient ear would make complete sense to the listener. And what about the phrase "Salt that loses its saltiness?"

Salt actually can't lose its saltiness, but salt that was harvested from the Dead Sea sometimes was mixed with other compounds like sand and gypsum that were completely worthless. They were like a salt that had lost its saltiness.

Jesus is asking us to be real salt, not gypsum.

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PASTOR'S CORNER

So how do we do this? How are we real salt in a world where authenticity is hard to come by? In my sermon, I elaborated on these three concepts which I share with you again here:

1 Be the same person everywhere. The world is watching to make sure that we don't have a "church persona" and a "work persona" and a "driving persona." The person we are on the road ought to be the same person we are at work, and school, and home.

2 Be grateful. It's amazing how far gratitude for our life and our life's circumstances can go in terms of being salt to the world. It's not common to express gratitude out loud, and when we do, people notice.

3 Care for the least of these. It doesn't mean that we have to take care of the whole world, only that we might consider doing for one person what we wish we could do for everyone.

Friends, you are the salt of the earth. What will you do to bring flavor and authenticity to the world around you? It's an honor to be on this journey together with you.

With grace and peace,
Pastor Traci

MUSIC FEBRUARY

BY SUSAN SMENTEK

HYMNS AND SONGS INSPIRED BY EXODUS

BUT MOSES SAID, "PARDON YOUR SERVANT, LORD. PLEASE SEND SOMEONE ELSE."

EXODUS 4:13

My first glance at the list of Scripture readings for February worship made me stop and think, "is there someone else who could make the music lists for February?" Because, besides, *Go Down, Moses*, what other hymns do you know about the Exodus? My second thought was, "Send me!" Because the answer to my question about hymns is this: almost every hymn is related to Exodus. In addition, scores of contemporary Christian songs draw from the same well. Themes of faith, deliverance, sinfulness, wandering, being sent forth, God being present, God's Covenant, the Ten Commandments, the list goes on.

As we worship joyfully, let's look forward to singing and playing some of our favorites and, exploring a few new songs. Members of the congregation have often mentioned *Here I Am, Lord* as one of their favorite hymns. It's a great song for this February.

BY EMILY CULELLA, DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY

LOVE MEANS WE ARE FRONT AND CENTER

A few weeks ago, my 6-year-old asked me if I loved God more than I loved him. I told him that I believe that we love God by loving each other. In a child's mind (and also many adult minds), hierarchy is important. It's a way to understand a world that can feel disorganized or confusing. But for my Sonny, he wanted to know if I loved him first and above all. One of my favorite things that I get to do as a parent is tell each of my kids how and why I love them so much. Especially when they ask. It's like an extra little gift, along with seeing them learn and grow. I was so gratified to tell him that love is so huge and encompassing that I love him first along with everyone else whom I love.

Love means we are all front and center, especially to our parent God. Richard Rohr, the Franciscan priest and theologian, argues that while God is love, God is also the being that inspires all love. While God has meaning, God is also the being that inspires all other things to have meaning. In that way, love is not only a thing we share with others, but a thing out of which other things are created. In that way, each small act of love, each thoughtfulness, each kindness matters and creates. What a beautiful world we live in, when our acts of love are not unnoticed and value-less, but instead generative and healing.

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What
We're
Learning
Downstairs

Can you believe this is the month when Lent starts? Whew! Sometimes the liturgical calendar moves like a speeding train.

This month, we'll be learning about Jesus' life and early ministry. We learn about his beliefs, his personality, his interactions, and his hardships. We'll be learning our Bible verse from Mark, in sign-language, and working to understand 1st century life!



UPCOMING EVENTS

AFTER CHURCH FORUMS



Two Nationalisms: Two Stories, One Land

Sunday, February 16 from 11:30 am– 12:15 pm

A 30-minute presentation by Dr. Art and Suzanne Pitz on the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, obstacles to successful peace negotiations, and the origins and effects of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement from the perspective of their personal stories and their relationships with Israelis, Palestinians, Bedouins, Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Holy Land.



