

# Edinboro Presbyterian Church

## Newsletter Update

March 4-17, 2022

## LENT: A season for repentance and spiritual growth

The spiritual season of Lent is a journey to strengthen our faith. This annual 40-day countdown to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection has as its focus a time of repentance and growth in discipleship practices. It begins with Ash Wednesday (March 2 in 2022) and continues through Holy Week and the Saturday before Easter morning.

Many people are familiar with the practice of *"giving up something for Lent."* Some abstain from chocolate or sugary sodas for these 6+ weeks. Such habits help to normalize the denial of some good things in order to increase awareness of better things. "Fish on Fridays" is a long-standing demonstration of this discipline. Notice the menus at and advertisements for most restaurant chains in March, and you will see that even secular businesses support this ritual: how many places promote their fish sandwiches at this time of the year every year. (When you see such a fish-centric ad, let it be a moment to ponder the goodness of our Lord!)

In addition to giving up a treat – or cigarettes or a particular TV show or any of a dozen other usuals things – Christians can also choose to give up other things for Lent: actions of anger, tendencies to get into arguments, or addictive behaviors which end up hurting us throughout the year. Not only do such intentional decisions help us and the people around us during these selected weeks, if we take them seriously they can reframe our attitudes and actions for the long term. Behavioral scientists report that it can take at least 28 days to break an old habit and begin replacing it with a new one. Lent gives you 40+ days.

Therefore, in addition to giving up something up something for Lent, it is becoming increasingly popular for Jesus' followers to *"take on something for Lent."* While self-denial is an aspect of this spiritual season – mindful of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness without food or friends – there is also great benefit to add something specific to your start-of-Spring patterns. Choose to schedule specific charitable actions with a community organization. Fix a meal or a snack and take it to a different neighbor each week (and maybe tell them briefly that you are doing this as a response to your faith). If you (individually or as a family) don't have an ongoing devotional practice in other parts of the year, add Bible reading or [prayer walks](#) or an online worship service to your daily plans for March and early-April. Switch from secular media to a Christian radio station or streaming service during Lent.

The goals of Lent can be personalized to your own current life circumstances. Observe the [Lenten disciplines](#) and you can acknowledge your spiritual needs, receive in a profound way the grace which our Lord offers, and bless others as your discipleship grows in depth and in outreach.

# How we will be observing Lent at Edinboro Presby

Our local observance of Lent will include a new Bible Study, a worship series on Jesus' teachings on his way to Jerusalem and to his cross, and two expanded ways to receive a marking with ashes as the season for spiritual reflection and discipleship growth begins.

**ASHES, ON ASH WEDNESDAY AND BEYOND:** Throughout the centuries and across the continents, many Christians begin the season of Lent with the traditional imposition of ashes. It reminds us of our mortality and of our sinfulness, yet also becomes a tangible reminder of the restoration and amazing grace we can receive from the Lord.

We had 15 people attend our Ash Wednesday service at FUPC this week, but we recognize that not everyone can easily attend some church events at midweek or after dark. Therefore, we will experiment this year with offering the ritual of ashes in a couple of additional options:

- ✠ On the first Sunday in Lent (March 6), sanctuary worshipers will have the option to be marked with the sign of the cross using traditional ashes. As you come forward for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or where you are sitting, the pastor can place ashes on your forehead or your wrist.
- ✠ Our church website will provide a "home version" of **Worship Online** where you can take part in an adaptation of receiving the mark of Christ, similar to what happens in the sanctuary on March 2 and March 6. Details will be online this weekend.

**LENTEN BIBLE STUDY:** A four-week Sunday morning Bible Study on powerful prayer and deep discernment will begin March 6. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall starting at 9:35. It is open to all adults and teens. (Confirmation Journey participants will join us for this class on March 13.)

Each week's exploration will be independent of the others, so you need not have perfect attendance to benefit from these conversations. We will conclude each meeting by 10:20, so that anyone ushering, setting up Fellowship Time or singing in the choir can move along to their other Sunday morning responsibilities.

For anyone who would like to join us via Zoom, please let us know in advance so we can arrange to expand this study beyond those who are attending in person. Log-in information will be provided. There will also be short video summaries of the material posted on our website. You can use those as part of your personal devotional activities.

