



FUPC Newsletter Update

September 17-30, 2021

A major clean-up, organizing, and streamlining project is underway at Edinboro Presbyterian

A big clean-up project that was years in the making began in the past two weeks at FUPC. Our team of Deacons took the lead to clear out storage areas in the back half of the building. When the Jack and Jill Preschool closed amid the Covid-19 after being hosted at this church for more than a half century, we have a surplus of toys, learning activities and school supplies. The group also is sorting through materials which have accumulated across a few decades from our Sunday church activities for children.

The elders of our Session have authorized several groups within the church to organize and streamline these materials. Some will be consolidated for use in future church classes and activities. Some have been categorized and relocated into Vesta's Nursery for our younger children when that reopens. (*Vesta's Nursery was named to honor the memory of longtime supervisor Vesta Martinson.*) Some of the school supplies have already been donated to public school classrooms in some economically-challenged areas of our immediate region. We will continue to seek out schools, programs and families which could benefit from the distribution of the items which have been used here over the years. If you know of a place which should be considered for further donations, please let us know your ideas and recommendations.

Upcoming, be watching for further details on two things:

1. Opportunities for you to have or to buy items which will be donated or sold, because there is more here than is needed.
2. The next work days will be Thursday and Friday, September 23-24 to package learning and teaching supplies to be sent to local organizations. Please contact Linda Rummel if you could volunteer some time to help with this important project. This is a big project, and many hands make light work.

With those storage areas and classrooms newly cleared out and streamlined, three large closets will be available for easier organization. This means better places from which our Children and Youth Team and Fellowship Team can access their items for their events. We also will have enhanced storage space for the hospital equipment which we make available for loan to people inside and beyond the congregation. Those home health care items are not easy to access where they now are stored, in half of our outside shed. Many of these items will be moved into the main building, where it also will be easier for people in the community to see what we have available in this popular local mission outreach. (*We have at least one or two people on average stop by each week to borrow a wheelchair, walker, bedside commode or a similar item.*)

While this process is underway, some of the big room in the Fellowship Hall will be used in the process of reorganizing. Thank you for your patience while this happens.

We are especially grateful for the group which got us launched in this timely effort: Linda Rummel, Mary Walker, Pauline Kraus, Loretta Vanstone, Sue Payne, Joyce Overheim, Becky Hetz ... and special thanks to Jane Lloyd and Margo Roberts who served a lovely tea party to the FUPC ladies for a mid-morning break. This multi-stage process has aspects which will be overseen by our Children and Youth Team, Property Team, Fellowship Team, Deacons and Session.

From the Pastor

“Hybrid” is our new pattern, and our marching orders

“*Hybrid*” is a key watchword for our times. It’s everywhere. Including in the church.

Hybrid can be a genetics term, which I recall from junior high biology class, where we studied the dominant and recessive traits of each generation of fruit flies. Botanist Gregor Mendel merged two plants to make a third.

The electric cars of a few years ago worked OK for local driving, but they ran out of battery power much sooner than a driver would have been able to travel on a tank of gasoline. The manufacturers’ answer was to develop hybrid vehicles which could run (almost silently) on the short in-town trips, but kick in the other fuel before the electrical juice ran out or when more power or speed was needed. Hybrids are all over the place now.

Stores and restaurants, by necessity of late, have moved to a hybrid business model: we will deliver, you can order online, you can drop by curbside and we will bring out the items you preordered, or you can come on in and shop or eat just like we all used to do. A full “buffet”, and the consumers pick which they like.

As did much of the rest of the world, early in this Covid-19-20-21 pandemic, all of FUPC’s worship and meetings and Bible studies went “virtual” for a while, using the miraculous nature of Zoom videoconferencing. I am impressed at the number of people – and the *variety* of people – who were willing to learn how to Zoom on their computers and tablets and devices (for worship *and* for family chats). Even more plugged in with us on the other aspect of Zoom, joining with a simple phone call to listen and speak during these distanced gatherings.

Since those days though, a lot of our congregation has determined it was safe – and preferable! – to get back together in person in one place. Even with smaller-than-before numbers (at first) it has been fun and gratifying to get back to sanctuary worship, meals and church activities. Even though the style was admittedly different.

