

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Please take a moment during the Prelude to silence your cell phones and quietly prepare yourself for worship.

WELCOME AND MINUTES FOR MINISTRY

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Why are you here?

People: I am seeking God with my whole heart, with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.

Leader: I see it! You’re in the right place! This is God’s house. The door is open to you.

People: Why are *you* here?

Leader: I am seeking God with my whole heart, with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.

People: We see that in you! You’re in the right place. This is God’s house. The door is open to you.

Leader: Let us worship God.

People: Let us learn from the Spirit. Amen!

*HYMN “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” Hymnal 610

*PRAYER OF AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that questions are a building block of faith. “How many times should I forgive?” “Jesus, where are you going?” “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes. “Where does it hurt?” “What do you need?” “How can I help?” We believe that God is a teacher. “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” “Here I am.” “Send me.” We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage, with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength. We believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

RECEIVING FORGIVENESS FROM
GOD AND EACH OTHER

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we long to be lifelong learners. We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind. Instead, we often live as if we know best. We forget that the disciples called you “Rabbi, Teacher.” Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious. Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best. Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers. Like Peter – who was brave enough to ask, “How many times should we

forgive?” – make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters. With hope and humility we pray, amen.

*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: Family of faith, when Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive?” Jesus responded with abundance. That abundance exists for you as well. No matter what you have done or left undone, no matter what lessons you have learned or are still learning, God’s abundant grace exists for you. God’s love will never run out. So hear and rest in this good news: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are invited to serve. Thanks be to God!

All: Amen.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

HEARING THE WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Psalm 119:9-16
Matthew 18:15-22

MESSAGE Pastor Blake Severson

*HYMN “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive” Hymnal 444

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS
PASTORAL PRAYER, followed by The Lord’s Prayer (we say *sin*)

GOING INTO THE WORLD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING
OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD
OFFERTORY

* DOXOLOGY “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” Hymnal 606

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*HYMN “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” Hymnal 306

*WORDS OF SENDING “Teach Me” by Rev. Sarah Speed
Teach me about the ways of the wind,
about the ways of the world,

about the ways of the heart.
Teach me about the soft crook of my lover's arm,
and the way two souls can hold each other close.
Teach me about forgiveness, about the language
of *I'm sorry*
and the softness of sincerity.
Teach me about abundance, about
seventy-times-seven
and *all the days of my life*.
Teach me about joy, about its contagious weaving
and its soul-healing.
Teach me about mercy, about open hands and
deep breaths.
Teach me about the dawn of time and the stars
in the sky.
Teach me what matters most.
Teach me what is mine to do.
Teach this aching curious heart
until I run out of questions
or I run out of days.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
and I will have a life well-lived.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION
POSTLUDE

WELCOME to worship – we are glad that you're here! If you are visiting today and would like to share your contact information, there are welcome cards in the pew pockets. Please fill one out and place it in the offering plate. Everyone is invited to stay for coffee, snacks, and fellowship in the narthex after worship.

LARGE PRINT HYMNALS with a black cover are on the small bookcase in the rear of the sanctuary.

CHILDCARE PROVIDED for children up to Kindergarten age in the nursery. There are clipboards with coloring pages in the narthex if your children wish to stay in the sanctuary.

The March flowers are sponsored by Patti and John Malecha.



Eagle River Presbyterian Church
March 17, 2024



Welcome to Eagle River Presbyterian Church

March 17, 2024

Weekly Walk

Sunday	9:00 AM	Choir rehearsal
Sunday	10:00 AM	Worship
Sunday	10:15 AM	Sunday school for k-6 th graders
Sunday	11:15 AM	Handbell rehearsal
Tuesday	7:00 PM	Session meeting on Zoom
Wednesday	9:30 AM	Coffee hour at church
Wednesday	10:30 AM	Zoom Bible study
Wednesday	7:30 PM	In-person Bible study

Last week's In-Person Attendance ----- 48
Year to Date Regular Income ----- \$53,763.42
Year to Date Regular Expenses ----- \$60,958.63

There is a Session meeting scheduled for this Tuesday at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

In our goal of seeking a new long-term pastor, the next step is to form a **Mission Study team**. This group will seek to answer three core questions about ERPC:

- 1) Who have we been?
- 2) Who are we now?
- 3) Who do we want to be moving forward?

Please prayerfully consider if you would like to be part of this team. For more information, please contact the office and/or Pastor Blake.



Our annual **Christian Education garage sale** will take place earlier than in years past, on Saturday, **June 1**! If you're doing any spring cleaning, be sure to save donations for the garage sale! We will be accepting donations the week prior to the sale.



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From the creator of the bulletin cover art: Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

When I’m creating a mandala inspired by a text, I’m able to zoom out and see the bigger picture, and the image itself ends up looking like a bird’s eye view, which I think is a helpful perspective sometimes. In this mandala, I wanted to follow a person through the process of reproof, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration as Jesus describes in Matthew 18. In the center, a person is standing alone, isolated, with their arms crossed in a closed-off posture. If you’re sinned against, Jesus says to go and “point out the fault when the two of you are alone” (Matthew 18:15). When you move to the second ring of the mandala, there are pairs of people shaking hands and finding common ground – or at least attempting to. If this doesn’t work, then you are to bring more people (one or two more) together to provide counsel and witness. In the third ring of the mandala, two people are engaging with the closed-off person, sharing a way forward. In the next ring hyacinth flowers – which represent sorrow, regret, and forgiveness – stretch, bloom, and grow, bringing beauty into the now open arms of the people in the last ring of the mandala, who are embraced and woven into the community. The person from the center goes from being alone and closed-off to embraced and open.

When I was drawing the figures from the center out, it began to look like a dance. Is this the picture that grace paints? Forgiveness cannot happen in isolation and certainly neither can reconciliation nor restoration. The movement toward wholeness is the movement toward one another.

Perhaps craving more tangibility and practicality, Peter asks how many times he should forgive someone who has wronged him, and Jesus says, “Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times” (Matthew 18:22). This piece contains seventy-seven people and flowers to represent the abundance of grace that Jesus calls us into. The gold represents the divine presence of empathy, compassion, grace, and love throughout this dance from isolation toward community, from brokenness toward wholeness, and from guilt and shame toward freedom.

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