

Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PASTOR'S + CORNER

REV. TRACI SMITH



What's a story you enjoy hearing over and over again? Perhaps it's a funny family story, or a movie you get something different from each time you watch it. Perhaps there's a story you love to tell over and over. Our faith is rooted in storytelling. The story of the birth of Jesus, the story of his life, and the story of his death and resurrection is a story the church has been telling for thousands of years. We never tire of telling it. We never tire of hearing it. Though there are basic elements that stay the same, the story changes. We interpret it in light of new information and new contexts. We invite new storytellers to tell us what they have seen and heard.

This year our stewardship theme is I Love to Tell the Story. As we think about setting our priorities for the year to come, and as we seek to set our budget for 2021, I want us to think about meaningful stories of faith that have impacted our lives. We'll look at the faith stories we have lived in this community since our founding, and then we'll talk about what kind of story we want to tell as we move into the future.

Last week, after the wonderful outdoor concert organized by Keith Baumann, a few of us stayed after and sat on our church stoop, talking. (Would we ever have done that if it weren't for the restrictions put upon us by COVID? I don't think so.) There was no agenda, really, but we started to tell stories about God's faithfulness in this place. Some talked about how PADS came to be in our building. Someone else talked about another ministry to people with different physical and mental abilities. I mentioned that I had heard we once had a dialysis treatment center in our basement, and others shared the details they remembered about that.

We have a story to tell in this place. It is a story of Jesus and his love. As we move in to 2021, there is still a quite a bit of uncertainty. We don't know what our worship will look like. We don't know what kind of restrictions will be placed upon us. We do know one thing, though, and we know it *for sure*. *We will continue to tell the story of Jesus and his love in this place.*

Recently I've been feeling a very deep certainty, in my spirit, that 2021 will be an exciting and formative and holy year for our congregation. I feel as if God is going to speak to us and guide us in ways that will be memorable. I'm not a fortune teller. Maybe we'll face many trials in 2021. Maybe it will be both — a year of trials and joy. Isn't that how life often is?

I look forward to hearing stories of Jesus and his love from the past and thinking about the stories we want to tell in the future.

With gratitude,

Pastor Traci



Sign up to Walk the Labyrinth

WALK A SPIRITUAL PATH || WWW.CALENDLY.COM/TRACI-SMITH/WALK-THE-LABYRINTH

ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN'S
CORNUCOPIA
OF
KINDNESS

STOP BY THE NELSON-WHITE
ROOM TO PICK UP AN
ENVELOPE! !

OCTOBER 9-31



UPCOMING» EVENTS

HAPPENING IN OCTOBER »»»



Book Discussion

"WE FED AN ISLAND -- THE TRUE STORY OF REBUILDING PUERTO RICO ONE MEAL AT A TIME"

BY CHEF JOSE ANDRES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 - 7:00 PM ZOOM



Available on
 YouTube

October 4th- 11:30 a.m.
October 11th- 11:30 a.m.
October 18th- 11:30 a.m.
October 25th- 11:30 a.m.



New online worship service available every Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m. followed by ZOOM Coffee Hour.

NEWS GARDEN



From your garden coordinator, Ruth Schroeter:

What an amazing year of gardening it's been at Elmhurst Presbyterian Church! After facing the initial shock of the pandemic and the need to isolate from one another, I realized that gardening could continue. Gardening is outdoors in the fresh air. Most garden tasks can be performed alone. Gardening produces beauty and things to eat. Gardening is great exercise. Gardening became my sanctuary. And so, along with others drawn to the church gardens, "God's Great Garden Experience of 2020" began in April. It was fun to see other people, and we got a tremendous amount of work done. A small core team met twice weekly, working socially distanced from each other or wearing masks when nearby. Others joined throughout the summer for special projects. The following is a summary of what we did.

Children's Vegetable Garden: "We Grow to Give"

Cool-season crops were planted in April (broccoli, radishes, and sugar snap peas). Warm-season crops were planted in late May (zucchini, tomatoes, bush beans, pole beans, carrots, cucumbers, beets, sweet peppers, hot peppers, and butternut squash). Additional cool-weather crops were planted in early September (radishes and spinach). Harvesting began in mid-June, and by the end of September we had already delivered more than 300 pounds of organically-grown vegetables to the Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry. (We hope to surpass our former record of 357 pounds this month.)

