**Jan’s Journal**

Welcome to February! This is Black History Month and Heart Month. During the month of February, we will celebrate Valentine’s Day and Family Day weekend. We will mark Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent with a joint Ash Wednesday service with West Plains. The service will be here at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 22nd. We will mark the first Sunday of Lent on February 26th with Communion. On February 19, we will celebrate Baden-Powell Sunday with 7th Aldershot cubs and scouts. I’m struggling to realize that I am beginning my sixth month at East Plains! This Sunday is the fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

The focus this week is about living our faith. Isaiah makes the point to the Hebrew people that pious worship and rituals are meaningless unless they are accompanied by actions that bring about justice for all people.

The passage from the Gospel according to Matthew is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus describes his disciples as “salt” and “light.” What do these metaphors mean?

Lectionary readings for this Sunday include:

Isaiah 58: 1-12 Psalm 112: 1-9 1 Corinthians 2: 1-13 Matthew 5: 13-20

At the Official Board meeting on January 31st, the Board passed a motion from the Communications Committee which allows for the video recording of worship services and the posting of the services to a private YouTube channel accessible only through the EPUC website. Only the front of the sanctuary will be visible. The utmost care will be taken to protect the privacy of all members of the congregation who are participating in worship. The videoing of services will allow members of the community who are unable to attend church to view the services at home, at a later time. It will also allow people who are away at a vacation destination to stay in touch with EPUC. Hopefully, other people who log in to the EPUC website out of curiosity will watch the services and perhaps decide to attend worship in person (if they live locally).

A second motion was approved to permit the resumption of a time of fellowship following worship on the first Sunday of each month, beginning this Sunday! It is hoped that the various committees and groups of EPUC will each choose a month in which they will take responsibility for providing the refreshments and hosting the gathering. The Ladies Workshop will be our hosts this Sunday. If you would prefer not to remove your mask to eat and drink, stay for the conversation, and take a treat home to enjoy.

You can reach me at: revjanmcc@gmail.com or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings for the New Year,

 Pastor Jan