

Announcements

December 2017

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church

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“We are a church called by Jesus Christ to Proclaim, Teach & Serve.”

In Our Prayers Steve Reckley, Marilyn Waters and Marion Young

Lee Strouse upon the passing of his wife, Joan Strouse.

Continued prayers for the search for our PNC (Pastoral Nominating Committee, and new DCYM (Director of Children & Youth).

There is a list on the bulletin board in the Nelson-White Room on the “news” bulletin board. It shows the latest parishioners who are in a health center or are hospitalized. If you would like your name added to the board or put on the prayer list, please contact the church office.

Debbie Paton, Pastor
Diane Slocum, Associate Pastor
Susan Smentek, Director of Music
Karen Bircher, Office Administrator
Jesus Garcia — Custodian
Cheryl Kopecky, Clerk of Session
Cheryl Turek/Carol Ewert /Bill Berner/Ray Lee
Technology Assistant Sunday morning's
Frank Dattillo, Rick Rodriguez & John Venti—Sound Techs,
Sunday morning's
<http://www.elmhurstchurch.org>
Find EPC on Facebook: Elmhurst Presbyterian Church &
Find on Facebook: Elmhurst Presbyterian Church & Youth Ministries
Follow us on Twitter: @EPC_tweets

God 
Answers
Prayers

Dear Friends,

It is with bittersweet feelings that I write this letter to officially inform you that I will be retiring from my position as Associate Pastor of Elmhurst Presbyterian Church, effective December 25, 2017. After much prayer and discernment, I have decided that this is a good time for me to move into a new chapter of my life. My husband Phil retired eight months ago, and now that I’ve gotten used to having him around again, I want to be able to join him in doing some traveling, and spending more time with our wonderful children and grandbabies. I am also very much aware that Elmhurst Presbyterian Church is not a two Pastor church right now. I am hoping that my leaving will open the door to finding a new Christian Education Director who can focus our energies on rebuilding our children and youth ministries. I am currently working on building ministry teams in the areas of Worship Design, Children and Youth Ministries, and Care Teams that will carry out the areas of ministry that I have been responsible for.

Since September 2006, it has been my deepest privilege to serve all of you; first as an intern while I was in seminary, and then as your newly ordained Associate Pastor. I will be forever grateful to all of you for putting your faith in me as we grew together in our roles as Pastor, congregation, and friends. You loved and nurtured me along as I learned what it meant to be a Pastor, and I thank you for all your encouragement and support through the years. Serving Elmhurst Presbyterian Church as your Pastor has been without a doubt one of the most fulfilling jobs I have ever had, and I look back at all the times we walked together as precious: times that have included so many joys and celebrations as well as those times of grief and sorrow when we all pulled together as a faith community. Like all faith communities, we have also walked through times of challenge and discernment; not knowing exactly where we were going or how we were going to get there. But with faith in the power of God’s Spirit, and the leadership of so many of you who love and care deeply for this church, we have witnessed the opening of a multitude of windows through which God has ushered in the fresh breezes that have filled this church with new life and possibilities. And for that I am indeed grateful.

God has blessed this congregation with so many gifted, committed, faithful, loving people, and I will deeply miss serving alongside of all of you. But I believe that we will remain friends, as well as sisters and brothers in Christ forever; and I will continue to pray for you in your journey of discerning where God is now leading you as a faith community. I have no doubt that God has great plans for Elmhurst Presbyterian Church as you continue to be a place that works for justice, peace, equality, welcome for everyone, and grace. Touched by grace we will live differently, right?

Blessings and God’s Peace be with all of you.

Love, Diane

MISSION CORNER

EPC SERVES PADS DECEMBER 30/31

Our congregation is the Host Church that serves meals and oversees our PADS’ Site on the 5th Saturday of the month. We will only have two opportunities to do this important mission work this season- the last weekend of the year and again the last weekend of March.

These are two tough times due to the holiday vacations and Spring Break. We are specifically asking for your help the evening of December 30th or the morning of December 31st. Please see the Mission Board in the Nelson White Room for volunteer and donation opportunities and reach out to Diana Riekse and Pam Fuesz with questions: dianariekse@gmail.com; twofueszs@att.net.

As always, we are looking for volunteers each weekend for opening, closing, sorting donations, and more. We hope you are able to join our important mission to help the homeless in a way that works best for you, but we do need your help!

MISSION CORNER

Christmas is around the corner and the needs of many individuals and families seem greater at this time of year.

For many years our congregation has gathered gift cards , toys and clothing (all new) for the Holidays with Heart Bazaar at Erie House. Erie House is on the near west side of Chicago that serves low-income residents, providing a wide range of community-based education programs. The Mission Committee is asking all of you to plan ahead and help the families at Erie. The Mission tree is in the Nelson-White Room with tags on it. Each tag has the name of a person, their age, and what they would like for Christmas. Take a tag, purchase items on the tag, limit is \$35.00, **and bring your gifts back to the church by December 4th**. The Holidays With Heart Bazaar will be on December 9th. Your gifts will be delivered to Erie House on December 6th. Our church also helps our PADS guests at Christmas time, giving each guest a \$20.00 gift to McDonald’s for a warm meal or hot coffee. The tags for these gift cards will also be on the Mission tree in the lobby.

