

FUPC Presby Press

[August 2022 Church Newsletter]

Help shape our autumn relaunch

It is time to redevelop our ministry teams & schedules

In order to prepare for our mission and ministries for the upcoming fall and winter, it is time to hear wishes and dreams, assemble work groups, and develop a church schedule with the right number of events and the right blend of priorities. We have some marvelous, faithful ordained leaders who serve on our councils of Deacons and Elders. To better accomplish our goals, we would do well to broaden our idea development and the number of people who carry out our activities.

During August, all of our members and friends are encouraged to prayerfully ponder how the Lord might be calling you to use your interests, talents and motivations to foster the life and work of FUPC. Please prayerfully consider how you might join with one of our Ministry Teams, either for some brainstorming, to develop a single event, or to serve as a member of a Team through the rest of 2022. Maybe you know what you are already good doing. Maybe you are ready to branch out into something new to you. Maybe you have a heart to urge us to expand on an opportunity which has been dormant or untried. Maybe you'd like to help, don't know how, and should talk with an elder or deacon or pastor to ask them to identify a skill you have.

Please speak with one of these contact people about what you might do for a Team, and how the Lord might bless you because you step out to participate in your church in a way like this.

Worship & Music: Sue Payne

Local Mission: Jan Schulz

Stewardship & Stories: Pauline Krause

Property: Doug Roberts

Children & Youth: Mary Beth Honeycutt

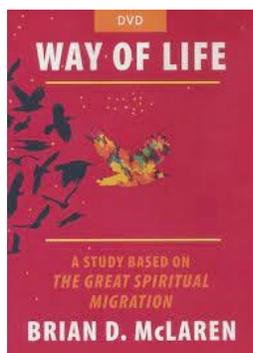
Food & Fellowship: Linda Rummell

Finance & Personnel: Shari Gould

Prayer & Care: Mary Walker

10 AM worship continues *through* Labor Day Weekend

Our summer sanctuary worship will begin at 10 AM through all of August *and* during Labor Day Weekend on September 4. The return to 11 AM will begin on the following Sunday, September 11. **Worship Online** will continue to provide recorded worship experiences 24/7 at www.EdinboroPresby.org/videos.



FUPC BIBLE STUDY & DISCUSSION GROUP

Sunday mornings at 9:30 (with online options)

September 11, 18, 25, October 2

Teens & Adults

...details inside

From the Pastor

Analyzing and adapting to the trends of life, culture and church

My August worship series (8/14 through 9/04) will be based on Brian McLaren's book "The Great Spiritual Migration". The summer sermon series – and the upcoming September Bible study – is called "A New Way of Life", noting the "migration" of Christianity from a "a system of beliefs to a way of life based on love." In many places, we have seen this already happening. In many other places, it is an already Need, but a not-yet Priority.

I am convinced that the Covid Era has accelerated this reality in the American culture (and probably in a lot of other places too). However, McLaren's book was published in 2017, back when only a handful of medical researchers were studying the tiny virus with the crown-shaped attachments, long before anyone had encountered what became labeled as **Coronavirus Disease of 2019**. The change in the culture – and in the church – was well documented over the last two decades, and any of us who would pay attention could see that transitions in motivations and practices have been changing for a long time.

The topic, and our interaction with it, is complex and isn't one-size-fits-all. I'm not sure that all of McLaren's teaching is the best goal for every Christian or for every Christian church or denomination. Still, I have found him to be a provocative and important thinker, theologian and motivator since I first read one of his books and first attended a conference where he spoke. (Remember when people used to attend conferences?!?!?)

I look forward to the sermon series this month, and I hope you will include on your calendar the four-week video series with local discussion which will be our new adult Bible study starting in September.

This will be a four-week Sunday morning class. We will gather at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We begin with McLaren's 15-minute video on the week's topic. Then we will have a half hour or so for our own in-house conversation on the topic. I hope quite a few of us will gather for these important discussions on Sunday mornings after Labor Day. I am also interested in arranging a "hybrid" version to provide this study to others who cannot be in our building Sundays or who would benefit from a different schedule. (If you'd like to participate in a virtual mode, please call/email/text me this month, and we will arrange the format to align with the preferences of those who express an interest.

