



Edinboro Presbyterian Church

Newsletter Update

January 21 - February 3, 2022

New ordained officers will be installed this weekend, January 23

Each year, Presbyterian congregations rotate about one-third of their leadership groups, with an election by the church, followed by a period of orientation and preparation. Then, at a public worship service, the incoming elders and deacons stand before the church, make vows using nine questions provided by our denominational constitution, and begin their terms of service.

The installation of these newest deacons and elders is scheduled for this Sunday, January 23, during our 11:00 sanctuary worship service. Those who join us via **Worship Online** will see the video the following week. Jan Schulz, JoAnn Austin and Margo Roberts will rejoin our Board of Deacons. Jan Zeart and Sue Payne will start their work in the Class of 2024 on our Session, the council of elders. (Jan and Jan were reelected to a second consecutive three-year term. The three others are rejoining these groups after previous service several years ago.

Installation ceremonies not only include the vows by the officers-elect. The members of the church join together to make promises to the Lord and to the congregational leaders. Again, these questions are set up in our PCUSA Constitution:

Do we, the members of the church, accept [names] as ruling elders, and [names] as deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

On Sunday morning, and throughout the year(s), show your support for those whom God has called to guide and direct us, in ministries of prayer and care, in mission to each other and the world, and through worship of our Lord and Savior.

Our 2022 Leadership Councils

With the upcoming installations, these will be our Ruling Elders and Deacons for 2022. (A vacancy on the Session is expected to be filled soon at an upcoming congregational meeting.)

Deacons: Ministries of Prayer, Compass and Mission

Class of 2024: Margo Roberts, JoAnn Austin, Jan Schulz

Class of 2023: Linda Rummel, Loretta Vanstone

Class of 2022: Mary Walker, Marcia Cooke, Marilee Pavolko

Elders: Ministries of Leadership, Shepherding and Discernment

Class of 2024: Sue Payne, Jan Zeart

Class of 2023: Shari Gould, Milly Williams, Art Smaltz, Doug Roberts

Class of 2022: Brian Long, Pauline Kraus

From the Pastor:

We can be grateful for the leaders who answer God's calling to guide and to serve in the "Elder-terian" Church

This edition of our bimonthly "Presby Press" has a cover story about our incoming deacons and elders. I want to use my column here to expand on the concept of ordained leadership in our denomination – and to further talk about the calling all of us have to be involved in ministry. All of us. We are all called by God!

The PCUSA draws heavily on the Biblical models of leadership. The tribes of Israel appointed leaders to seek God's will and to make decisions for the good of all. The nation of Israel, when it elected kings and judges sought the Lord's vision on whom should carry that mantle. Jesus himself gathered a group of twelve apostles to carry out the churches work. The first generation of "The Way" selected a new disciple to fill a vacancy, and prayerfully determined who should be in the role of deacon.

Our theology understands the danger of placing too much power in the hands of a single person. Sometimes that turns out OK. Other times, not so much. When there is a team of leaders, the likelihood that Original Sin in any one of us will guide the church incorrectly is lessened. Group decisions are usually better than individual decisions.

Our name even speaks to who we are and how we seek to determine God's plans. A little Greek lingo for you: "Presbyterian" in its original language is based on the word for "elder". Everywhere you see *elder* or *overseer* in an English Bible, the original word would be PRESBY. That's right, the Presbyterian Church is the "Elder-terian" Church. We are governed and guided by elders.

Yes, other forms of church have a few advantages that we don't. Still, centuries of experience have proven that our Presbyterian way of doing things really works well. We are not ruled by bishops or hierarchies. Our pastors have key spiritual leadership roles, but have relatively little governing 'power'. It is the elders – the people within the church, called by God, affirmed by the people – who make most of our decisions.

This group consensus is emphasized in what I believe was a very help revision to our denominational Book of Order about ten years ago. The Session and the Diaconate (and, for the matter, the larger presbyteries and synods and national General Assembly) were formerly defined as "boards" or "governing bodies". Those terms sound like governmental entities or the executive committees of your local PTA or service organizations. The newly-described term for these groups is **councils**. I really like saying "councils". Instead of getting leaders together to follow Roberts Rules of Order and vote with majority rule, the leaders of church entities are to be councils. We gather together, discern God's guidance and the movement of the Spirit, and "come and let us reason together" [[📖 Isaiah 1:18](#)]. Less maneuvering and more faith. Less win/loss and more discernment. Less politics and more theology.

