February 2024 Issue 115

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THE GRACE OF

ses Misérables

Pastor's Piece

February 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

As always, time seems to be rushing by. This winter, so far, has been very unlike our usual. I've made no apologies for my love of all things winter, but this year... with mild temps, no snow to speak of, and grey dreary days, I've lost my joy for the season. While some things in the cycle of the season are off, the one constant are the seasons of the Christian year. We are on the doorstep of Lent. This year, Easter is early, falling on March 31st. My joy is always renewed in this season!

There is a journey we all must take to reach that glorious day. There are many ways we can do that. Beginning on Tuesday, February 6th, we will start our Lenten Book Study. Our meetings will be via zoom, which means no issues around unpredictable weather, or going out at night! We will be using a study and video written by Matt Rawle titled "The Grace of Les Miserable." I'd welcome more of you joining us!

The focus on grace is also part of the emphasis on our scripture lessons this month as well. Jesus has begun his ministry and with each reading we not only hear of his preaching and teaching with authority, we also witness his compassion and grace for each individual he encounters. We are reminded of our mission as disciples of Christ, to extend that same compassion and grace not only among our family, friends and church community, but to the ends of the earth.

That's the goal we work toward. To help us along the way, the season of Lent is a time to reorder our lives. It's the chance to be intentional in prioritizing our time to reflect, pray and serve. With all the busyness of life, I pray you will find time to nurture your relationship with God in Christ. Our Worship time together is a good start, a little more time given to reading scripture or a Lenten devotional (you can find some in a basket as you enter the sanctuary), and attending the special worship times that mark the season, are all ways of growing stronger in faith. Here's the schedule for Lent:

•Ash Wednesday – February 14th, 7:00 pm (Elmwood). A service for reflection and receiving the mark of ashes.

•Palm Sunday – March 24th, Regular worship times: Rock Elm – 9am, Elmwood – 10:30 am.

•Good Friday – 6:00 pm (Rock Elm).

•Easter Sunrise Service – March 31st, 7:30 am (Elmwood) followed by a Continental Breakfast. Easter Service– March 31st, 10:00 am (Rock Elm)

I look forward to our continued journey together! Shalom, Pastor Meg

Open Minds, Open Doors, Open Hearts



A Newsletter for the Elmwood and Rock Elm United Methodist Churches

Pastor: Meg Erickson

Sunday Services: Rock Elm 9:00 a.m. Elmwood 10:30 a.m.

Email: ereumc@gmail.com

Website: http://www.ereumc.org/

Facebook: Rock Elm & Elmwood UMC

YouTube: Elmwood & Rock Elm United Methodist Church

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OF INTEREST

- Sunday school for 4K thru 8th grade during the school year
- Youth Group-6th-12th grade
- United Methodist
 Women
- Contemporary and traditional music





Working together Caring for Each Other as Christian Community

As a faith community, we are bound together by the grace of God. As disciples of Jesus our Christ, we commit to living in loving relationship with God in Christ, and strive to live into the likeness of Christ in every aspect of our lives. We love and care for each other, excluding no one from experiencing the love of God.

As we grow in faith through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we look to the power of the Word that comes to us through the scriptures and its application for our daily lives. We grow stronger together as we share in all life's adventures and challenges along the way, all the while building the kingdom of God in the here and now.

This life journey as a faith community requires our commitment to all aspects of what it means to be a church. Our growth as a church requires our prioritizing our relationship with God by being present in the life of the church through worship, study, service and fellowship. As members and friends together, we come to know the meaning of Christian community.

As your pastor, I am charged with bringing a faithful witness to the scriptures, meaningful worship and praise, enlightened learning that encourages your discipleship, and I am to be a supportive presence when and where ever needed.

Here's where I ask your help; while I am actively present in the life of our congregations as a whole, I do not always know the needs. When there is a crisis, a tragedy, or a death, please call me (715-307-7311)! Do not assume I will already know. Every pastor would rather receive 20 calls regarding a situation rather than being the last to know.

