



**WINTER
2020**

THE ELK GROVE PRES PRESS

VOLUME 9

A REFLECTION FROM PASTOR DEXTER

A SPECIAL ENCOUNTER

It was one of those briefest of encounters in which strangers are drawn together by the fragility and preciousness of life. A number years ago, my wife and I were having coffee in one corner of a sidewalk café in the piazza of a small Italian city. We were sitting next to the intersection of two streets, across from a large roped-off area next to the large 15th century church. As we quietly sipped our coffee, I noticed what I took to be a young Italian couple pushing a baby stroller come down the street on our left, reach the intersection, turn to the right, and meld into the leisurely moving crowd.

Maybe 15-20 seconds later, I saw a young Black girl come down that same street on our left, go straight ahead through the intersection, and continue down the piazza. She looked to be 4-5 years old, had pig tails, was wearing short coveralls, and walked with a confident-looking swagger, apparently walking a bit behind her parents, whom I had not noticed.

Probably no more than 20 seconds later, that stroller-pushing couple came running back down the street from our right, ran to a police car that was sitting at the intersection, and became engaged in an excited exchange.

Something clicked in my brain, I abruptly jumped up, hurried over, said one of the few Italian words I knew -- "Scusi" -- and, as curious parents and police looked on, I used gestures indicating a small person with pigtails wearing short coveralls. The frantic parents said "Si. Si", I pointed in the direction the girl had headed, the father took off running, mom hurrying behind.

I walked over and looked across the open area. And there was that little girl, now standing at the edge of that area, looking back up across the open space, hands on the hips, a “Hmm...I-don’t-think-this-is-where-I’m-supposed-to-be” look on her face.

Her father must have spotted her about the same time I did, for I heard him call out to her. She turned, and seeing him, cried out “Papa!” I waited just long enough to see him reach her and sweep her up in a big hug that spoke of great relief and great love.

The little drama over, I returned to our little table and began explaining to my bewildered wife why I’d so suddenly run off without saying a word to her.

About then I saw the reunited family walking back up the street. As they reached the corner, the father spotted me, gave a simple nod and said “grazie”, to which I replied with a simple nod and said “prego” (“you’re welcome”). They turned the corner and disappeared into the crowd.

Total strangers knew we had been drawn together into a very special, life-affirming encounter.

“Grazie”. Thank you, God, for little miracles!



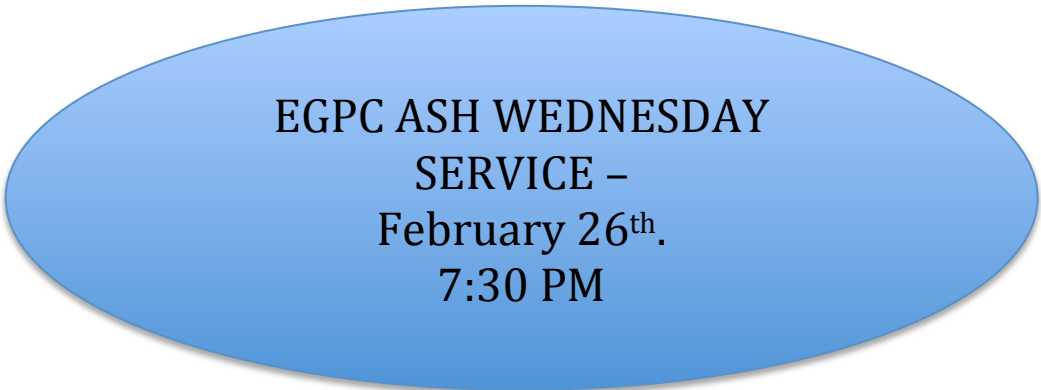
LENT BEGINS WITH ASH WEDNESDAY

“...And the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” The familiar lyrics ring so true.

During the heartfelt Ash Wednesday evening worship service we make our way one by one to the front of the Sanctuary. There our pastor uses ashes to make the sign of the cross on each forehead and reminds us that we *“came from dust and to dust we shall return.”* The presence of God can be felt in that moment and the things of this world become less important compared to our coming eternal life with Christ.

We Christians begin the church season of Lent with Ash Wednesday and are mindful of our dependence on God. Lent is a time for prayer and reflection. Lent is a time to examine our own life seriously and thoughtfully.