Make a Mini Greenhouse

Sunday, February 23 from 11:30 am– 12:15 pm

Come help our University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Ruth Schroeter, practice her teaching skills at this class. Learn about cool weather crops like lettuce and spinach and make your own mini greenhouse. Please bring an empty gallon jug from milk or water, if you have one. Adults and children with a helper are welcome. Please sign up on the list in the Nelson-White Room or email Ruth at schroeterruth@yahoo.com.

PADS HOMELESS SHELTER

Our PADS homeless shelter needs your help. We need volunteers to open and close the site, sort donations, shop for socks and underwear, etc. There is a sign up sheet in the Nelson-White Room to open and close our site, which takes 45 minutes on a Saturday night or Sunday Morning. It is easy and we

will train you. Please see Diana Riekse (dianariekse@gmail.com) or Pam Fuesz (twofueszs@att.net) to see how you can get involved. Also, our next host weekend is February 29 and March 1. Please mark your calendars so that you can be a part of this great mission.

What is Your Personal Mission?

The EPC Mission Team wants to learn more about you. What is your personal mission? Do you donate to an organization that is meaningful to you? Do you volunteer your time somewhere outside EPC? Tell us all about it on the personal Mission Wall. Contact Pam Fuesz personally or via email at twofueszs@att.net to sign up or learn more.

A CALL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PER CAPITA OFFERING

What is Per Capita?

Per capita is how Presbyterians share equally, responsibly, and interdependently in the costs of governing the Presbyterian Church (USA). Per capita is:

- » The major source of funding for the Presbytery
- » Requested from every congregation
- » Based on total active membership of each church
- » Paid by the Presbytery to the Synod of Lincoln Trails and General Assembly regardless of what we actually collect

What Does Per Capita Provide?

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a connectional church. Presbyterian congregations worship, serve, and govern together. Per capita contributions fund the shared governing responsibilities for the whole church. Together with the per capita contributions from churches throughout the country, they support the governance work of the presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly.

Presbyterian ministers and elected elders serve as representatives to each governing body. Commissioners to each Assembly represent their individual churches, or governing bodies, but their main purpose is to prayerfully and obediently seek to discern the will of Jesus Christ together. Per capita contributions support ministries such as:

- » The work of Presbytery of Chicago's Commission on Ministry and Commission on Preparation for Ministry
- » The work of our staff and various committees
- » Official meetings of the governing bodies of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly

Through per capita, the Presbytery of Chicago is able to:

- » Help congregations with pastoral transitions
- » Train and support interim ministers
- » Resolve congregational conflicts
- » Care for ministers Christian Educators, and their families
- » Help prepare people for service as ordained ministers
- » Organize and run presbytery assembly meetings
- » Provide staff to support congregations

If you are able to support this offering by paying any amount, please make a note on your check or envelope that the gift is to support "per capita." If you have any questions, please see Tom Mason, Clerk of the Session, or Pastor Traci. Thank you for your generosity!

EPC: A GREEN CONGREGATION!

In January, Elmhurst Presbyterian Church applied to be an Earth Care Congregation. As part of the process, we have taken the Earth Care Pledge. Take a look:















The Social Justice and Peacemaking Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in consultation with congregations and presbyteries across the denomination, developed a five-part resolution as a model for mobilizing congregations to respond to the General Assembly's "CALL TO RESTORE THE CREATION." The resolution was simplified to a four-part pledge in 2010. Churches applying to be an Earth Care Congregation must have the Earth Care Pledge affirmed by their session and signed by the clerk.