We are in ministry together, growing the Kingdom of God, one person, one relationship at a time! May we faithfully follow where the Spirit leads!

Pastor Meg





by Sue D'Alessio

In the Gospel of Mark, after the baptism and temptation stories (Mark 1:9-13), Jesus called the first disciples (Mark 1:16-20), then Jesus began to cast out unclean spirits (Mark 1:21-28), and to heal many (Mark 1:29-34). After going to a deserted place to pray, Jesus' disciples searched for him and told him, "Everyone is searching for you." (Mark 1:37b)

"There is a God-shaped vacuum in every [person] that only Christ can fill." -Augustine of Hippo, North Africa

"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee." -Augustine of Hippo, North Africa (UMHymnal 423)

"Everyone is searching for you." Whether we know it or not, we are all searching for something more, for Christ – for God-with-us.

How easy it is to ignore or not even notice the empty place (vacuum) in us which only Christ can fill, restlessly searching for the sparkling beauty and joy in every moment. Our souls, our very be-ing needs to connect with the mystery and at-one-ment which God has given us in Christ.

We seek to fill that emptiness with food, or busy-ness, or shopping, or sports, or addictions, or... - what is your choice of habits? We believe that everything will be better if we are good enough, or pretty enough, or preach well enough, or are better leaders, or... - what is your choice of beliefs? The places which are filled with violence and conflict (in our hearts and minds, or in our homes, or in our communities, or in many places around the world), are gaping empty places which need to be filled with God's presence of hope and healing and wholeness and holiness.

This is a life-long exploration and journey; we are never completely finished. (Hence why we still have struggles and conflict and why we still hurt others and even ourselves, and why we are still broken.)

Some questions to ponder in the rest of this Epiphany season (until Ash Wednesday, February 14th):

- How, and when, and where (in your body), do you experience the restlessness of God-shaped vacuum/emptiness?
- What are some of your go-to habits which you use to try to fill that emptiness?
- Where are you on your life-journey of searching for Jesus?

We can explore new ways to respond to the search/emptiness (beyond our habitual reactions).

- There are many practices of prayer and meditation. This Lent, our Conference will be engaging in a Dynamite Prayer Journey and you are invited to join.
- Reading scripture or memorizing and reciting a favorite scripture passage or quote or prayer.
- Physical activities walking, dancing, exercising, playing an instrument, painting activities which take us outside our constantly self-talking, thinking-brain.
- Find a community of others who can share the journey and exploration with you.

What have you found which fills your heart and soul with joy and hope and healing? How has your faith journey influenced these experiences? Who are companions for you on your journey?

Healing God, we bring our empty places to you for your Spirit of healing and hope. In our restlessness, help us to find your peace and comfort. In our restless world, help us be your witnesses of hope, justice, and healing. For it is in the name and Spirit of Christ we pray. Amen.

Foin us along with Grace Bridge Korean UMC for an authentic Korean Meal!

For God

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So loved the world

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that whosoever

John 3:16

in him should

not perish but have

everlasting life

Join your fellow United Methodists for fellowship, worship, and collaborative ministries! Our first Laity Circuit meeting in 2024 will be: Sunday, February 18

at 1:30 pm Menomonie UMC 2703 Bongey Drive



We'll prayerfully plan ways we can work together throughout the year – VBS Day Camp? Meal packing mission day? A campaign for kindness during election season? Then we'll get to enjoy worship with the dynamic new church start, Grace Bridge Korean UMC. (English translations of the songs and sermon are always provided.) They'll even share an authentic Korean Meal in celebration of the Asian New Year!

If you'd like to bring a dessert or a dish to pass, you're welcome but not required to do so.

Come one and all for a celebration of the faith and mission we share as United Methodists! February 13-Sky Holt February 13-Scott Kendall February 15-Paige Ginsbach February 17-Dee Roesler February 18-Natalie Ginsbach February 23-Cole Christman February 24-Micah Hoyt February 26-Carl "Butch" Schroeder Jr.

