

# Newsletter



REV. PASTOR TRACI

## PASTOR'S + CORNER

Minister's forums and in-person conversations are consumed with one specific topic these days: church decline. Some people are anxious: "Churches are closing! We're losing numbers!" Some are confident: "The Spirit is doing a new thing!" Some are weary or annoyed "I tried to warn people that this was happening, but nobody would listen!" Most days, I'm curious. It's true that the church is changing, and in big ways. People who have attended church, faithfully, for decades have opted out citing one excuse or the other. People who came occasionally now come once a year, if at all. Some people call the remaining folks the "faithful remnant." To be clear, I'm not talking about Elmhurst Presbyterian Church, specifically, but mainline protestant churches, generally. Many scholars of religion and society have written more eloquently than I have or can about the statistics, the reasons, and the future. My calling is to continue to listen to the voice of the Spirit and the direction of the Session and to follow wherever both might lead.

I've been reticent to read too many books that prescribe a solution. Too many books offer five-part plans and six easy steps to take. Filled with acronyms that help you chart a new course or cast a new vision, I find most books on church leadership to be vapid and hollow. One exception to this is the book I'm reading right now called *When Church Stops Working* by Dr. Andrew Root. Andy was a Ph.D. student at Princeton Seminary when I was in the Master of Divinity program, and he was one of my preceptors. Even then, he was an outside-of-the-box thinker who looked beyond simple solutions. It was only because of this relationship that I even picked up the book. I'm only about halfway through, so hopefully my glowing endorsement isn't premature. I don't think it is, though, because even if the second half provides little or no instruction or insight (I doubt that's true), I've gotten so much from the first half, I almost feel like I can stop reading.

The book is about waiting on God. It's about chucking the five-point plans and most church leadership books to the curb (yes, please.) Consider this:

If we are to take our own origin story seriously, we need to see that God's people only ever act in response to God's act. They do not plan their own activity and then proceed. They encounter God and act in obedience to that encounter. God acts through God's people, not in the way a puppet master manipulates a marionette but in the manner of a relationship that starts with God's action. (p.24)

This line keeps ringing in my ears: they do not plan their own activity and then proceed. We act in response to what God is doing. This is the way the community of faith has always operated. Root is arguing that if we're not sure where to go next, the faithful and proper response is to wait for God to show us. To listen. To slow down.

This is true at an individual as well as organizational level. What does it mean to wait for God? What does it mean to respond to God? These are the questions I'm pondering as we move into another program year.

Happy to ponder with you, my friends!

**With gratitude,  
Pastor Traci**

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Matthew 25

CHECK OUT [PCUSA.ORG/MATTHEW25](https://www.pcusa.org/matthew25) TO LEARN MORE!



WE ARE A  
**MATTHEW 25 Church**

*Actively Engaged in the World*

# Upcoming Events



## Leadership Sunday

All are welcome to join us for this special worship service on Sunday, September 10th. We will be celebrating a variety of events and invite our guests to **WEAR RED** as we partake in the installation of officers and witness confirmations of faith from various EPC students!

Don't forget to stop by our church picnic afterwards as well!



## All Church Picnic

Everyone is invited to stay after worship on Sunday, September 10th for our All Church Picnic.

Food such as sandwiches, sides, and desserts will already be provided. So come on by and enjoy a time of good food and fellowship!



## EPC Project C.U.R.E. Gala

Mark your calendars for September 22nd as we prepare for an evening of food and fun all while raising money for Project C.U.R.E.

Learn more on page 4 and 5 and purchase your tickets by scanning the QR code below.




# Get Involved!

Attention parents of teenagers! Join us for a time of conversation, community, and reflection as we gather around the joyful and challenging stage of parenting teens!

If you're interested in participating, please contact our church office for dates and times we are meeting.



 (630) 834-7750

 [elmhurstpresbyterianoffice@gmail.com](mailto:elmhurstpresbyterianoffice@gmail.com)



We're looking for volunteers to assist on Sunday mornings with Youth classroom management and general assistance. Tasks would include supporting students and assisting with games and art projects!

No planning or curriculum building necessary, Micaiah, our Sunday School teacher, will provide you with everything you need to know.



EPC is now an official sorting location for ICDI. We are working with them to help provide clothing for the immigrants who have arrived in Chicago. ICDI provides transit assistance and housing with wrap-around care to asylum seekers, and advocates for justice for immigrants.

If you wish to volunteer at EPC, please email BOTH of the following people with how many hours you wish to volunteer and your availability.

 [erodriguez@icdichicago.org](mailto:erodriguez@icdichicago.org)

 [sankunda@icdichicago.org](mailto:sankunda@icdichicago.org)



 [www.icdichicago.org](http://www.icdichicago.org)

# Get Involved!

EPC invites you to participate in our new, beginner level, multi-generational handbell choir. Please join us as we learn some fun music to share during Worship. The bell group will rehearse on the following Sundays: *September 24, October 1, October 15, October 22* from 11:45am-12:30pm. Performance during Worship on Sunday, October 29.



If you are interested in joining us to make a joyful noise, please contact **Susan Smentek, Director of Music.**

## Worship Basket Upgrade!



Scan for Amazon Wishlist!