**WORSHIP SERIES "JESUS' PARABLES FOR LENT":** FUPC worship during Lent will focus on some of the lessons Jesus taught as he was making his journey into the holy city of Jerusalem, where he would eventually be arrested, tried and crucified. "The Parables of Lent" will help us to experience what Jesus would have us do when we have choices between Godly living and going along with the norms around us. Each of these teachable, ponderable stories shows us truths about God's Realm and about our callings toward faithfulness. The messages Sunday mornings in the sanctuary will delve into these parables, then highlights from those services will go onto our web page the following weeks.

<i>Receive the invitation: Parable of the Great Feast</i>	Receive the Treasure: Hidden Treasure & a Priceless Pearl
Receive Justification: A Pharisee & a Tax Collector	<i>Receive Grace: The Workers in the Vineyard</i>
<i>Receive the Word: Parable of the Sower &amp; the Seed</i>	Receive Forgiveness: Parable of the Loving Father

*From the  
Pastor*

## “You will hear wars and rumors of war”

In the past two weeks, since our most recent newsletter, we have become inundated with news about a war between the Russian army and the Ukrainian people. This rapidly-changing story has much of the world fearful. The events in southern Europe have the people in southern Europe more than “fearful” – they are terrified, they are being killed, some feel called to rise up in previously-unimagined ways and fight for their country.

You and I should not deceive ourselves. While this new swirl of war and danger fill our attention span, the fact that there is a “new” war does not erase the fact that there was also war before Ukraine and Putin filled our screens. CNN and Fox News and the Today show may not have been telling us about this, but there are other spots in the world that have been at war away from the headlines. Our February meeting of Lake Erie Presbytery took up the financial offering and designated it to provide buy food and other emergency supplies for those who were left behind in Afghanistan when America pulled out of that nation which has been torn by war for two decades. (Dare I say two millennia?!?!?) Military and political threats are “real life” in Asia and Africa and South America. There are streets in too many American cities where innocent victims are dying due to gang warfare and random acts of violence.

What then are we to do, wondering whether there will be nuclear war or brutal economic fallout or “boots on the ground” or who knows what else? Pray, certainly. Act, probably. Learn, absolutely. Prepare, sure, that too. Yet our actions and our thoughts and our preparations need to be done appropriately, proportionately to the real situations and their real causes.

Oh, and two other vital steps: Focus, faithfully. Hope, abundantly.

Read the first half of chapter 24 of Matthew’s Gospel. That is where our Lord Jesus reassures his followers even as he tells them that we all will **“hear of wars and rumors of war; see that you are not alarmed....but the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.”**

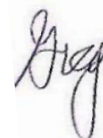
In his Westminster Bible Companion commentary on Matthew 24, influential Presbyterian preacher Tom Long says this:

[The community of faith] felt as though they were looking in a mirror. To this Jesus offered a word of deep comfort. He tells the disciples that the key to the future is not to be found in the bad news but in the good news, the gospel. Seasons of suffering – in the world and in the church – are not the culmination God has in mind for the world. The church is not to be afraid. The church is to follow its Lord with boldness, teaching and healing and preaching the kindness of God, steadfast to the end. In fact, the truest sign of the end of the world is not an earthquake in Japan, a famine in the Sudan, a bombing in Oklahoma, or an outbreak of war in the Middle East, but the rising flood tide of the gospel across the landscape of history as the church preaches and teaches and serves with mercy.

So my friends, you and I are empowered to pray, and act, and learn, and prepare, and focus.

And maintain our Lord-centered HOPE.

Wishing you – and all of us – Jesus’ Peace,



# All-Church Planning Retreat

## Next steps toward envisioning *and enacting* our future

Our elders and deacons have scheduled an all-church planning and discernment retreat for Saturday morning, March 19. We will begin bright and early at 8:00 (with breakfast munchies and drinks available), and wrap up by 11:15. As we appear to be moving beyond the “Covid Era”, and as we continue to move into the social/cultural/religious future which will stretch us beyond the *familiar* and the *comfortable*, it is time to get together for an extended time of prayer, conversation and decision-making. This will include some time on “big picture” issues as well as some practical determination of how to align our people and processes and priorities for a strong 2022 and beyond. Pastor Greg and an outside facilitator will share leadership of this retreat, and small groups will be used to help envision realistic future goals, then make some decisions on how best to enact them.