Charge February Birthdays

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE WITH LOVE.

What can I give to Jesus On this special Valentine's Day? How can I tell Him I'll love Him, And follow Him, come what may?

How can I show I need Him? Should I send a red heart, with lace? How can I thank Him enough For his sacrifice, love and grace?

What Valentine can I give Him, My adoration to impart? I'll give to Him what He wants most; I'll yield to Him my heart.



entine's





Greetings Neighbors,

Established in 2015 as Spring Valley Seniors Staying Put, *Staying Put, Inc.* now serves the towns and villages in both the Spring Valley and Elmwood School District areas. We provide services that fill gaps for seniors and adults with disabilities in our rural WI area, helping to maintain their health, wellness, nutrition, social connectedness and access to essential transportation. Staying Put volunteers transport clients for non-emergency medical rides as far as Minneapolis/St. Paul, Rochester and Eau Claire, as well as providing local rides, social programming, light in-home support, and some caregiver respite. We provide missing links to many area services; our help is free to clients. Volunteers continue the rural tradition of "neighbors helping neighbors." Donor funded, Staying Put is a non-profit that relies on individuals, businesses, and foundations to support our mission.

We were busy in 2023, in May welcoming Kendall Vingua as our Advancement Director. She built a new website for Staying Put; she helps with outreach and sharpening our technology skills. Kelly Bonner has taken on Client/Volunteer Director duties, and both became full-time staff in 2024. Congratulations to founding member, Kathy Nyeggen as she retires from Staying Put staff. Fortunately, Kathy will continue as a volunteer, as well as coordinating our music program that provides talent for Sharp Minds/Sharp Notes dances and other social events!

Staying Put will receive a <u>Cycling Without Age</u> TriShaw - a battery-assist rickshaw bicycle made in the Netherlands from an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Pierce Co. transportation grant this Spring. Once it arrives, the WI Bike Federation will conduct a four-hour Tri-Shaw certification training for volunteers to become "pilots." We look forward to a new fun, fairweather outreach vehicle, as well as attracting volunteers to support our social programming!

Two of our Board Members' Terms are ending, so we are also looking for volunteers to become board member candidates, bringing skills that help with activities to support our rapidly growing rural senior population being able to "age in place" in the greater Spring Valley and Elmwood area communities. The Board meets via Zoom at 8:30 am on the third Monday of the month, and occasionally for committee work or in person events.

In 2022 we doubled our service area into the towns and villages in both the Spring Valley and Elmwood School District areas and appreciate your client and volunteer referrals. The <u>StayingPutInc.org</u> website has more information as well as a <u>volunteer form</u> to share. To request our newsletter, the monthly *Staying Put Activities* list (February 2024 attached), or to update your contact information, contact Kendall or Kelly at 715-778-5800 or <u>info@stayingputinc.org</u>. We welcome your input and questions!

Thank you for your support. Sincerely, Susan Ketchum, Board Secretary <u>StayingPutInc.org</u> Open 9:30 am - 3:30 pm Monday through Friday S312 McKay Ave. Spring Valley WI 54767





STAYING PUT - FEBRUARY 2024 EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Serving Spring Valley and Elmwood areas S312 McKay Ave. P.O. Box 193 – Spring Valley, WI 54767 715-778-5800 – call for complete list of services

OPEN OFFICE HOURS: MON. TUES. WED. THURS. FRI. 9:30 AM- 3:30 PM NEW HOURS

TRANSPORTATION: SP provides local & non-local (mileage reimbursed) transportation for medical

appointments, grocery, banking, pharmacy, & hair appointments. Call 715-778-5800. DRIVERS NEEDED.

MEALS ON WHEELS/Spring Valley & *Elmwood: For home-delivered meals info, call ADRC of Pierce County:

715-273-6780 /or toll-free 877-273-0804.

Can you help as a Staying Put volunteer to deliver meals? Call 715-778-5800. *ELMWOOD DRIVERS NEEDED NOW!