This year Ash Wednesday is on February 26th. Observing the season of Lent helps us experience the full joy of Easter. EGPC's Ash Wednesday worship service begins at 7:30 PM.



EGPC ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE –
February 26th.
7:30 PM

A Spiritual Utility Company?

That foam cup you used at coffee hour ten or twenty years ago is still around. In fact, it may be around for hundreds of years. That's if it got buried in a landfill. If it floated away on a lovely summer breeze and landed in the Sacramento River it may have made it to the Pacific Ocean. And there, in the aquamarine beauty of God's creation, it persists; breaking down into ever smaller particles of plastic which are often mistaken as a food source by the fish we buy at Sprouts or Safeway.



As people who are thankful for the world God has placed in our care, our congregation has decided to do what we can to help protect it. We have decided we will no longer use Styrofoam at coffee hour. We will do what we can to keep plastic bottles out of the landfill, and we are looking at replacing the interior church lighting with LEDs.

As we look to be more faithful in our stewardship of creation, the session has approved our membership in *Interfaith Power and Light*. We are joining many other congregations working together in the care of creation. Jim Helmich has agreed to step up as the EGPC representative for this program. Thank you Jim! If you have ideas and suggestions or if you want to jump on board to help, please let Jim know.

Terri Bacon -- Missions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE EGPC JOYFUL EVENTS!!

TRIUMPHANT QUARTET CONCERT & HONDURAS MISSION FUNDRAISER

Join us for an evening of fellowship and good music when Southern Gospel favorite Triumphant Quartet returns to Elk Grove on Sunday, **May 3, 2020**. Also blessing us with her talents will be Virginia Ayers Dawson. The concert will be at 6:00pm (doors open at 5:30pm) at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 9175 W. Stockton Blvd., Elk Grove. Tickets are \$20, plus processing fee, and can be purchased online at www.itickets.com/events/433012 or by calling (800) 965-9324. A portion of the ticket proceeds will benefit the EGPC Honduras Mission Project. For more information contact Diane Sakakihara at (916) 479-3578 or diane@hardinghallinc.com.



Save the Date

June 19, 2020

Simon Engel's 80th Birthday

A lavish celebration

All EGPC members invited

Sponsored by Simon and Merrilee Engel

details to follow



YOUR ELDERS AND DEACONS

EGPC is blessed to have a dedicated leadership team. Our Elders provide spiritual oversight, pray for our church and encourage our faith.

If you have questions for this governing group, please contact:

Diane Sakakihara:	Treasurer/Finance
Bob Huggett:	Property
Diane Lowe:	Worship
Mike Van De Pol:	Community Outreach
Liz Irons:	Admin/Clerk of Session
Terri Bacon:	Mission/Evangelism
Phoebe Hsu:	Nurture
Judy Lewis:	Education
Kathy Dropmann	Communicaton

Who is Your Deacon?

The colored star on your EGPC name badge identifies you to a particular Deacon. Deacons provide a much-needed personal connection and are the hands and heart of our church. They are available for special prayer or assistance with issues in your daily life.

Green Star:	Marie Galustian
Yellow Star:	Marlene Laufer
Blue Star:	Mary Arnett
Red Star:	Doris Williams
Purple Star:	Carol Burrow
Orange Star:	Randy Irons

May God bless each of these dedicated members for their service!

A MESSAGE FROM DALE

Dear Church Family:

Health considerations and a bossy wife and doctor have persuaded me that it's time to cut back on bouquet making on Saturdays. I usually spend 3-4 hours doing the flowers and other jobs each Saturday. Not everyone takes that long to produce a sanctuary size bouquet, but I am old and slow. I am suggesting that I take one Sunday each month; that would leave 2 Sundays to be covered. The first Sunday is communion when we generally don't have flowers. I have had great help when Sharon and I travel. Both men and women have been trained and I am happy to do more training if necessary. If we can't get coverage, then the communion table will be bare. So please pray about it and if you have questions, see me. The change will go into effect soon.

In God's Service – Dale



ABOUT OUR CHURCH:

Elk Grove Presbyterian Church is a faith community striving to follow Christ by:

- ***Supporting each person on their own unique journey with God.***
- ***Joining together for joyful and meaningful worship, education and fellowship.***
- ***Working together to help build a better community and world.***

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