Earth Care Pledge

Peace and justice is God's plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God's. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

1. Our worship and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth.
2. In education, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice and community.
3. Our facilities will be managed, maintained and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations.
4. Our outreach will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

Do you have a calling to participate in making sure that EPC honors our pledge to care for the earth as an Earth Care Congregation? If so, please speak to Pastor Traci or Alan West for more information.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Lenten Practices FOR FAMILIES 2020						
MARCH 1 Pick up trash in or around your house. 	MARCH 2 Kindness — Do something kind for another person, without telling them about it.	MARCH 3 God, when we are unkind or unloving, please forgive us. Amen.	MARCH 4 Say thank you to someone who serves you, like the mail carrier, or garbage collector.	MARCH 5 Thank you, God, for the many blessings you give to us, today and every day. Amen.	MARCH 6 Imagination — Draw a picture of what it means to love God and love your neighbor.	MARCH 7 Leave food out for birds or squirrels. 
MARCH 8 God, please be near to those who are ill at home or in a hospital. Amen.	MARCH 9 Compassion — Is it hard to show compassion to someone who isn't kind to you? Why or why not?	MARCH 10 Clean up trash in a public park or school. 	MARCH 11 God, please help us to remember to take care of the world you created and be kind to the earth. Amen.	MARCH 12 Joy — Make an extra effort to smile at every person you see today.	MARCH 13 Leave a happy note on a stranger's windshield. 	MARCH 14 God, please help us to share the love of Jesus with people we meet today, and every day. Amen.
MARCH 15 Peace — World Peace begins at home. Be kind to your family today, as you are able.	MARCH 16 Hold the door open for someone. 	MARCH 17 God, please help us to remember parts of the world where there is war and violence, and to always pray for peace. Amen.	MARCH 18 Tolerance — Research some information on a different religion or culture today.	MARCH 19 Give a compliment to a stranger. 	MARCH 20 God, please help us to learn about others who are different than we are and to always pray together. Amen.	MARCH 21 Justice — Justice means being fair to others and giving others equal opportunity. How can you show justice to others?
MARCH 22 Return the cart for someone at the grocery store. 	MARCH 23 God, thank you for each day. Whether it is a good day or a challenging one, you are always with us. Amen.	MARCH 24 Fasting — Do without dessert or screen time today (or both).	MARCH 25 Donate a book to a free little library in town. 	MARCH 26 God, you are a friend to all. Help us to always remember this. Amen.	MARCH 27 Mystery — Many things about faith are a mystery. Name something you find mysterious about God.	MARCH 28 Learn about an organization in your town that is doing good work and send them a note or donation.
MARCH 29 God, thank you for your unconditional love for us and for everyone in the whole world. Amen.	MARCH 30 Silence — Try to be silent for 5 minutes. Set a timer. 	MARCH 31 Donate food to a food pantry. 	APRIL 1 God, may everyone in your world always have enough to eat. May we help make that dream a reality. Amen.	APRIL 2 Hospitality — Invite someone to come to your house today or sometime soon.	APRIL 3 For food in our stomachs, pillows for our head, and all of the other blessings you provide, we say "Thank You, God." Amen.	APRIL 4 Shovel snow or sweep the walk for a neighbor. 
APRIL 5 God, help us to have a special Holy Week as we get nearer to the day of resurrection. Amen.	APRIL 6 Love — Jesus asks us to love our neighbors, even people we don't know. How can we do that?	APRIL 7 Show kindness in a meditation. Close your eyes and pray God's goodness on someone who lives far away.	APRIL 8 God, during this Holy Week, may we spend extra time in prayer and service. Thank you for your grace. Amen.	APRIL 9 Hope — Hoping and waiting are very similar. What is something you are hoping or waiting for?	APRIL 10 Color paper place mats and deliver them to a senior living center.	APRIL 11 God, thank you for being with us during this Lent and all the time. We pray for a joy-filled Easter tomorrow. Amen.
APRIL 12 Celebrate resurrection by planting a seed or drawing flowers! Happy Easter! EASTER SUNDAY	 This calendar rotates through prayers, acts of service, and practices. Sometimes the practice is something to do; sometimes it is something to talk about. Try to do as many days as you can, but don't feel stress if you miss some days. Just pick up where you left off!					



ELMHURST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

367 SPRING ROAD
ELMHURST, IL 60126



EPC'S ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 @ 7 P.M.

367 SPRING ROAD | ELMHURST, IL 60126 | 630-834-7750
ELMHURSTCHURCH.ORG | EPC@ELMHURSTCHURCH.ORG