<u>COFFEE KLATCH</u>: Mon. through Fri. @ 10:00-11:00 AM at Staying Put office (check for Occasional cancellations).

Enjoy a friendly visit over fresh coffee or tea, donated treats. Clients & volunteers welcome, just drop in!

MEMORY CAFÉ: Every 2nd & 4th Tues. of the month. This is a social get-together for older adults, held

10:00 -11:30 AM at St. John's Lutheran Church, S520 Church Ave., Spring Valley.

Come share your memories & stories, optional: bring a friend or companion. Enjoy coffee, tea & treats.

All are welcome. For more info or a ride, call 715-778-5800.

ANIMAL COMPANIONSHIP: ATD Certified Therapy Dog (Abby) will come for a visit!

Call 715-778-5800 to request a visit.

<u>STRONG BODIES FITNESS SESSIONS</u>: Co-sponsored by Pierce County/ADRC. Classes held Tues. & Fri.

9:30 -10:30 AM @ SV Village Hall. Call to register 715-778-5800.

BINGO: Wednesday, February 7, 2024, from 1:00-2:00 PM, at the Staying Put office.

DOCTOR CONNOR'S DISCUSSES HIS TRIP TO AFRICA: Friday, February 9th, 10:00-11:00 AM, at the Spring Valley

Community Center. Please call to register at 715-778-5800

VALENTINE'S DAY MUSIC: Wednesday, February 14th, 1:00 -4:00PM at the Moose lodge in Menomonie, WI.

Jerry & Karen play Polka and old-time country. Meet at Staying Put at noon or call 715-778-5800 for a ride.

MONTHLY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION: Wednesday, February 21th, 2:00-3:00 PM, at the Staying Put office;

A Birthday party for volunteers and clients with February birthdays. Treats, games, prizes!

Call to register or just drop in.

GAME DAY: Wednesday, February 28th, 1:00–3:00 PM at the Spring Valley Community Center. Games and socializing. Call to register 715-778-5800.

<u>CARE BASKETS</u>: Assembled & donated by a Staying Put volunteer, delivered to members experiencing loss, illness, loneliness, sadness. Call the office with tips: 715-778-5800.

<u>TECH WORKSHOP</u>: For personal help on your electronic device, from a youth volunteer; **call 715-778-5800**.

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- SALVATION Lord, may my child come to know who you are and ask you to save them early in life. (Acts 4:12)
- SPOUSE Lord, please protect my child's future spouse. May they know you, love you, and help my child follow You all the days of their life together. (Ephesians 5:21-33)
- LOVE Lord, help my child to love others today. Help them to love their family, friends, and even those who are not nice to them. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
- JOY Lord, fill my child with joy. Let them see that joy is not based on circumstances, but from a relationship with you. (Psalm 16:11)
- PEACE Lord, give my child true peace today. Free their minds from distractions and anxiety, and fill them calmness and confidence because of You. (John 14:27)
- 6 PATIENCE Lord, help my child to remain calm and not become annoyed in situations. Help them to wait calmly and joyfully, without complaint. (Colossians 1:11-12)
- KINDNESS Lord, help my child to be kind to others. Fill them with the desire to do good for those around them. (Proverbs 3:3)
- B GOODNESS Lord, help my child be a blessing to those around them. (Matthew 5:16)
- FAITHFULNESS Lord, help my child to be steadfast and constant in their belief of who You are. Fill them with faith! (Hebrews 11:1)
- GENTLENESS Lord, help my child to not be harsh or forceful with those around them. May they be full of thankfulness to You and polite to others. (Ephesians 4:2)
- SELF-CONTROL Lord, help my child be able to control their thoughts, words, and actions. Help them to make wise decisions concerning themselves. (Titus 2:6-7)
- GIFTING Lord, as my child grows in their relationship with you, help them to identify the talents and gifts you have given them. Help them to use these gifts and talents to serve others. (1 Peter 4:10)
- BRAVE Lord, help my child to know that you are always with them. May this give them confidence and courage in situations that are difficult. You are the reason they can be brave! (Deuteronomy 31:6)
- (14) **CONFIDENCE** Lord, give my child confidence in who you are, and fill them with belief that you are perfect and good. (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- CALLING Lord, help my child discover the calling that you have placed on their life. Help them to uncover the gifts and talents you have given them. More importantly help them discover the calling to follow you! (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

