

FUPC Presby Press

[May 2022]

It's back !!!

Community VBS returns in July, with faith-building opportunities for our children – and those around us

After being sidelined the past two summers due to caution related to the Covid-19 pandemic, our Edinboro Community Vacation Bible School is on its way back for the summer of 2022! We at Edinboro Presbyterian are happy to be among the local congregations who will combine again to provide a full exciting week of Bible stories, songs, games and lessons for the children we serve.

VBS is an important and effective outreach for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not an exaggeration to say that in these five full mornings, participants can get a “month of Sundays” worth of knowledge, understanding and appreciation for the Lord. Almost literally, a month of Sundays’ worth.

Please extend your invitation to your child’s friends to be a part of this. Plan that your family members will attend.

The location and dates have changed for 2022 compared to the past several years we have sponsored the combined VBS. This year, we will be at the social hall of the Lady of the Lake Roman Catholic Church. The dates have moved later in the summer, to avoid overlapping with similar events which a few other congregations will hold in June. Ours will be weekday mornings, July 11-15.

Registration and further information are available online. New this year, you can also pay online. If you want more details, or you would like to request a little help to reduce the small registration fee, make that request through the FUPC office soon.

How can you enhance our 2022 VBS?

- Pray for the children, leaders and families.
- Sign up the children you know.
- Invite other people to join in this fun and meaningful week.
- Offer to help. Adult *and* teen volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks. (We can help, if you need to update child safety clearances.)
- Contribute a gift to your local church marked “VBS” so we can offset the cost for a family who needs a little help.
- Attend the Friday morning closing ceremony, and talk with the families there.



Edinboro Area Vacation Bible School
July 11 – 15, 2022, at Our Lady of the Lake Church.

If you are interested in Volunteering, please email:
edinborovbs@gmail.com

For more information or to sign up:
[food-truck-party-edinboro-vbs-2022](https://www.edinborovbs.com/food-truck-party-edinboro-vbs-2022)

From the Pastor

Each dilemma needs a Christian perspective – and its Sabbath rest

This spring it has sure felt to me as if the Covid Era is ending – perhaps even over. Most states and school and businesses and churches have finally relaxed the restrictions and limits. Sure, public transportation and hospitals are still requiring masks now, but most of us have been freed from these consequences of the past two years. It is nice to be “done” with all of that.

The implications, though, will be long-lasting – even if we don’t end up with a relapse of any kind.

Our economy (and those of many nations) has a lot from which to recover. Workplaces and schools lost a lot of productivity. Good habits fell into disuse. The culture has lost the ability to seek consensus on what “the science” says. People have lost trust in the institutions which used to be more-or-less reliable, and they vilify anyone who disagrees with one’s beliefs or perspectives or experiences.

Plus, it must be said – never to be forgotten – many many many people died of the respiratory disease, from delays in receiving other treatments during the shutdowns, and from the consequences of the depression and hopelessness which unfortunately overwhelmed them.

Into all of that, the people of God have a message to share. We must speak into the clamor and confusion. We must not only speak into the distrust and the anger, we must tangibly demonstrate the better way. We Christ followers know a prime source of hope – Jesus. We have access to a powerful source of internal and communal strength – God’s Holy Spirit. We are plugged into people who can affirm and reassure and mutually bless each other – God’s Church.

I call on us – as neighbors, as citizens, as Christians – to live out our values in all our interactions. We must become community leaders as we “speak the truth in love”, “forgive others as your Father in heaven has forgiven you”, and “outdo one another in showing mutual respect”. The core values of faithfulness and righteousness and grace are greatly needed in times like this.

Covid messed with us, big time. This era has been stressful, even as it showed us that the “old ways” are not the “only way”. The lessons learned and the experiments tried have opened to us new and different ways to accomplish similar goals. What was set aside also helped many people to reevaluate priorities. We now can be more intentional to focus on who we are in God’s eyes. How we treat each other matters, especially in this context, especially with those closest to us. There are many folks in our wider spheres of influence who would love to see that kindness and respect and honesty still matter, despite all the examples of lying and hatred and stereotyping and judgmentalism which grabs most of the headlines.

Are you someone who needs some encouragement to reclaim these higher goals in your everyday life? Could you benefit from some practical ways to live into the Better Way, and some permission to unplug from the culture and re-plug into your calling? Here are my suggested techniques:

- Crank down the volume of the cranky media. Too much “news” and too much “news/talk” creates a harshness which will wear you down.
- Fill your mind with more positivity: Christian music on your radio, a fun family game night, an afternoon out in nature or watching peaceful surroundings outside the window, journal your blessings.
- Are you fretting over your anxieties, or can you pray about them, turning them over to the Lord?
- Take a regular Sabbath time – in your hours, in your days, in each week and month:
 - Once an hour ... whether it is a beeper you set on your phone or the chiming of a clock, stop for 30 seconds of slow, deep breathing no matter what else you have going on.