The Faith Formation Committee is hoping to upgrade our worship baskets to contain more engaging, faith-based activities for our youth to use during services. Please consider purchasing one of the items on our Amazon Wish List!



We're looking for some volunteers and trunk decorators to help us get ready for Trunk or Treat! Scan the QR code below to sign up!

Volunteers will help cook the pizzas during worship and set up lunch before the trunk or treating begins. Decorators are needed to decorate their trunks and bring candy and goodies to hand out to kids in our circle drive!



Sign up here!

# Upcoming Events



## Afternoon Tea & Treats at Calvin

All are invited to attend a lovely afternoon tea on Saturday, October 14th. This event will be held from 2-4pm in Calvin Hall.

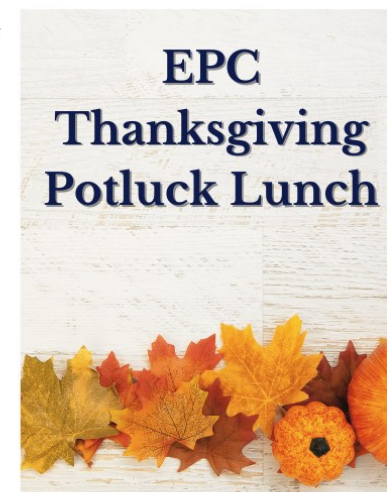
There are no dress requirements. All we ask is you sign up and RSVP by **Saturday, October 7th.**



## Thanksgiving Potluck

Thanksgiving is a time to show our thanks for one another. Join us as we gather together to enjoy a delicious meal and share our favorite Thanksgiving side dishes with each other. **Begin signing up today!**

This event will take place after worship on Sunday, November 19th in Calvin Hall.



## Trunk or Treat

Join us as we wrap up October sweetly with EPC's Trunk or Treat! Get your Halloween costumes ready for a fun afternoon filled with candy and fun spoops!

The festivities will begin at 12pm on Sunday, October 29th after worhsip. All are welcome!

**Want to decorate? Learn more on Page 6!**

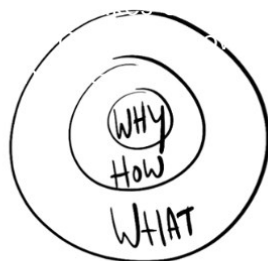
# Project C.U.R.E. Gala



Written by Suzanne Springate

In the Summer Edition of the Elmhurst Presbyterian Church Newsletter, Pastor Traci presented a **Focus on Why**. This segment highlighted our call to being a Matthew 25 church.

You will recall in Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus makes clear that what we do matters to God and how we treat others is important to God.



Pastor Traci reminded us that **“Whys”** give us direction, vision, and focus. In Malawi, infants, children, and their families are experiencing devastating illness and physical maladies that in our country, would be minor. Much of the health disparity is because existing medical equipment and supplies in most Malawian healthcare facilities is original to the buildings built in the early 1900’s.

**So...WHAT can we do to serve the least of those among us?** Earlier this year, our Session pledged \$15,000 to help transport a cargo container of over \$300,000 in donated medical equipment to Malawi, Africa.

Our pledge of \$15,000 is **WHAT** we can do!

**HOW** will we make this vision a reality? **HOW will we raise \$15,000** and *touch the lives of the people of Malawi?*

**Our HOW: Elmhurst Presbyterian Church’s Fundraising Gala on September 22nd, 2023.**

On September 22, 2023, in partnership with Project C.U.R.E. we are hosting a fundraising **Gala at Angelo’s in Elmhurst**. The Gala promises to be a fun evening with live and silent auctions, a delicious meal and great music.

The Ambassador from Malawi, Esme Chombo will be there as well as Project C.U.R.E. physicians who have first-hand experience caring for the people of Malawi and the impact of updated medical equipment and supplies.

Ticket sales for the event, proceeds from the auctions and individual and corporate donations will be **HOW** we achieve our ultimate purpose of raising \$15,000.

So please join us in fellowship as we seek to serve the least of these among us!

*Continue reading on Page 5...*

# Project C.U.R.E. Gala





## FUNDRAISER

PROJECT C.U.R.E.

**Friday, September 22, 2023 6-9 PM**

Angelo’s Restaurant in downtown Elmhurst

Dress: “Dressy Casual”

Cash Bar: 6-8pm

To purchase tickets and make your entrée selection, scan the QR code.

If you can’t attend the Gala, (we will miss you!) go to the EventBrite site, and make a donation by clicking on the “purchase tickets link and scrolling down to “make a donation.” You can visit the site through scanning of the QR code.

**Or**


Go to EPC’S SimpleGive and scroll down to the Project CURE bucket and make a donation!

To read more about Elmhurst Presbyterian’s partnership with Project C.U.R.E and our commitment to Malawi, please go the EPC website and click on “Serving” and scroll down to “EPC Project C.U.R.E. Gala.”


**Ways to donate through SimpleGive:**

 <http://elmhurstchurch.org/about-us/giving/>

- “CLICK HERE TO GIVE ONLINE”
- Select “Project C.U.R.E.” fund

 Text “GIVE” to 630-230-8989 and follow the prompts

**Learn more or purchase tickets:**

 Scan the QR code with your phone