- (16) RELATIONSHIPS Lord, help my child to focus on his relationship with you and be drawn to friends who love you, too! Help their friendships sharpen each other and further each other in their relationship with you. (Proverbs 13:20)
- WISDOM Lord, give my child the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong. Help them to know what is good and true and apply it to their lives. (James 1:5)
- PROTECTION Lord, please protect my child. Keep them safe physically and emotionally and give them the wisdom to know when a situation is unsafe and to ask for help. (Proverbs 3:23-26)
- PURITY Lord, help my child to understand the gift of purity. Protect them from decisions that will negatively affect their future. (1 Thessalonians 4:4)
- HOPE Lord, give my child a confident expectation of what is to come. Fill them with hope that is without doubt! (Psalm 62:5)
- PASSION Lord, fill my child with a passion to follow you. I pray that my child will love you with all that they are. (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- (22) HUMILITY Lord, help my child to be humble. Remove pride and arrogance from their heart and fill it with gratitude for all you've done. (Colossians 3:12)
- COMPASSION Lord, give my child the ability to be compassionate toward others. Please show them how they can help and encourage the people they meet! (Psalm 86:15)
- GENEROSITY Lord, help my child to not be selfish. Help them to want to give and share freely with others around them. (Acts 20:35)
- INTEGRITY Lord, give my child a firm foundation in your truth, and allow them to make decisions based on that truth. (Proverbs 2:7)
- (26) RESPONSIBILITY Lord, help my child to understand and be responsible for their actions. (Luke 16:10)
- (27) MERCY Lord, help my child to be forgiving and kind towards others, including their enemies. (Luke 6:36)
- STEADFASTNESS Lord, help my child be planted firm in their relationship with you. Ground them in truth so they will not waver with everyday circumstances. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- TRUST Lord, help my child to believe in your promises in all circumstances. May they put all of their confidence in you. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- 30 HONESTY Lord, help my child understand the importance of truthfulness in every situation regardless of the consequences or rewards. (Proverbs 12:19)
 - kidspring.com

Bible Study Tools 29-Day Scripture Writing Challenge

God speaks to us through His Word, so take some time each day this month to write down the following Scripture. If you have time, you might want to also write a prayer that the Scripture leads you to pray, or your reflections as you write.

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|-----------|--------------------|---|------------------------|--|--|
| □Feb.1 | Psalm 3:2-4 | □ Feb. 16 | John 3:16 | | |
| □Feb. 2 | Psalm 3:5-6 | □ Feb. 17 | Zephaniah 3:17 | | |
| 🗆 Feb. 3 | Ecclesiastes 7:9 | □Feb. 18 | Jonah 2:2 | | |
| 🗆 Feb. 4 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | 🗆 Feb. 19 | Psalm 22:19 | | |
| 🗆 Feb. 5 | Psalm 34:14 | □ Feb. 20 | Malachi 1:11 | | |
| □Feb. 6 | Matthew 11:28 | 🗆 Feb. 21 | 1 Samuel 2:2 | | |
| □Feb.7 | Psalm 37:37 | □ Feb. 22 | 1 Chronicles 16:11 | | |
| □Feb. 8 | Titus 1:15-16 | □ Feb. 23 | Isaiah 40:30-31 | | |
| 🗆 Feb. 9 | James 1:5 | □ Feb. 24 | 2 Timothy 4:7 | | |
| □Feb. 10 | Mark 12:30-31 | 🗆 Feb. 25 | Jude 1:20 | | |
| □ Feb. 11 | John 13:34 | □ Feb. 26 | Hebrews 11:1 | | |
| □ Feb. 12 | 1 John 4:7 | 🗆 Feb. 27 | Galatians 5:22-23 | | |
| □Feb. 13 | Ephesians 4:2 | □ Feb. 28 | Matthew 21:21 | | |
| □ Feb. 14 | Isaiah 54:10 | □ Feb. 29 | 1 Peter 1:21 | | |
| □Feb. 15 | 1 Corinthians 13:4 | Come back next month for a new Scripture writing challenge! | | | |

Come back next month for a new Scripture writing challenge!