My hope is that the people of this congregation never give into despair or disgruntlement with the trends of modern-day (post-modern??) life. Throughout two millennia of the **Christian Era** (longer-lasting and more powerful than the Covid Era!!), our Lord has consistently demonstrated divine presence with those who count their blessings anyway, those who seek out the guidance of their God, and all who find ways to faithfully interact with the deepest truest needs around them. God historically allows certain things to happen when other lesser powers succumb to the natural consequences of their excesses. Renewal happens when perceptions of disappointment become more and more overwhelming. Numerous times throughout the Christian Era – and in the Before-Christ Era too, for that matter – our Lord stirs up a Great Awakening. Such movements of God's Spirit and God's people bring about transformation in nations and church networks and in individual congregations. It sure feels like what we've been through in the last couple of years – and maybe even the last couple of decades – can be the springboard toward a motivating, exciting launch of what the Lord has been anticipating. The times are ripe to reclaim past successes, to discern new patterns, and eagerly lean into the next chapter of life and faith and Godly influence on so many things that surround us. It is not just a time to adapt; this is an era when we could thrive.

Jesus' Peace & Hope & Joy,

Greg

It was great to be back together

2022 Community VBS built up the faith of 60 children

Our Community Vacation Bible School was back for a successful week in July. After a two-year hiatus, multiple local congregations offered a fun, faith-building VBS. Organizers were pleased with the turn-out as 82 people took part. There were 60 children in the daily classes, workshops, and music and recreation groups. We had 22 adults and teens serving as leaders, guides and volunteers.

Those from Edinboro Presbyterian took part were Olivia Pavolko, Kaydan Pavolko, Ainsley Walker, Marilee Wnek, Marcia Cooke, Margo Roberts, Peyton Frick and Greg Gillispie. (We know others from FUPC would have also attended, had work schedules or family vacations not conflicted with the schedule.)

You can already mark your calendars for the 2023 VBS. Our Lady of the Lake Church has agreed to host us again next summer at their activity building. The parallel week in 2023, July 10-14, is already been scheduled. Make your plans now.

Slide shows and videos related to our version of the “Food Truck Party” VBS are available through our congregation’s website, www.EdinboroPresby.org.

(Usually, when children are involved, we password protect that content with our three-digit passcode – the church office’s area code.) The Food Truck theme was an opportunity to explore five of the Bible’s stories of how the Lord used food to create miracles and demonstrate God’s providence.



**THANKS for a great week of
Vacation Bible School**

Fill the Backpacks!

Come join us for an evening of “hands-on”, “first-person” mission

Please join the FUPC Mission Team and Edinboro United Methodist Women in Grace Hall of the Edinboro United Methodist Church (113 High Street), on Wednesday, August 17, for an indoor picnic at 5:00 p.m., followed by “Fill the Backpacks” mission project. Enjoy some food and fellowship with friends then help fill backpacks with school supplies for area children. The backpacks will be distributed through the Edinboro Food Pantry for the upcoming school year.



Fill the Backpacks is a long-running mission project which multiple local congregations have supported cooperatively. Recipient families have expressed grateful appreciation for our help.

Do you need to update your child/youth safety clearances?

Like all other agencies, schools, sports leagues and businesses which serve children and teens, Pennsylvania's Christian congregations need to align with church policies and state law regarding background clearance checks. Due to the interruptions of the past couple of years, some staff and volunteers with such entities have allowed their clearances to lapse.

As we prepare for FUPC's new program year ahead, it is time to assure that this documentation is brought up to date. This protects our young people, the congregation, and our volunteers' personal reputations too. Here is what is needed, whether you help occasionally or have an ongoing role:

1. Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police.
2. Child Abuse History Clearance from the PA Department of Human Services.
3. *Only if you have been a resident of a different state in the previous ten years, a federal criminal history check.*

Further information is [here](#), and the process can be completed online [here](#). Be sure to indicate that you are a "Volunteer" and there is no cost for the clearances. Email a copy of the resulting report or drop it by the FUPC office, where it will be maintained in a locked file. *Renewals are required every five years.* Contact the pastor or an elder if you have questions or need help to update your clearances.

Wee Kirk Conference returns, with ideas and inspiration for smaller and midsize churches

Registration has opened for the renewed *Wee Kirk* Conference in western Pennsylvania. This annual event is back for clergy, other ordained leaders, church members and congregational volunteers and staff. You are invited!