And, one more thing.....our Eire House friends and our PADS guests need warm heads, necks, and hands. Feel free to purchase hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves. Please place these items under the Mission tree.

If you have any questions, ask Marj Schuham, Pam Fuez, or Trish Waters

Pecans Pecans Pecans

Cakes Cookies Pies Snacks Bread

Think of the possibilities for using fresh pecans! Fresh one pound bags of pecans halves are available after church in the Nelson-White Room. The sale of pecans is a fund raiser for the After School tutoring program at Erie House. The pecans are being sold for \$10.00 per pound. For each pound sold, \$1.75 goes to help children with their learning skills. You can also pick up pecans from Marj Schuham, contact at 630-330-4219.

Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) Update

Through Thanksgiving week we had been presented with more than 30 candidates to consider.

Your PNC has been reviewing the resumes and identifying the candidates we’d like to pursue for interviews.

We’ve been aided in this task by some technology - namely online sermons that we can often find by visiting the candidates’ home church websites. Years ago, a drive or a trip on a plane would have been required to hear a candidate’s sermons.

As we evaluate the candidates, we are looking at each through the lens of the qualities that members have helped to identify as especially important.

Our goal is to begin formal interviews during December.

Submitted by
Doug Fitzgerald for the PNC

Session Meeting Update from November 22, 2017

Session members expressed appreciation to the leadership and other volunteers who made Grace Cafe such a success.

The job description for the **Director of Children and Youth Ministry was approved.**

Congregation meetings were approved for December 3, 2017, and January 21, 2018, both after church. The purpose of the December 3 meeting is to elect officers for 2018, to dissolve the associate pastor relationship with Reverend Diane Slocum, to dissolve the associate pastor position, and to hear updates from the Pastor Nominating Committee and the Director of Children and Youth Ministry search team. The motion also included the approval of December 24, 2017 as Reverend Slocum’s last day of work with her salary being paid through December 31, due to unused vacation time. The purpose of the January 21 congregation meeting is to present the annual report and budget.

For leaders of groups represented in the Annual Report, group reports are due to Karen Bircher **no later than January 2, 2018.**

The trustees request all pledges be sent as soon as possible. It’s not too late!

A Leadership Retreat for elders, deacons and trustees will be held on Saturday, January 13, 9:00 A.M. –3:00 P.M. More details will follow.

Submitted by
Cheryl Kopecky, Clerk of Session

Advent 2017 “Seeing The Sacred”

“The Word became flesh and made a home among us.” (John 1:14)

The Advent/Christmas season is a time when the juxtaposition of the sacred and the secular sometimes feel blatantly opposed and, at other times, quite blurred. The word “sacred” points to something dedicated as “holy” and “set apart.” We all know that the busy-ness of the holiday season can overrun the sense of the sacred. So this year, we will begin our Advent journey toward Christmas by emphasizing the gift of the “now”... the gift of sacred time given to God, to family and friends and to those in need of help.

We invite you to join us on this spiritual journey, to see all things pregnant with the possibility of the holy. What would your Christmas season experience be like if you lived it looking through the kaleidoscope of the sacred?

Second Sunday of Advent (December 3)- 10:30 a.m.): “Sacred People”

“Many nations will go and say, ‘Come, let’s go up to the Lord’s mountain, to the house of Jacob’s God so that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in God’s paths.’” -- Isaiah 2:

“Mary said, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.’” -- Luke 1: 26-38 “When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife.” -- Matthew 1: 18-25

Third Sunday of Advent (December 10- 10:30 a.m.): “Sacred Space”

“The Lord’s ransomed ones will return and enter Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. Happiness and joy will overwhelm them; grief and groaning will flee away.” -- Isaiah 35: 1 “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” -- Luke 1: 39-56

Fourth Sunday of Advent – Paper Bag Christmas Pageant (December 17- 10:30 a.m.): “Sacred Knowing”

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of a messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God rules!’” -- Isaiah 52: 7-10 “The angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people.’” -- Luke 2: 1-15

This Sunday, we will thank Pastor Diane for her service, followed by a reception.

Christmas Eve (December 24)- 4:00 p.m.: “Sacred Being” (there will be no morning worship).

“...he saved us because of his mercy, not because of righteous things we had done. He did it through the washing of new birth and the renewing by the Holy Spirit...” -- Titus 3: 4-7 “The Word became flesh and made his home among us.” -- John 1: 1-14 “She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger...” -- Luke 2: 1-20

Ring out the year! Worship on Sunday, December 31 will include beautiful music played on hand bells featuring Mary Grittani and special guest. “Sacred Doing,” Matthew 2:1-12.

News from The Prayer Shawl Ministry

The next time Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet will be on Wednesday, December 6th. Time: 1:00-2:30 P.M. in the Nelson White Room.

We have a number of completed prayer shawls. If you know of someone (or yourself) who is in need of a hug from God and the warmth of a shawl to help you or someone you know face a difficult time, please let Mary or the church office know.

