

# Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

## Midweek Update August 16, 2023

In this issue: Worship & Staff Vacations, Oneness, Backwoods Workday—Tomorrow!, July Mission, Berlin Trip 2024, August Session



## Worship & Vacation Schedules

### WORSHIP

- This Sunday, August 20, we will be outside in the chair circle for an acoustic service,
- On August 27, we'll be back in the sanctuary, and then hopefully outdoors again on Labor Day weekend.

### STAFF VACATIONS

- **Music Director Jenya** is taking off the whole month of August to visit her parents in Belarus after more than three years apart.
- **Custodian Sol** also hopes to take some time off this month with dates not yet determined.
- **Pastors Luna & Phil** plan to take off two weeks this fall, September 14-27.

## We Are One in the Spirit

Over the next weeks in both Bible study and in worship, we will be looking at five extremely important chapters of the Bible, Romans 8-12. Feel free to read those chapters. Spoiler Alert! The message of these chapters is that nothing can separate us from God's love. Nothing. It is actually our belief, our valuing, of separation that leads to all of our suffering. The moment that we fully accept and trust our oneness with each and with God—that is the moment that we find real peace.

Here's one verse to start us off. Romans 8:9 says, "But you aren't flesh; instead you are spirit." Probably that just sounds like the Bible to you, and you think, "Sure, sounds good." But if you

think about it for a moment, you will see how crazy and how transformative it is. I am not flesh? I most certainly am!! I can pinch my flesh right now—Ouch! I'm sitting at my computer at my dining room table, feeling a little peckish, listening to the wind outside, ready for a catnap. Flesh, flesh, flesh. I can hear Luna walking around upstairs, Flesh. I'm in Saint Paul and the Eggerts are in Europe, Flesh. I see a chair, a table, an insect that are not me, Flesh. I am me and you are you, Flesh. I am me, in my body, and God is eternal spirit, Flesh. Not one, but separate. Our flesh proves our separation over and over, every second.

The Apostle Paul seems to believe that we are not flesh, but we are spirit. It may be true that we live in a fleshly body; but what if there is something that is more true? Am I willing to hold the possibility within myself, for just a moment, that I am not separate from you, from anybody, from God? What happens inside me when I hold this not-separateness?

The image that comes up for me is laying on the soft grass in a beautiful spot like our Backwoods. I see the branches and leaves and clouds and birds all dancing together in easy harmony. I forget in that moment that I have a body, that I am in any way separate from all that is. All judgments and expectations and pressures and desires float away. I am one; I am spirit.

I invite you to notice this week these two self-observations.

- What do I use to prove to myself that I'm separate?
- In what ways or in what situations do I experience my oneness with all things?

**Next Workday: Tomorrow!! Thursday, August 17th, 8:30-11:30a**



**Thank you** to folk doing continued tending within the backwoods!!! If you haven't spent time just **be-ing** in the backwoods, we encourage you to linger, dally, and rest amongst the flora and fauna!! 🌱 🐇 🌳 🐔 🌲

The next **work morning** to continue clearing the paths, stations, labyrinth and small burring plants will be **tomorrow, Thursday, August 17th, 8:30a-11:30a.** If that is not a good time for you, connect in with Pastor Luna, and she is willing to find

a time to meet you and to work together!! All help will be joyously received!! 😊

## August Mission

August Mission: Facial Tissue boxes and funds for Students and Families in Need at Highland Park High School



August missions collections will go to Highland Park High School. HPHS is next door to the church and has about 1300 students in grades 9 -12. Both facial tissue boxes and money are requested for the August mission. You can choose to contribute to either or both.



Facial tissue boxes we collect will be distributed to the teachers at the school in early September. Please drop off the tissue boxes in the church office.

The money collected will be used to purchase gift cards that school counselors will give to parents/guardians when they become aware of specific needs. This was suggested by Principal Dr. Tucker who once told us that EPC is the "Little church that is MIGHTY!" You can contribute to this mission for August by indicating "August Missions" on the memo line of your contribution check to EPC or by noting this in the Notes Box of any online contribution.

Thank you for your continued support of our Missions.

## Bonhoeffer Trip to Germany in 2024

June 26-July 3, 2024 Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church (a sister church in Minneapolis) will be exploring theology, culture and Christianity through the lens and story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dr. Andrew Root will guide us through an integrative mix of lectures, tours, conversations, and experiential learning set in the Bonhoeffer family home and various museums and sites all around the historic and vibrant city of Berlin.

Go [HERE](#) for more details and to indicate interest. The Eggerts have already signed up! Space is limited to 22 participants (Spots tentatively held as of 7/26/23: 7)

## August Session Notes

*From Elder Jay McGregor*

Connie led with a devotional centered on silence. Through her recent silent retreat, she explored how silence within friendship is a comfort and she suggested that our friendship with Jesus could include this silence. Connie invited us into 3 minutes of healing and friendly silence.

Phil invited Michelle to share any insights that she has had since this was her first session meeting since being ordained. She shared that she felt called. She further shared that she felt held and supported during the laying on of hands during her ordination. Michelle enjoyed collaboratively leading the service last Sunday, as her first assignment since her ordination.

Pastor Phil asked Connie and Todd about their experience of Sunday's service, which they described as a wonderful opportunity to deepen relationships and move within the space provided by having been deeply trusted to serve.

Luna gave her Pastors report and she revisited calling us to be in prayer for the community regarding the future landscape of our finances. Luna shared about her experience in using the words that are engraved on the stones at the meditation stations while she does the work of invasive plants removal. The two words that she spent time with were Courage and Willingness. She then asked what was arising for the rest of us regarding these two words in approaching our path forward. Pastor Luna asked us (elders) if we are willing to be led in prayer and discernment. Luna also shared that she has invited another congregation join us in a backwoods service. She will report back. Luna was also happy to have been invited to lead silent retreat in Dallas, Texas.

Pastor Luna's invitation for us to consider courage and willingness as we are prayerfully approaching our church future and our finances served to remind me that I have a reliable resource to draw upon when I am feeling called to share my experience of EPC community with folks along my path. When I share from the enthusiasm that comes from feeling connection, belonging, and purpose, the words come easily because they flow from the grace that I have been given and an innate longing to have that same grace flow through me. Simply put, I want to have a big family of brothers and sisters that come together to love each other, heal, grow, sing, bowl, and eat pancakes! Everything else flows naturally (grace) from the truth of our oneness, including our finances.

Pastor Phil shared that Lynn Wolf has been taken off hospice, which means that while this does signal that she is physically doing better, she is somewhat more isolated as a result of losing the scheduled visits from hospice workers. Her family has said that they are willing to pay someone to be a companion and support to Lynn. If you are interested or know someone that might be interested in helping Lynn and her family meet Lynn's needs, please contact Pastor Phil.

Phil also shared that he still has not returned with the Enneagram Prison Project to Shakopee Women's Prison, but he has been working in his role within EPP with people through online teaching and outreach. He is also excited to have been invited to Saskatchewan to work with folks that are in training as they prepare and begin to enter prison for the first time. These opportunities for this life changing work may continue in the future. This led to a discussion about when they are planning to take vacation time (September 14-27) as part of this EPP opportunity. This also stirs excitement about the possibility for, once again, getting creative and collaborative in planning Sunday worship!