Scripture testifies to the earliest councils of the Christian church, which met to deal with important matters. Throughout church history, across continents and generations, councils met to discern what the church is, what the Lord is telling us true, and what statements the church should make into the culture. Our creeds and professions of faith developed through the pray-led meetings of councils.

That's the role of ordained (that is, "called by God") leaders in our church and in our churches.

I must though ask you to consider your role in this congregation. If or when we leave the bulk of the work to the elected leaders, we are not as strong as the Lord equips us to be. The Biblical models are informative here too. Scripture speaks to us being "the priesthood of all believers" [[📖 Exodus 19 and First Peter 2, among other Bible passages](#)]. The role of the pastors and deacons and elders is to "equip the saints

for the work of ministry” [[📖 Ephesians 4:12](#)]. We will not be as strong of a church, as faithful of a church, when the leadership councils and the staff carry too much of the load. The officers can become weary, and the rest of us will miss out on opportunities to see first-hand how God is at work in our lives.

As we start a new year -- as the worst of the widespread deadlier version of Covid seems to be more *in the past* than *in the future* – I ask you to step up to help those who stand before us to answer the Ordination Questions. Your elders and deacons and pastor need your involvement:

1. Offer your prayers for their ministry and for this church’s life together.
2. Our Ministry Teams need participants from throughout the congregation. Let this be your year.
3. Beyond ministry on a Team, there will be multiple chances for you to step up to help with a particular activity or project.
4. Know that your priesthood/discipleship/ministry is not limited to what you do for FUPC. Much of our faithfulness will become evident in the ways we all serve God and serve people beyond these four walls and off of the church calendar. Our ministry happens in the marketplace, in the community, with the people who live up the street, and with our immediate and extended families.

As is true for our new and returning ordained officers, it is true that God’s very self has prepared and equipped each of us for these ministries we are called to do. If the Lord desires it, the Lord empowers it. We are not on our own to figure out our roles. We are not alone to carry out our work. We are not alone in carrying out what God has designed for each of us and all of us.

Here’s to a faithful and fruitful 2022 !

Wishing you Jesus’ Peace and Jesus’ Joy,

Greg

*P.S.... This is also a very fitting time for us to express tangible gratitude to those who leave current service on our leadership councils – elders **Rick Walker** and **Lianne Walker** and deacons **Joyce Overheim** and **Talon Frick**. These faithful servant-leaders were called by God into this form of service before any of us had even heard of C.O.V.I.D.-19. These terms of service were full of disruption, uncertainty, and disheartening contexts all around us. Yet these leaders, and their colleagues who continue on our Session and Diaconate, met these unimagined circumstances with a beautiful blend of caution, patience, forward-thinking, innovation and trust. Every era, every chapter has its own unique dilemmas and opportunities. Some within us and some around us. Yet, you and I can be grateful for these servant-leaders whose current terms end. I say to each of you:*

Thank you for stepping up, and staying faithful. May God bless your memories of this season, and may the upcoming one be a time for rest and for new spiritual discoveries.

“Well done, good and faithful servants!”

Session-related Teams:

Worship & Music

Children & Youth

Stewardship & Stories

Building & Grounds

Finance & Personnel

Deacons-related Teams and Tasks:

Mission & Outreach

Food & Fellowship

Prayer & Care

Visitation

Ad-Hoc & Special Teams:

Officer Nominating

Futuring

Adult Bible Studies

Technology

Presbytery Commissioner

We Need Our Church Community by John Blasé

[Let us] not [give] up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but [encourage] one another. [Hebrews 10:25](#)

I grew up the firstborn son of a Southern Baptist preacher. Every Sunday the expectation was clear: I was to be in church. Possible exceptions? Maybe if I had a significant fever. But the truth is, I absolutely loved going, and I even went a few times feverish. But the world has changed, and the numbers for regular church attendance are not what they used to be. Of course, the quick question is *why?* The answers are many and varied. Author Kathleen Norris counters those answers with a response she received from a pastor to the question, “Why do we go to church?” He said, “We go to church for other people. Because someone may need you there.”