Beds and Borders/Lawn

In spring, we cut back perennials, installed new plants in the gardens and entrance pots, and started many days of weeding. In summer, we maintained the gardens, trimmed shrubs, removed invasive plants and unwanted tree saplings, and started spreading wood chips as mulch. In fall, we seeded bare spots in the lawn; we took soil samples for testing; and we installed more new plants. Throughout the growing season we kept everything well-watered. Plans are being made for some new trees.

Thank you, Volunteers!

Here are the amazing people who helped care for the gardens and grounds this year: Elias Cabarcas, Karen and Doug Fitzgerald, Dave Fuesz, Jesus Garcia, Jan Happel, Mary Ellen Hayes, Faith Lee, Anna Lu and daughter Lucy, Mary Mueller, Fred Schroeter, Traci Smith and sons Clayton and Samuel, Pat Staats, Ted and Rita Steiskal, Tom and Cheryl Turek, and Alan West. Thanks be to God, for these helpers!

By Emily Culella

Are We Getting the Hang of This Yet?

Every day brings something new. If you're like me, this sentiment has held both positive and negative connotations in the recent months! With two kids in full-time remote learning, this ministry, and running a household, the constant juggling has become a new kind of normal. Some days of e-learning are good and some days are harder. The same goes for my other responsibilities. Each day there is something new to learn, deal with, or over come in this strange landscape. Each day brings difficult news, higher death tolls, and uncertainty. If the first part of the pandemic was a monotony of days, the second is a constant wave to swim over or to try to withstand.

Lament and hope stand side by side in this season, informing one another and asking a lot from us. Parents, Grandparents, Guardians, and Family members of children and youth, I want to say to you that you are doing holy work. Caring for the hearts of young people, while they process their fear, their sadness, and their anger is not easy, especially as we process our own.

Holy work is incremental. Hardly ever do we get to see the Red Sea split up into two giant walls, get to witness the miraculous healing of a bleeding woman, or see the vision of Christ in the clouds. Instead, we shoulder the burden of a longer timeframe. Each moment that we teach our children how to mourn and still look to the future, how to stand under the grief and acknowledge it without succumbing to it,

or how to walk forward into an uncertain geography is a small type of salvation, a small brick of God's kingdom being laid. It's tiring, can feel thankless, and often the outcomes are only visible after much time has passed.

Some ways we can help our children and youth process this season is to ask a lot of questions. This is a time to be extra curious about your young people. I've been asking kids and youth some of these questions:

- What's the best and worst thing about this pandemic?
- What have you lost in this season? What have you gained?
- How do you think the world will be different after this is over? What's one good way and one bad way?
- What have you learned about yourself during this? What have you learned about your grownups?

The work you're doing with young people is hard and holy; a tending of the soil and a ploughing for rocks. I work this work with you, and pray that you can rest some and keep going.

MUSIC NEWS

BY SUSAN SMENTEK

As the COVID-19 world and it’s restrictions continues along, our EPC musicians sing and play for cameras, imagining that you, the congregation, are present. Because the EPC YouTube Channel welcomes all viewers, the music videos also participate in outreach. Which brings us to the story of one of the most famous Gospel outreach songs of all time, *I Love to Tell the Story*.

In the mid-eighteenth century, a powerful evangelical movement began in England, where the popular ministries of preachers such as John and Charles Wesley initially appealed to people of the middle and lower classes. That gospel message, which focused on the need for personal conversion, thus inviting the Holy Spirit to come and take up permanent residence in one’s heart and life, began appealing to the upper classes in the nineteenth century. Many of those individuals were members

A. (Annabelle) Catherine “Kate” Hankey (b. Clapham, England, 1834; d. Westminster, London, England, 1911), was the daughter of a wealthy banker and was associated with the Clapham sect of William Wilberforce, a group of prominent evangelical Anglicans. This group helped to establish the British and Foreign Bible Society, promoted the abolition of slavery, and was involved in improving the lot of England’s working classes.