Still, not everyone who has been away – and those who *have* been very active in our events through the technological options – can be back into the building. Some of our members have been homebound or less active. A few still have anxieties about places where people are gathered. Nobody knows what the Delta variant (and any future twists and turns) of Coronaviruses will do to laws, protocols and consensus wisdom. (*I can honestly tell you, NO ONE knows!*) Positively, I highlight one of my favorite discoveries of this current era: some of our faithful worshipers from the past 18 months work on Sundays, or live dozens or hundreds of miles away from 16412. If these folks are to remain connected with us, Edinboro Presbyterian will need to be a Hybrid Church.

This will require continued creativity, patience and open-mindedness. Like the rest of the society, the merging of the familiarity and novelty will take us to new places. Our perceptions of “success,” of “attendance,” and of “faithfulness” will necessarily be adapted from what those words meant to us a couple of years ago. How can FUPC weave together the varying ways that people plug into church activities, the diverse ways any good church serves the community, and the core values of Christianity which speak to the issues of our days?

The good news – we are already underway with some of this hybridization:

- Our **WorshipOnline** is reaching dozens every week, only a few of whom come into the building on weekends.
- Several of our recent Bible studies have tried a merger of participants who get together in person simultaneously with people who join in via Zoom.
- We have done meetings of our leadership councils and teams with virtual, gathered and hybrid formats.
- Christian care by your pastor, deacons, elders and other compassionate members have happened at homes, on doorsteps and front porches, by mail, via Zoom and on the phone.
- We have not passed offering plates among the worshipers since March 2020, but giving by our members and friends has remained faithful, generous and steady throughout most of the months of this pandemic and its aftermath.

We still have much to learn about Hybridity. (*Is that a real word, or does it demonstrate this dynamic of being inventive and beyond-normal for times like these?*) There will be more experimentation. We will seek ways to better connect with people beyond this building, beyond our comfort zones, and beyond our traditions. We will need more technological know-how and volunteers, but also we must not emphasize the processes but focus on the Christ-centered purposes. You and I have learned much, need to learn more, and will be ready for further changes and adaptations, even as we move toward more and more patterns which feel like pre-Covid life.

Let's help each other be innovative *and* traditional. The people of God will hold each other accountable to maintain the timeless and unchangeable truths, but translate them into what will essentially be a new “multilingual, multi-mode” outreach to the neighbors and strangers who need to experience those truths. The winds of a New Pentecost are blowing. With our Lord's help, the actions and the disciples at FUPC will speak to – and be understood by – social media users, people with no Presbyterian experience, those who are busy or otherwise occupied on the weekends, and individuals who perhaps will *never* come into this particular building.

Hang on for the ride. Let loose of our too-tight grip. Hold onto our unique identity of an outpost of God's amazing realm.

Wishing you the Lord's Peace and Joy!
Greg

EdinboroPresby.org statistics

2,106 visitors have made **3,160** online connections with us through the FUPC website, since the pandemic started

Our congregation's website has been accessed 3,160 times since mid-March 2020. Those visits to Edinboro Presby.org have been made by 2,106 unique visitors, according to analytics provided by SquareSpace, the company which hosts our website. While some percentage of those visits are the result of automated searches, the huge majority of those were directly accessed by web visitors.

The statistics indicate that, beyond the site's home page, the Worship Videos pages is the most popular landing place. For 2021 year-to-date, an average of 19 people called up our video page.

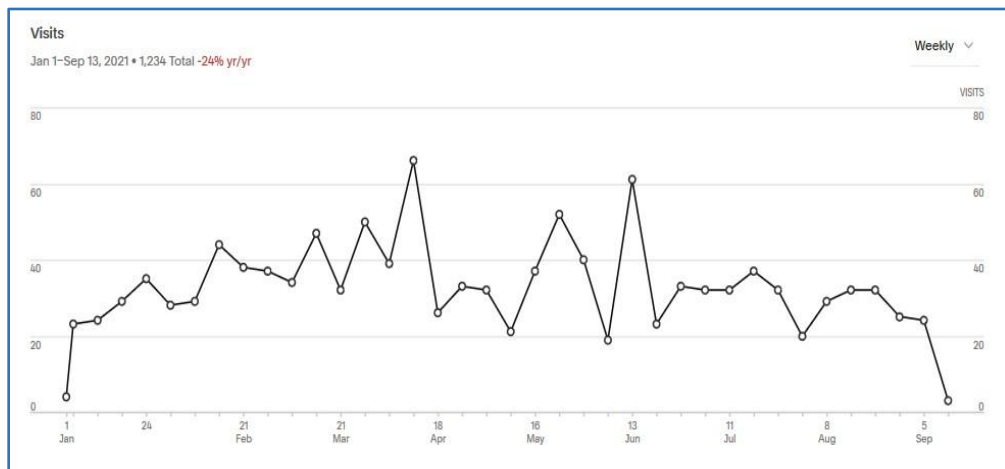
The biggest week on our website was Holy Week and Easter Week of April 2020, just a few weeks after our sanctuary worship services were put on hold. There were 163 viewers of our worship videos, devotions and news updates during that single week.