Now by no means is that the only reason we go to church, but his response does resonate with the heartbeat of the writer to the Hebrews. He urged the believers to persevere in the faith, and to achieve that goal he stressed “not giving up meeting together” ([Hebrews 10:25](#)). Why? Because something vital would be missed in our absence: “encouraging one another” (v. 25). We need that mutual encouragement to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (v. 24).

Brothers and sisters, keep meeting together, because someone may need you there. And the corresponding truth is that you may need them as well.

*What are the top four reasons you either go to church or don't go?
How does knowing “someone may need you there” make you feel about meeting together?*

[Our Daily Bread Devotional - Our Daily Bread Ministries Canada](#)

Please help with our revised and simplified Fellowship Time

One of the benefits of meeting together for worship is that we get a chance to see and talk with one another. This includes long-time church friends, members of extended families, folks we don't usually see anywhere else, and the guests who drop by to worship with us. Our Fellowship Time after worship is a meaningful time for those who choose to stick around after the preacher gives a benediction and the pianist plays a postlude.

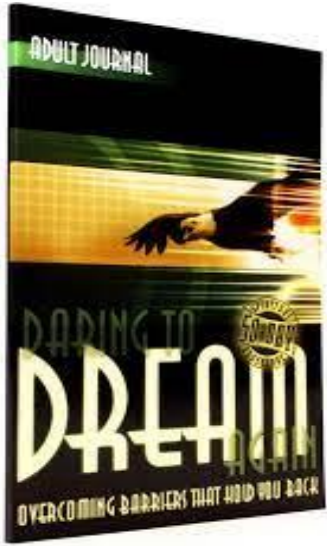
We have adapted and simplified our time for refreshments and conversations. Those who provide the goodies – cookies, fruit, healthy snacks and other tasty treats – do not need to spend half of a Saturday afternoon getting ready. The task is smaller, but the benefits remain the same.

Would you be willing to sign up to provide a few dozen treats, turn on the coffee pot, and set out a pitcher of lemonade? We would like to expand our roster of folks who help. If you have done this before, we really have modified the process. If you have not yet offered to help, we will give you all the guidance you need so you are comfortable in doing this a time or two a year. If you can help in the kitchen but don't care to bake or head to the store, your assistance will still be appreciated.

There is a sign-up schedule in the Fellowship Hall, or you can call or e-mail the church office to find out what this entails. Thanks for enhancing the social and spiritual life of FUPC.

Daring to Dream Again Bible Study returns

“Overcoming barriers which hold you back”



Our first adult Bible Study of 2022 will be “Daring to Dream Again.” This five-week study will explore people in the Bible whose own lives saw setbacks followed by renewals. The study is timely, as we and the rest of our culture have been through a long season of dreams deferred and “the ordinary” and “the hoped for” being pushed out of our reach.

The words of the prophet Joel, however, remain true, quoting the God of all times and places: It shall come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your older ones will dream dreams, and your younger ones will see visions.

Although ordinary life (or unexpected life) can threaten to diminish your hopes for the future, there are real-life ways to reconnect with God-given hope. Discover how to live up to the desires God has for each of us and overcome barriers that hold your church back from its enormous God-given potential. The author of this study (Dr. John White of Mainstay Church Resources) desires to infuse everyone with new life and spiritual energy as you investigate the biblical, heartfelt aspirations God has on our behalf.

The FUPC version of “Daring to Dream Again” will be a five-week series. The consensus among those who initially expressed interest when this study was considered in the fall was to meet via Zoom videoconference. If there is anyone who prefers to meet in person, we can switch it to a hybrid format. In order to maximize the potential for people to participate, we want to hear from you about which evening works best: **Sundays, Mondays or Wednesdays** (working around the weeks the choir rehearses). Please call or e-mail the church office [814-734-3511, office@EdinboroPresby.org] to either express a preference or to let us know your “veto” of which evening doesn’t fit into your calendar well.

This study will begin the first full week of February and run through the beginning of Lent. Request your copy of the study guide. There will be a parallel sermon series offered during our weekly worship, although the evening studies will cover additional material which will not be in Pastor Greg’s sermons.

1. Gideon Let God heal your painful past
2. David Discover God’s present involvement with your life
3. Hannah Empower everything with Prayer
4. Jonah Identify with God’s heart for the world
5. Mary Move with God beyond your comfort zones

First United Presbyterian Church

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