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|---|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| nev | ubmissions for vsletter can be s each month: er | ent to by the 2 | 9th | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. CHARGE POTLUCK Communion Sunday 9:00 AM Rock Elm In-Person Service 10:30 AM Elmwood Live Stream and In-Person Service | 5. | 6. 7:00-8:00 PM Lenten Book Study via Zoom | 7. Elmwood UMW Meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Elmwood Admin Counsel Meeting | 8. | 9. | 10. |
| 11. <u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In-Person Service <u>1:30 PM</u> District Laity Meeting at Menomonie UMC | 12. | 13. | 14. <u>6:00 PM</u> Ash Wednesday Service @ SV Health C are Center <u>7:00 PM</u> Ash Wednesday Service @ Elmwood UMC | 15. Bishop's Clergy Dap Apart | 16. | 17. |
| 18. <u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In-Person Service | 19. | 20. 7:00-8:00 PM Lenten Book Study via Zoom | 21. <u>6:00-7:30 PM</u> Confirmation and Youth Group @ Elmwood UMC | 22. | 23. | 24. |
| 25. <u>9:00 AM</u> Rock Elm In-Person Service <u>10:30 AM</u> Elmwood Live Stream and In-Person Service | 26. | 27. <u>7:00-8:00 PM</u> Lenten Book Study via Zoom | 28. | 29. | | |

AUTHORIZATION FORM

Elmwood United Methodist Church

For: Donations, Tithes and Offerings



| FO | R OFFICE USE ONLY | ENVELOPE/DONOR # | | DATE | | | |
|--|--|--|--|-------|-----|--|--|
| Effective date of authorization: / / / Type of authorization: New authorization Change banking information Discontinue electronic donation | | | | | | | |
| Las | t Name | | First Name | | | | |
| Add | iress | | - | | | | |
| City | 1 | | | State | Zip | | |
| Em | all Address | | | | | | |
| DAT | E OF FIRST DONATION: | FREQUENCY OF DONATION: Weekly – Mondays Semi-Monthly – 1* and 15 th Monthly on the 1* Monthly on the 15 th | FUNDS: General/Operating | \$ | | | |
| Piease debit my donation from my (check one): Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #) Checking Account (attach a voided check below) I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account reasonable notification to terminate the authorization. | | | Routing Number: Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3 Account Number: <pre></pre> | | | | |
| CHECH | I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization. Authorized Signature: Date: | | | | | | |

If using a checking account, please attach a voided check at the bottom of this page.

HEKE **MAT**R **FLACE** PLEASE

Elmwood, WI 54740 P. O. Box 52

Methodist Churches Elmwood ~ Rock Elm United

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Want to be on our email list? Send request to ereumc@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook: Rock Elm & Elmwood UMC

Youtube Channel: Elmwood and Rock Elm United Methodist Church

Website: http://www.ereumc.org/

Office hours: 8:00 am-12:00 pm Wednesdays or Thursdays, please call first

Meg Erickson, Pastor Katie Schneider, Secretary

Website: ereumc.org

Email: ereumc@gmail.com

Charge Office: 715-639-5831

OFFICE

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. The people of The United Methodist Church®

Rock Elm UMC located at: 5591 170th Street Elmwood WI (about 6 miles west on HWY 72)

Rock Elm Mailing Address: PO Box 52, Elmwood, Wi 54740

Our worship style is a blend of traditional and new. We combine older hymns with praise choruses. You can come as you are, people dress from semicasual to casual. Blue jeans are very acceptable. If you come from a church background, been away for a long time, or maybe have never been to church, you will feel welcome here.