Imagine "Wee Kirk" being said in a Scottish/Presbyterian accent: "wee kirk" is "small church". This conference is shaped especially for smaller and mid-sized churches – congregations like ours.

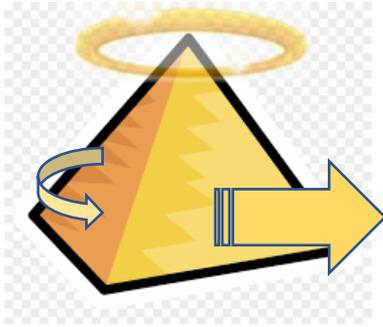
Speakers and workshops to be offered include topics which can foster faith and strengthen our churches:

- Building Bridges to the Wandering Sheep: Nones and Dones
- Rest, Reflection and Resilience
- Challenges and Opportunities in Times of Change
- Media and the Church: Beyond Streaming, What's Next?
- Spiritual Formation: Soils and Stages
- The Turn-around and Resurrection of Congregations
- Hedges and Horizons: Opportunities of Small-place Ministry
- Following Fred (Mr. Rogers): Reclaiming our Identity in the Neighborhood

The meaningful and restful conference stretches from Monday afternoon through Wednesday lunch, October 10-12. [The site](#) is about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, and carpooling from our area can be arranged.

Brochures can be picked up or e-mailed from the FUPC office. Register locally with us, and assistance with the fees and travel costs is available from this church and from our presbytery. More details are also available on the [Wee Kirk Conference](#) website.

August Prayer suggestions, for our PRAYER, CARE, CONNECTIONS



- Mondays:** That FUPC will be especially attentive to divine guidance.
- Tuesdays:** For our people who visit, call, write, and help with errands.
- Wednesdays:** For students who are returning to the University here.
- Thursdays:** Especially for our older members, and our younger ones.
- Fridays:** That those who face real trouble will reach out for help.
- Saturdays:** For the Erie County and Crawford County agencies and ministries which address poverty, racial hatred, and jobs.

Reflections on the national Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly

As the General Assembly bears witness, there are some qualities of our denomination that are worth applauding. First, we believe there is more wisdom in the many than in the few (Sounds like Spock, right?!). Every presbytery across this country elected commissioners, clergy and ruling elders as well as YAADs (Young Adult Advisory Delegates) to make the governing decisions. Our Lake Erie Presbytery commissioners are Teaching Elder Rev. Tim Harmon of Second Presbyterian in Oil City, Ruling Elders Kristin and Clay Woodring) of Belle Valley Presbyterian, and YAAD Owen Snyder of First Presbyterian, Girard. The Assembly committees met in person at Louisville, then the full Assembly met for a week via Zoom in July.

Unlike many other religious bodies, we do not ask our staff, top leaders, or only our ordained clergy to make decisions for everyone. Instead, members of the PCUSA are broadly and diversely represented in the conversations that dictate how the national church is governed. We believe in collective wisdom.

Secondly, we are connectional, relating with mutual respect and accountability. No one congregation is an island unto itself. Instead, we are a network of congregations that support one another, critique when appropriate, and strive to work together for a comprehensive witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. Again, we believe we are better together than separately.

Finally, it is worth celebrating that we still rely on a mutual trust that all of us are doing the best we can to follow Jesus. Our system of government depends on that trust, and we value getting together to affirm that shared confidence. Just as members of local churches value the sharing of worship and fellowship because it strengthens their faith, so it is with the larger PCUSA. As the 225th General Assembly theme suggests, together we move from isolation to community, from confusion to understanding, and from lament to hope. Together, we believe and hope in God's good future. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

-- **The Rev. Anita Bernhardt** is our General Presbyter, pastor to the 57 congregations of Lake Erie Presbytery

Presby Press is FUP's monthly newsletter for our members, friends, and the community at-large.

This summer we are using postal mail to send copies to everyone, including those who also on our email distribution list.

Archived newsletters are available on the website. All information is provided as general information. We cannot and do not replace medical, tax, legal or financial professionals who should give you specific advice for your unique personal situation. Only the Session (Council of Elders) can make official statements or positions of this congregation.

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