

Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PASTOR'S + CORNER

REV. TRACI SMITH

We are the Stuff of Stars by Traci Smith

Excerpted from *Faithful Families for Lent, Easter and Resurrection* (Chalice Press: 2022, used with permission.)



When we think about our genesis, our beginning, we are not limited to the Bible's explanation. We can also think about what science teaches us about our origins. Though the church and the scientific community have found themselves at odds with one another over the centuries, this need not be the case. We are free to allow science to enrich and support our faith. When we approach both science and faith with a sense of wonder, it deepens our

Science teaches us of the "big bang" where particles exploded into the universe to create life. The very same matter that scattered throughout the universe so many billions of years ago became the building blocks for our bodies. We are, quite literally, the stuff of stars.

On Ash Wednesday, we can remember this beginning and consider our place in this vast and ancient universe. One way to do this is by re-searching more about the origins of the universe. Search the web for lectures or reflections that talk about how the universe came to be. Study a new perspective. You might also take some time today to look at a map of the universe and consider just how many galaxies there are in addition to our own Milky Way. As you learn and explore, wonder aloud what your place is in this enormous universe. It is so big, and we are so small. Wonder aloud with those in your family. I wonder how the universe got its start...

Pastor Traci

Check out our live stream at 10:30 AM every Sunday! Just head over to:

 youtube.com/elmhurstpresbyterianchurch

We'd love to see you!

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Clerk of Session

Tom Mason

THE SESSION

of

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church

Treasurer

Greg St. Laurent

Class of 2022

Carol Ewert
Rob Kopecky
Faith Lee

Class of 2023

Pam Fuesz
Anna Pearson Lu
Peter Gough

Class of 2024

Jennifer Gordon
Mary Ellen Hayes
Pat Staats

UPCOMING» EVENTS

HAPPENING IN MARCH »»»

**ASH WEDNESDAY
WORSHIP SERVICE**



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
7:00 PM**

Lent Begins! | March 2nd

Join us Wednesday at 7 PM for our Ash Wednesday service, as we begin a new sermon series for Lent.



Pastor's Bible Study
Wednesdays 12-1 PM

What does the text say?
What does it mean?
How does it call us to live?


Drop in when you can! bit.ly/EPCZoom



Come attend our Pastor's Bible Study on Zoom every Wednesday from 12-1 PM.

Drop in to participate or just listen! Check out our events page at elmhurstchurch.org for more info.

What Did Jesus Actually Say?



A new progressive Bible Study looking at current topics in our society.


We'll be beginning a new progressive Bible study soon.

Look out for more information to come on our website and E-notes!

Help us Complete our Directory!

Visit
members.instantchurchdirectory.com

We need your:

-  Up-to-date Address!
-  Up-to-date Phone Number!
-  Up-to-date Email Address!

Check out **Pg. 6** for more information on our new directory!

NEWSGARDEN

GARDENING AS STEWARDSHIP

By Ruth Schroeter

When most people think of stewardship they think of financial commitment; and, while it is true that church members are asked to pledge financially each year, stewardship extends beyond money. Here at Elmhurst Presbyterian Church we also consider the time and talents of the congregation and encourage everyone to find a place to serve.



One of the ways a person might serve is through ecological (or environmental) stewardship. God calls us "to be faithful stewards of Creation and to show ways to live responsibly in the world God has given us" (an essential belief of the Presbyterian faith). With the climate changing and species dying at a faster rate than ever, we must do more to care for Creation.

Come join us as we kick-off this year's ecological stewardship with two garden work days. What does gardening have to do with ecological stewardship? Everything! – At EPC we are working to restore natural ecosystems on our property. If you are moved to serve in this way, please attend either or both of these days. We will be constructing new raised beds in our organic vegetable garden, removing invasive plants, tidying up the garden beds, and cleaning up the grounds. There will be jobs for children and adults. Please bring rakes, yard waste bags, and clippers, if available.

SAT., MARCH 26 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON

SAT., APRIL 2 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON

Ruth Schroeter, Garden Coordinator

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Email: schroeterruth@yahoo.com

Welcome to our new directory!

We’ve made a couple changes so that now, the directory is accessible to all church members in a digital format. You’ll be able to access it 24/7 from your computer or even an app for your phone.

Only members in our church directory are able to access this information . You *will not* be able to view anything other than our directory and nobody outside of our church can view ours. That being said, you’ll only be able to view our directory if you have an account. To create an account, you *must* use an email you included as part of your contact information in our directory.

Even though we’ve worked hard to make the directory as up to date as we could at this point, things happen, and this new digital format allows us to quickly adapt when those sudden changes occur. Now, whenever you discover your information is out of date, you can easily suggest edits be made to our directory moderator who will make sure your suggestion is relevant before making any changes.