The second-most clicked link is the online Newsletter page. We also have had 317 views of five online

and hybrid Bible studies which have been offered during the past 18 months.

The analytics also indicate that our website viewers used laptop or desktop computers 75% of the time. Cell phone browsers were used 24% of the time.

Here is the graph of our weekly website visits so far in 2021. We have averaged 35 each week, ranging from 19 to the high point of this year, 66 in Easter Week.



Upcoming at Edinboro Presbyterian

October 3 World Communion Sunday. This show of Christian unity and purpose was launched through Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. Followers of Jesus – across many denominations and traditions and nations – participate in what is likely the largest annual celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Using dozens and dozens of languages, with hundreds and hundreds of bread recipes, we join together at our local tables to signify that we are united at Christ’s one spiritual table, a family reunion and an empowerment for divine hope and Godly mission. Sunday worship in the sanctuary begins at 11:00 a.m.

Our ordained leaders also wish to make a special effort to share the Sacrament with people who cannot (or cannot easily) attend in the church building. We can schedule a time to bring bread and cup to you (or someone you know) at a home or another location. Theological guidance from our national PCUSA leadership also acknowledges it can be appropriate to celebrate the Lord’s Supper using virtual meeting technology. Let us know that you are interested, and we can arrange a Zoom meeting with you so you can experience Communion where you are, on a day which is convenient for you.

October 6 First Wednesday @ FUPC. For the first time since March 2020, we resume our “First Wednesdays” at the church. This is an all-church supper for everyone – including any guests you would like to bring. Linda Rummel and the Fellowship Ministry Team will provide a nice meal, and there will be time for conversation and catching up on church news. The meal begins at 6:00, but if your schedule has you running later than that, drop in when you can. We appreciate our volunteers who help as part of the kitchen crew.

Separately, after the shared meal on the First Wednesday of each month, many of our ministry teams hold monthly or every-other-month meetings. You do not need to be part of a team in order to come for supper; those two are separate. However, if you would stay and sit in with a group which interests you, your ideas and suggestions can help us to shape good projects, activities and ministries.

After-Worship Coffee & Conversations Our Fellowship Team has restarted our more-familiar patterns for coffee and cookies and fresh fruit. We will continue to use appropriate safety standards to provide reassuring comfort for all who choose to participate. Fellowship is now recruiting volunteers who would provide the refreshments, serve coffee and lemonade, or assist with set-up or clean-up. Look for a sign-up sheet at the church building or call or email the office.

October 24 SPUDS N’ SUDS LUNCHEON!: The deacons invite all to attend the “Spuds & Suds Luncheon” on Sunday, Oct. 24th, following worship. Spuds, Suds, & fellowship will be provided!

CROP Walk upcoming September 26, with an “anytime” option

The annual Erie County CROP Walk which will have an unofficial presence near the Runner's Pavilion in the Beach 1 parking lot at Presque Isle. The 2021 Erie County CROP Hunger Walk will take much the same form that it did last year with the focus on smaller group gatherings. The walk is not limited to that specific day. Instead, it could take place anytime in September that best fits your schedule. You may plan to walk locally. Find a good time to schedule a walk with others, or walk on your own. So find a friend, solicit sponsors, and go for a CROP walk! Checks may be made payable to CROP/CWS, or donate online.



The Erie County CROP Walk had the largest results in Pennsylvania again last year. This also ranked 12th largest in the entire nation in 2020.

Because hunger is a much larger problem in many areas of the world, your support of CROP Walk reaches around the globe through Church World Service, an ecumenical mission organization. With CROP Walks, 25% of the donations stay in the communities where funds were raised to fight hunger here at home. When you give to our walkers or through our church office, these grants are credited to support local food pantries.

