

Mission Statement 2009

Revised 5/4/09

Elm Street Presbyterian Church, since its inception has taught God's revealed and inspired Word to Christ's servants, promoting spiritual growth and providing emotional and physical well-being in order to build a caring faith community that, in turn, takes its faith and reaches out in service beyond congregational walls.

Elm Street Presbyterian Church started in 1909 as a mission and Sunday school of First Presbyterian Church. In 1919, we petitioned First Presbyterian Church to form our own church. Ground was broken in 1923 and services were held in the church basement from the fall of 1923 until the church structure was completed in 1926. In 1958, when membership was at, or near, its peak, we built our two story Christian Education Building. This houses the administrative offices, classrooms and larger kitchen and dining facilities than those found in the church basement. In 2001, ESPC became more accessible to the physically challenged with the addition of an elevator that connects the church sanctuary and basement to the parking level.

Elm Street Presbyterian Church retains much of the look, feel and friendliness of a neighborhood church. While Elm Street Presbyterian Church started out as a neighborhood church, it has extended its boundaries to Godfrey and beyond. Many of our congregation represent second, third and fourth generations.

Our congregation prefers traditional values and worship, but is not opposed to new ideas. We have provided services consisting of all music, services led entirely by our youth, Blessing of the Backpacks and those honoring our veterans and others who wear uniforms. We have held services outdoors such as Blessing of the Pets. We have had visitors come and preach such as, the Disciple James and Martin Luther. We have even taken our congregation to another church to worship and had other congregations come worship with us. We also include special Christmas and Easter worship, with Ash Wednesday services, Seder meals, Sunrise Services and Christmas Eve Candlelight Services as well as Easter and Christmas Cantatas. We have also participated in a Community Thanksgiving Service.

We have a new, contemporary hymnal and intersperse new tunes with the old familiar melodies. Our worship is structured, but not formal or rigid. Laughter and applause may be heard in this house of God. Elm Street Presbyterian Church encourages its members to be active participants in worship with adult and youth choir, liturgists, readings, parts in skits or plays, moments for mission and occasional faith journeys. Over the years, our small church has been the springboard for several ordained pastors, missionaries, and CLPs; as well as inspiring others to prepare services, lead worship and fill the pulpit on those occasions when the pastor is absent.

We have come to the end of our contract with our designated yoked pastor which we shared with First Presbyterian Church. We are looking forward to a pastor who will partner with Elm Street to resolve the many challenges ahead. We have just started conversations with all four Presbyterian Churches in Alton as well as the nearby communities of Fosterburg and Bethalto aimed at strategically planning the best avenue to maximize all our missions and ministries; including possible reorganization of churches. We have an ongoing feasibility study for a church development in Godfrey. We have an excellent part time staff which includes an administrative assistant, organist/music director and janitor.