Our next update involves us asking you to submit your family photos for the directory. The process is the exact same as making a request to change information, so we can’t wait to see your photos in the directory!

We understand that going digital is a big change and learning to access a new website can be overwhelming. No worries! We’ve made a video tutorial that will walk you through all the mechanics you need to know about the directory. As always, if you still have questions, we’re happy to help! Feel free to email, call, or even stop by the church office for assistance!

***For a helpful video tutorial, check our church E-notes or ask our office to send you the link!**

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We need your:


Up-to-date Address!


Up-to-date Phone Number!


Up-to-date Email Address!

By Emily Culella

40 days can seem like too long to observe a Liturgical season of our church. For many years, Christians have used this season as a way to identify with Christ’s time in the desert through fasting and deprivations. While this can still be a worthwhile way to change one’s perspective, there are other ways to participate in the 40 days that are subversive and challenging in a new way that ask of our American status quo; is this the way? I’ve made a list below of the ways we can find presence in this changing time!

Rest. In our country, rest is a concept that is foreign and scary to us. In fact, it usually takes an illness or injury to get us to stop moving and sit. The concept of Sabbath is about laying aside the need to be “productive” and instead sitting in the love of God. If you stopped being productive, if you never did anything again for the rest of your life, God would love you the same. What if instead of taking something away or practicing a fast, you let yourself have 10 minutes of daydreams? Or 10 minutes of silence? What does rest look like in our society when days off are tempered by emails and texts from work? Why does God ask us to commit to a Sabbath?

Observe. The changing of the seasons allows us the chance to understand our own temporal nature! We get to watch the trees go through their yearly dance of shed, dead, and budding! We get to see this change in ourselves. Maybe you’re in your fall, shedding habits or things that you don’t need anymore. Maybe you’re in your budding stage—finding a new type of self, growing and flourishing! Lent allows us to remember our eventual death and come to terms with being finite. There is a joy in our finitude! There is a joy in our presence now, right here on earth at this exact moment!

Remark. Tell someone what you are doing! Let your fellow congregants know what you are doing to rest! Let the know what changes you are observing! Tell people what is happening inside of you and around you! Do you know that scripture, midrash, and commentaries are collections of people’s observations written down so we can learn? Indeed, the gospels are the compilations of what people found interesting about Jesus! If you’re an introvert, try journaling and remarking to yourself. Write it down.

Recall. Tell the story of where you’ve been. In our fast-paced society, it can be alluring to always look to the future for what’s next. But recall your story; where have you been these past 2 years? What have you gone through? What are the ways you’ve changed, grown, suffered? The story of who you are is the story of where you’ve been plus where you want to go.

Imagine. What’s next for you? One of my favorite theologians says that his favorite Christian thinkers are the ones who are creative imaginers. He says that with the power of God, we get to imagine a beautiful future of generative spaces, love, and agriculture and then make steps to get there. What do you imagine about the beauty of your future? What hopes can you whisper to yourself about what this world could be? Every gardener knows this hope when they plant a seed, a type of prayer for the future.

This season, for 40 days, do any of these 5 ways to be present for Lent, resonate with you? As we model ways to be present in the liturgical seasons of our church, we show kids how to live with nature and not to live above it or in dominion over it. We are natural beings placed here and now for this moment. How can we honor that in our habits and thoughts?



BY SUSAN SMEN TEK

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church is fortunate to have a dedicated group of musicians at Worship on Sunday. We occasionally like to tell you more about them. Gayle Bisesi, vocalist, sat down to chat with me on a recent Sunday. Gayle has been on the Worship music team for so many years, it was difficult to determine what year she truly started singing at EPC on a regular basis! We counted backwards in “pastor years”, and we know that she was here pre-Cliff. I hope you enjoy reading a little bit more about Gayle and her professional accomplishments. Thanks, Gayle, for all that you do to help us feel the Spirit in Worship.

Gayle Bisesi (Jazz Vocalist, Educator, Composer, and Voiceover Artist) has been teaching and singing professionally for over 25 years. Currently, she resides in Elmhurst while pursuing her musical career and participating on the music ministry team at Elmhurst Presbyterian Church. At Elmhurst University, she is the Director of “Late Night Blues” vocal jazz ensemble, teaches private jazz voice lessons, and is the Director of Music Admission. Internationally, she is active as a clinician, voice teacher, and presents masterclasses on “Exploring Your Musical Depth” and “How to Cultivate Your Musical Identity!” In addition, she is the Founder and Co-Director of Vocal Voyage which offers a week-long exploration of singing through the musical genres - Classical, Jazz, Musical Theatre, and Pop/Rock. Her singing and teaching have taken her to such



RECENT RENOVATIONS