Pocket Prayer Shawls are also available in a basket in the Nelson White Room. Three hundred and seventy seven shawls have been given to members and friends of the congregation.

Any questions please contact Mary Mueller at 708) 547-8793.



Children and Youth Ministries (CYM)

The children and youth are always welcome in worship and invited to come to the front for “the time with young disciples,” The children are also invited to leave after the music ministry for Bible Zone. On the first Sunday of the month, when we celebrate communion, the children will remain for all of worship. This will allow more teaching time with the children and youth as well as worship time with the community.

NEW YOUTH GROUP STUDY

Every Sunday morning at 9:30, students grades 7 through 12 are meeting together. On the first, second, and fourth Sundays of the month, we gather in the roof top lounge to study the book "The Case for Christ" student edition and to ask tough questions about Jesus and the Bible. On the third Sunday, we meet in the kitchen to prepare coffee and snacks for the congregation after the service. All students are welcome. It is never too late to join us!

The Yorkfield Presbyterian Church continues to invite our youth to participate in Jr. and Sr. High Youth fellowship. Middle School Youth Fellowship gathers on Wednesday nights from September—March at 5:30 p.m. at YPC. For more information check the MSYF page on YPC’s website.

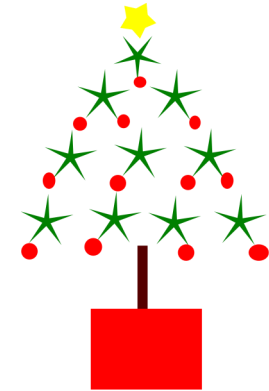
Senior High Youth Fellowship meet Sunday evenings September—May at 6 p.m. at YPC.

CYM is currently interviewing candidates for the CE Director position.

We are creating a list of substitute Sunday School teachers and helpers, to step in when needed. We are looking for people who like to tell stories, do crafts, play games, sing songs, bake cookies, and most importantly love children. If you would like to know how you can help, please contact Debbie Paton.

A big thank you to all everyone who helped decorate during the Greening of the church last Saturday.

The church and Nelson –White Room looks beautiful.



POINSETTIAS

It has been the tradition of the church to decorate our sanctuary during Christmas with flowers ordered by our members and friends. They are then theirs to take home or share. Watch on Sundays as envelopes/order forms will be distributed before church by Meg March. You can order this year either red or white poinsettias at \$15.00 each. Orders need to be given to Meg **by Wednesday, December 13th**. Contact Meg March at meg912@att.net



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, DECEMBER 3, 2017

The session has acted to call a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 3, 2017 immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers, to dissolve the associate pastoral relationship with the Reverend Diane Slocum, and to hear updates from the Pastor Nominating Committee, the Director of Children and Youth Ministry search team.

GO ONLINE AND CHECK OUT EPC'S NEW WEBSITE! Thank you to Karen Miller for redesigning the website. <http://www.epc@elmhurstchurch.org>.

MOVIE GROUP will meet on Saturday, December 2nd. Members will be notified. Contact Susan Leslie at kcleslie206@sbcglobal.net to be added to the member list. The Movie Group meets the first Saturday of the month.

R.O.M.E.O. Group (Retired Old Men Eating Out)

Will meet on December 27th at Hi-View Restaurant in Villa Park. Time: 1:00 P.M. Contact: Doug Hall at (630) 279-8739.

SOUND BOARD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are asking for one or two volunteers to step up to fill the void of a tech who stepped down due to his traveling work schedule. The sound board ministry isn't very complex to learn, but it is a crucial part of our worship services at EPC. Please contact Pastor Debbie Dlpaton@yahoo.com if you are interested in helping out. Thank you to John Venti who has stepped up to help for the next couple of months.

Adult Studies with Pastor Debbie

Sunday morning Adult Bible Study . We continue our study of the Gospels Parallel, looking at the passion narrative in Matthew, Mark and Luke at 9:15am in Calvin Hall. No study on December 24th.

No preparation is necessary, just come with open hearts and minds to share in the conversation and learning.

Wednesday Evening Book Study, at 7pm in the Tallman Room. We will engage meditations on hospitality. The group is led by Pastor Debbie.

All are welcome to join us.

DEACON'S CORNER

Thank you to everyone who helped make Grace Café a success! We served over 90 guests. All in all, we enjoyed a wonderful evening of fellowship and piano music with our guests. What a rewarding experience for all the volunteers to share a warm meal with our neighbors and grateful to be a part of Grace Café again.

Trish Waters, Chair of Deacons

GARDEN NEWS **December, 2017**

Children's Vegetable Garden

Final count for veggies delivered to Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry: 314 pounds! (237 from the Children's Garden and 77 from members and friends of EPC.)

Beds and Borders

Joan Strouse took a huge part in keeping our garden areas beautiful by seasonally planting and caring for the pots at both the east and west entrances. You will be so missed here, Joan, but we know that you are enjoying the gardens in heaven!

Ruth Schroeter, Garden Coordinator