So you know: Here are the current building guidelines posted at our doors

Please join us for worship options we offer each weekend:

Sanctuary Worship in person here - - - **11:00 a.m. Sundays** (After Labor Day through May 31)

Worship Online - - - on **EdinboroPresby.org/videos**, *pre-recorded, available to watch any time, any day.*

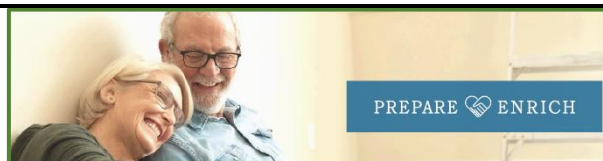
Inside the building, and for outside events:

Our elders ask that you be guided by current guidelines of the national Center for Disease Control and Prevention – and by the Law of Love! This congregation’s leaders want our guests, friends and members to feel welcomed and comfortable.

- Make choices on masking and distancing appropriate to **your own** personal health situation and comfort level
- Make these choices to honor and respect the health and comfort levels of the **other people** around you.
- We **will not judge** each other about wearing masks or not wearing masks.
- We **will not ask** for proof of vaccination status, nor judge people on the medical choices they and their doctors make.
- We care for these facilities with **awareness of good protocols**.
- Use **your own good judgment** to keep yourself and others safe and calm.

Garden of Edin Update

Participants in the Garden of Edin Community Garden have donated to the Edinboro Food Pantry to date this growing season is **292 pounds** of produce! Most of this abundance comes from four "tithe" beds (10% of 40 beds) that are exclusively grown for the Food Pantry. Also, many of the other thirty-six gardeners have generously donated produce from their own personal garden beds!! We are so grateful to all the gardeners in the Garden of Edin! Again this summer, Hermitage House Youth are working with us on Thursday afternoons. Two to four students with their counselor have mulched the pathways, improved the compost bins, weeded, and amended the soil in the raised beds. These students are willing workers and are learning about gardening too. We are so grateful for the work these students can accomplish!



3 top blog entries, to help your marriage or deep relationship

Prepare-Enrich, a leading program for premarital preparation and lifelong strengthening of marriages and other relationships, has compiled some of their most popular blog posts so far in 2021. Click [this link](#) (or request printed versions from FUPC) to read some wise advice to help you draw closer to loved ones. Some of what you read here likely can help you in parenting, friendships and work connections too.

Understanding & Empathy

Nurture Friendship within Your Marriage

4 Strategies to Defuse a Fight

Theological Education annual emphasis reminds us about how God's call to church leadership continues generation to generation


Our national church reminds us to build interest in the pursuit of both formal and informal theological reflection. Theological education happens in all sorts of ways in a Christian's life, whenever we ask questions, go to Sunday school and Bible studies, express doubts, inquire with our curiosity, or go to seminary. Theological education is a path of discernment and learning to think about God, who God is, and what it means to live as a beloved creature of God in the world.

The third week of September each year, we have an emphasis on theological education. Traditional seminary experiences are still available, where potential future ministers go to school for three years or so, preparing for ordained church leadership. Our seminaries also have adapted their programs, offering online and virtual training for future clergy. These schools also offer shorter programs and individual classes to help local elders to become more confident and competent for leadership in congregations, even without traditional clergy status.

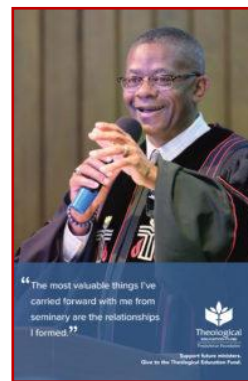
Formal theological education – seminary education – exists in order to maintain the training for leadership of a culture of reflection within the church. Those who are formally trained become equipped to nurture and support the informal and more wide-spread examples of theological education that exist throughout the Christian church.

Where will we find the pastors, preachers and other church leaders for upcoming years and decades? The process primarily will start in local churches. Today's diverse vocational options should be promoted within congregations, and not only to young people to be pondering their futures. Help establish study/action groups for people who are seeking clarity about their personal call to ministry and opportunities to pursue theological studies locally or through our seminaries.

— Information from the national PCUSA office for Theology, Spiritual Formation and Worship

Today we celebrate  [Theological Education](#) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Please join us in praying for the Church's future ministers, and as we look for opportunities to mentor those among us who have gifts for ministry. Our Church supports future ministers who are Presbyterian students at PC(USA) seminaries through The Theological Education Fund.

— Rev. Lee Hinson Hasty, The Presbyterian Foundation



First United Presbyterian Church

Newsletter Updates currently are published the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

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