

Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church

Pastor's Log, August 5, 2020

What have we learned about being church, that is the living breathing Body of Christ, over the last two years of our journey of coming together, and now as we walk through the midst of the covid-19 virus pandemic, and the reemergence of the struggle for the human rights of all people. We have been awakening to realities that have long been laid out for us in the scriptures that guide our faith, and through the witness of many of those who follow Jesus.

Our journey into becoming one congregation has reminded us of Paul's words that in Christ there is no Jew nor Greek, no male nor female, no Covenant nor Ewing, for we are all one, all equally the heirs of salvation. We have learned that there is no one way of doing things, that different words and symbols speak deeply to the heart of each of us in different ways. We have learned to make room at the table, to create the space in our lives for others. And in doing so we make space for Christ to enter into our lives, to speak into our hearing, to warm our hearts.

Those are all important lessons for us as we enter into the work of reconciliation among the people of our community, our nation, and God's world. We have learned how it is that our particular understandings, words, actions, and practices will close doorways of interaction, how our discomfort with that which is different hinders our ability to welcome the "other" in the name of Christ. Christ is still at work within me, within us, to break down the walls that divide.

Our Reformed Tradition's understanding of what it means to be the church may well help us through these intense times. The first part of the Book of Order, called the Form of Government sets forth our tradition's understanding of the church. It first reminds us that Christ is the head of the church; not an individual, no single pastor or elder, only Christ.

It then goes on to remind us of the mission of the church.

In our own time, we affirm that, in the power of the Spirit, the Church is faithful to the mission of Christ as it:

Proclaims and hears the Word of God,

responding to the promise of God's new creation in Christ, and
inviting all people to participate in that new creation;

Administers and receives the Sacraments,

welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ,
bearing witness to Christ's saving death and resurrection,
anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and
committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the
hungry; and

Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ,

living in the strength of God's promise and
giving itself in service to God's mission. (The Mission of the Church **F-1.03–F-1.04**)

The Form of Government goes on then to remind us: The great ends of the Church are:
the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
the maintenance of divine worship;
the preservation of the truth;
the promotion of social righteousness; and
the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

I encourage you to read these words through again. What are they telling you about who we are as the followers of Christ? I will be creating a special email account, ewcov.vision@gmail.com, for us to carry on a conversation about what they mean to you and tell you about the future of this church.

These tenets of the Reformed Tradition will guide us in the weeks and months ahead as we go through our visioning process, listening to Christ's call into the future Christ holds for us. I look forward to hearing from you, and exploring our future together.

Blessings,

Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul will be on vacation from August 6 through August 15. There will be no Wednesday evening Zoom conversation with Pastor Paul on August 12.

Please contact Pastor Ann if there is a pastoral emergency. (610-220-9763)

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Fred Pregger at the end of May. We give thanks that he is now in the arms of our loving God.

An Update from Pastor Ann

Just a little note to let you know....

Friends, I have finished 6 treatments of chemotherapy. I am not nearly as sick now, and I am feeling a bit stronger each day. I want to thank you for your understanding and graciousness regarding my "snacking" all the time. Snacking was a way to fend off nausea, which is one of the side-effects I experienced.

Other side-effects have changed my appearance: weight loss, paleness, tearing from my eyes, and some swelling of my feet and ankles. Already many of these side-effects are lessening, although some may persist for a year or more. While hormone-targeted therapy continues through February 2021, its side-effects will be more tolerable in the absence of chemotherapy.

My surgery on July 27th went well, and I begin physical therapy this week to regain as much functionality in my right arm as possible. Radiation will follow but details in that regard must

wait to be discussed with my doctors. Although it will take time, and I will have to return to “the basics”, my hope is to again enjoy self-expression through ballroom dancing and playing the piano. (The tune of the hymn *There is a wideness in God’s mercy* is one I am humming as I write this.)

Meanwhile, it continues to be my great blessing to walk alongside all of you, and to minister unto and serve our newly unified congregation. And to work alongside Pastor Paul, who is patient, kind, and compassionate always. Also it has been good to have seminarian Freddy Sanchez with us this summer.

10

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits...who forgives all your iniquity.... who heals all your diseases.... who redeems your life from the Pit...who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy...who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.... Psalm 103

Praise be to God!

Pastor Ann

Pastor’s Log - Freddy Sanchez

Dear Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church,

It has been a great pleasure serving with you all these last few weeks. But, as we know, time really does go by fast. I remember the nervousness I had in coming here while meeting and speaking with all of you. Whether it was through phone, online, or other medium I am reminiscent of the uncertainty that I had at the very beginning. Now, as I am nearing the end of my internship, I have come to love and appreciate each one of you. I wish there would have been more moments where we could have greeted one another in person, and hopefully this can still happen sometime in the near future. However, it has come to my dismay that I will not be returning to Ewing-Covenant for the academic year. The Seminaries decision to have class online with the request that students should not return to school unless it is absolutely necessary ultimately influenced my decision. As a result, I will be returning home to Chicago and figuring out other opportunities there. I ask that you pray for me in this. My last sermon on August 16th will also be my last day here.

I am happy to have learned about ministry in a new way. I have come to discover the plethora of relationships and emotions that ministry calls for. In moments of happiness as well as the moments of joy, God is in the midst of all of it. And as of now, I am experiencing a range of emotions both happy to see my family in Chicago but sad to not be here as was previously planned yet, I know that we serve a God who is not afraid to adapt and this is where my security lies. In the comfort that Jesus can bring in uncertainty.

I thank you for your hospitality, your kindness, your goodness, your faithfulness, your gentleness, your love, and self-control. Continue to take these fruits into the world, allow Jesus to multiply it, and continue to give yourselves to the call of feeding and tending to the needs of God's people. Amen.

Yours most sincerely,

Freddy Sanchez

Our Zoom Links

Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church at Worship

Every Sunday, 10:00

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/910100569>

Or by telephone dial 1-929-205-6099, if asked, enter the Webinar ID: 910 100 569

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00 AM Led by Sam Bonner

<https://zoom.us/j/564813133?pwd=WxV3dk5zYlkvUGJDUUEwZEc2R3REdz09>

By phone, dial 1-646-558-8656 and enter when asked the meeting ID 564-813-133

Tuesday and Thursday Chat's with Pastor Ann

Tuesdays at 10 AM to 11 AM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81010467123?pwd=UDNqWG5pN0t3MFJUeDN5SFcvQnpzdz09>

Meeting ID: 810 1046 7123 Password: 271785 By phone +1- 929- 436-2866 enter password: 271785

Thursdays at 7 PM to 8 PM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/960150849?pwd=bTdYTVV3S1M0R2xmenZSWlc5MnhMUT09>

Meeting ID: 960 150 849 Password: 079496 By phone dial 1-929 -436- 2866 Password: 079496