- Once a day (at least) ... get into a prayerful posture, and ask for God's blessings on the stresses within you and around you. Say *thanks* for what is good. Listen for guidance.
- Once a week ... commit to worship, be that in a sanctuary or watching a worship video.
- Once a month ... Put a Family/Friends Day into your calendar, with as much urgency and importance as everything else that fills your schedule. Have dessert with a group of friends. Take a renewal day to do something wonderful if you are in a couple. Take a field trip or a special activity with children or grandchildren. Just for yourself, put a big red X on that spot your planner, so you have a day to just unwind and enjoy.

Even beyond Covid, there are ways (if we are not attentive) that we can be subsumed by the political discord, the rising prices, the questionable methods of activists across the spectrum, the lack of a sane center. Southern Europe is the only place where war is being wage, even though (thankfully) the battles closer to us are not being fought with lethal weapons. Just this week, the new loudness of events surrounding the Supreme Court just added to an already-long list of stressors. The Good News of the Gospel is not front-and-center, especially amid all this.

It needs to be.

This is a tough culture in which anyone can just "luckily" "stumble upon" joy or peace or calm. It requires intentionality. We can influence the society, and we can find ways to shape our souls, making them ready to receive the gifts which God is eager to give to the Lord's beloved children. We need not back into the methods of madness and hatred of the lesser powers around us. We need not succumb to hopelessness and misery. You and I have heard of "peace like a river, hope like a fountain, joy like an ocean" in the old Sunday School/Vacation Bible School song. Those waters of renewal are easily accessible, right where we are, right in this moment.

Set your focus in these helpful directions. Open yourself to the renewal and the freedom. Drink deeply.

Wishing you Jesus' Peace and Easter Joy,

Greg

A personal note, in this direction: I will be practicing what I preach. With unused vacation time that has been building up over the past two years, I am going to take some extra time away from my work for my own rest and renewal. In conjunction with a son's college graduation, I will be away two Sundays in May. Once summer officially starts, I will take a two-week vacation (something I've rarely done in 28 years of ordained pastorates). Details will be published on worship plans and how we will handle care emergencies when you would otherwise call the pastor. Thanks for your encouragement, and my thanks for those who are stepping into leadership roles, so I can catch up on Sabbath breaks for my family, my sensibilities and my soul.

Summer worship schedule starts June 5

FUPC's summer sanctuary worship will move to
10:00 a.m. for June, July, August & Labor Day Weekend

Worship *Online* will still be available 24/7 if you are unable to attend in person, or if you will be away on any given Sunday

Help us celebrate the Class of 2022

Let us know about your family's graduate

Help us to celebrate the accomplishments of the college and high school graduates connected to this congregation. If you or someone in your household will be graduating this month or next, please be sure that we have all the names and details. Call or e-mail Sue Johnson in the church office, so that we know any special honors and future plans. Those will be published soon, and honored in a Sunday worship service.



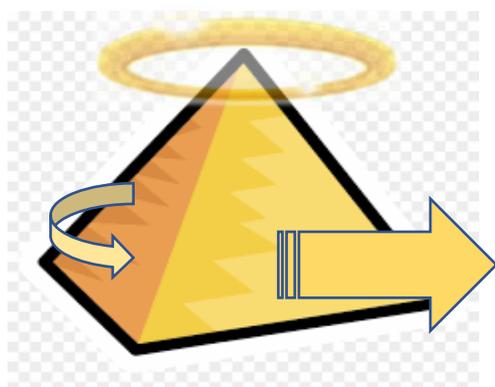
A pyramid of goals, with which we can measure how our mission and ministry align with God's plans for FUPC

When a group of our ordained officers and other congregational leaders met for a half-day discernment retreat, we came up with three prime areas in which we can focus our congregational life and work. These are three broad areas, but can be used to measure our faithfulness to our divine calling as a church in this place, at this time.

The first of these priorities: **PRAYER.**

Before we make a lot of our own plans, we will do well to ask God to guide us toward that upcoming future. Our prayers will include requests for our people, our activities and our success. Our prayer time though – individually, in small groups and teams, and as a congregation – must always include listening and discernment. Prayers which only speak miss out on the

blessings which come from prayers that are primarily ready to receive signs and directions from the Lord.



The second emphasis: **INWARD CARE**

After the challenges of the past few years, we have renewed opportunities to connect and reconnect with one another.

Traditional methods of gathering – classes, worship, meals and social events – will have their roles. Leaders believe we need to emphasize and expand our outreach with the people who already are among our household of faith. Reconnecting, in former and new ways, will strengthen this church.

Third (on the list, but *not* a lower priority) : **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

As important as inward ministry is, two millennia of church life and a strong theme in the Bible is outreach beyond those already in the faith. Outward mission opportunities are ripe. There are many people around us with physical and spiritual needs. The number of people – of all ages and circumstances – with no church affiliation is large, and it is growing. Each time we plan an FUPC event, we are encouraged to ask the question: *How can we make this activity more inviting and more magnetic to someone who is not now (not yet) involved with FUPC?* Some of our events should specifically be other-directed rather than insider-focused.

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

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