This certainly will include ordained officers and our paid staff, but this will be a more well-rounded and more fruitful process if the entire congregation is represented. We need your ideas and your reactions. Please don't leave this process only to the elders and deacons. If you cannot stay for the whole morning, drop in for an hour or so. We have already had a request to make “virtual” participation available, so we will plan to open our Zoom meeting so people can join in by phone or internet.

### **March Mission of the Month: GHANA PARTNERSHIP**

The Upper-Northern Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, Africa, is in partnership with the Presbytery of Lake Erie. This partnership started in the year 2010. Through this growing



partnership many projects are supported by PLE and our congregation. Some of these ongoing projects include Manse renovations in Yendi, replacement of the engine in the Wapuli Health Clinic's only Ambulance and the engine in the Clinic's pickup truck, providing computers, medical equipment, and renovations to the Wapuli Health Clinic.

**Wapuli Health Clinic's only ambulance**

March's Mission of the Month

**GHANA Partnership**

Collection will be the 2nd Sunday of March.

Donations can be made the entire month.

**\*Lake Erie Presbytery will MATCH all donations for Ghana during the month\***





Please complete the order form or notify the church office if you would like to order one or more Easter lilies (\$10.00 each). **Orders need to be placed by, Monday, March 21.** Please indicate who the lily will be in memory of/in honor of someone. Our Local Mission Team is also suggesting, in addition to flowers for the sanctuary, that some of our lilies be delivered ahead of the holiday (instead of waiting until after Easter) to someone from the congregation, in the community, or at a health center.

See the order form for complete details. You choose how your lily will be used, and whether you wish to pick it up and take it home.

Please indicate your interest before March 15

## Update on summer youth conferences

Young people connected with FUPC can get plugged in to one of our presbytery's trips to exciting youth conferences this summer. We need to express our interest by March 15 in order to help the regional leaders to make the arrangements. If you are not going to be certain by then, we may still be able to add you after that date. (You can invite a friend to come with you – participants do not need to belong to a Presbyterian church.)

**MIDDLE SCHOOL (completing grades 5-8):** The Montreat Middle School Conference will be July 19-24 at Maryville College in Tennessee. Some 600 young people take part in energetic recreation, music, and hear a top speaker who explores faith and scripture in creative ways – multimedia, drama, storytelling, and more. Small groups of 20 or so have a safe space for further conversation.

**HIGH SCHOOL (completing grades 8-12):** *The national denomination has canceled this summer's Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Therefore, the Presbytery of Lake Erie was able to shift and reserve spaces at the Montreat Youth Conferences in North Carolina. Rather than the 6,000+ youth at the Indiana event, the annual Montreat retreats have about 1,000 high schoolers each week. Our trip is scheduled for July 24-30.*

People who have attended each of these across the years have described them as great fun and a spiritual milestone of their lives. Speak with your pastor or contact the presbytery office to find out more. It would be very helpful to have you ask questions and consider signing up this week.

*Spring is springing...!!!*

## Garden of Edin holds a fun Spring Equinox gathering

The calendar say that springtime begins when the Sun moves our direction and crosses the equator. That annual sign of hope and warmth is a prime occasion for the "Garden of Edin" Community Garden to celebrate.

The gardeners who raise the produce in this garden will be at FUPC for a community celebration on Sunday, March 20, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. At this time, people can sign up for garden plots for the 2022 season. It will also be a fun gathering with a quilt raffle, craft items to buy, free seeds and demonstrations on things like garden yoga.

Even if you are not a gardener or do not plan to request a Garden of Edin plot this year, the people of FUPC are especially encouraged to attend. This is a great opportunity for the people of the church to connect with people from the community who come to our property multiple times throughout the year.

The Garden of Edin now is a self-governing organization. It was started as a mission outreach supported by the people of Edinboro Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of Lake Erie.



**Mailing:** FUPC, P.O. Box 789, Edinboro PA, 16412  
**Location:** 4281 Route 6N (Waterford Road)

**Website & Online Worship:**  [www.EdinboroPresby.org](http://www.EdinboroPresby.org)

**Zoom meeting number** 814 734 3511  
**Password (for Zoom and web videos)** 814

[Office@EdinboroPresby.org](mailto:Office@EdinboroPresby.org) (814) 734-3511 Mon-Wed-Thur 10am-2pm

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