At the age of thirty, Hankey suffered a serious illness. During her long recovery, she wrote an epic 100-verse poem, *The Old, Old Story*, about the life of Christ. That poem is divided into two parts and, the first part provides the source of the verses for the hymn *Tell Me the Old, Old Story*. Part two provides the verses that we sing in *I Love to Tell the Story*. While this hymn text simply affirms the Christian’s zeal to “tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love” to all, the entire original poem provides a better glimpse into Hankey’s life and evangelical fervor. Hankey organized and taught Bible classes for shop girls in London, visited the sick in local hospitals, and traveled to South Africa to be a nurse and to assist her invalid brother. She published numerous written works and religious poetry including *Heart to Heart* (1870) and *The Old, Old Story and Other Verses* (1879). Hankey used the proceeds of her writings to support various mission causes.

Hankey wrote a tune for her lyrics, a second tune was then penned by American gospel musician, William H. Doane. Doane altered the arrangement of the verses and added the refrain, “I love to tell the story, ’twill be my theme in Glory, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.” However, neither of those melodies caught on and the hymn remained largely unknown until 1869, when William G. Fischer composed another melody for the hymn. THIS version of the hymn had the good fortune to be published in multiple collections including the extremely popular *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (1875) by Phillip Bliss and Ira Sankey.

Although aspects of the language, inclusivity, musical style and sometimes, the bottom-line theology on hymns from this era do not line up with our modern Presbyterian standards, songs like *I Love to Tell the Story* have had a powerful impact on many lives throughout the ages. They stand on their own merits as musical works of art and, they continue to speak to individuals today. The music ministry program at EPC will continue to strive to record a variety of hymns and songs for our Worship services. You can see the songs as separate videos on the Elmhurst Presbyterian Church YouTube channel. I hope that you will share your favorites and help us share the old, old story, no matter what era that song is from, through music!

UPCOMING EVENTS

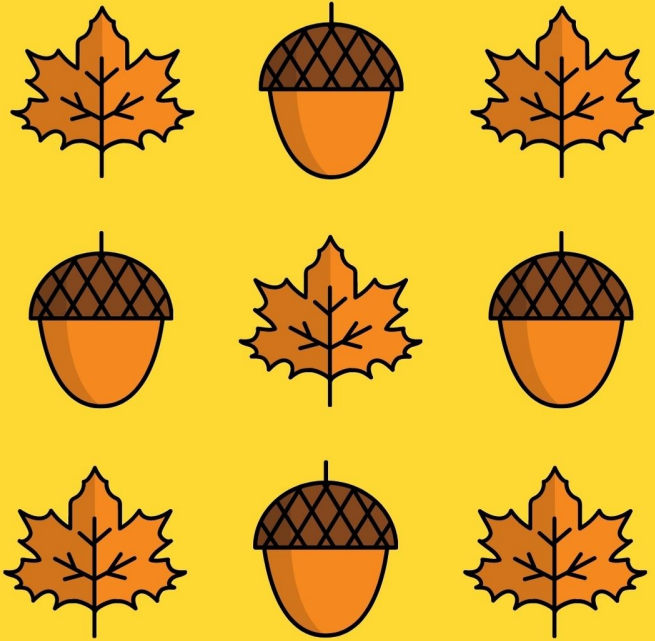


BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3 at 5:00 PM
OUTSIDE CIRCLE DRIVE

BRING YOUR PETS TO BE BLESSED (or bring a picture!)





ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN PRESENTS

ALL-CHURCH PUMPKIN CARVE!

BRING YOUR OWN PUMPKIN, BLANKET, AND TOOLS AND JOIN US FOR CIDER AND MUSIC AND DISTANCED SOCIALIZING!

OCTOBER 25TH, 2PM-3:30!

WELCOME TO THE NEW FORMAT OF THE EPC NEWSLETTER!

We hope this space will continue to be a place where members, friends, and visitors can learn about the happenings of Elmhurst Presbyterian Church! If you'd like to contribute something to the newsletter, please make sure you submit your article to