

# Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

*Midweek Update*

*August 23, 2023*

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## Worship & Vacation Schedules

### **WORSHIP**

- This Sunday, August 27, we'll be back in the sanctuary, and then hopefully outdoors again on Labor Day weekend—Sunday, Sept 3.

### **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.
- **Pastors Luna & Phil** plan to take off two weeks this fall, September 14-27. Phil is leading an Enneagram Prison Project course at a women's prison in Saint Albert, Saskatchewan, which gives Luna & Phil an excuse to visit central Canada!

## What Might Be More True

While exploring Romans 8 together over the past few weeks, we have seen that Paul's opening thesis is that "We are not flesh; we are spirit." (vs 9). This past Sunday, I suggested that we hold this possibility in the same way that we hold the possibility that the earth is a globe.

Probably all of us have received so much education on our planet and solar system, and seen so many photos of the earth from space, that it is easy to accept that the earth is a sphere. But in my day to day life, it does not feel like I live on a ball. It feels like the earth is flat. Again, because we have trained our minds to hold this dissonance, most of us do so without daily stress or fear or confusion.

I'm suggesting that the same mental and spirituality is possible with the idea that I am not flesh, but I am spirit. Here's a quick chart to compare these ideas.

### WHAT MY SENSES TELL ME

- >The earth is flat
- >The sun rises and sets each day
- >I am a body of flesh and blood
- >My body ages and dies
- >I am separate and alone
- >Something is wrong with me

### WHAT MIGHT BE MORE TRUE

- >I live on a ball, flying through space at 67,000 mph
- >The ball spins around every 24 hours
- >I am spirit
- >I am free
- >Nothing can separate us from the love of God
- >Nothing is wrong with me; I am God's beloved child

Now that our inner circuits are loosened up a bit, let's look at that last comparison. What happens inside of you when you hear the question: What if there is nothing wrong with you? Somewhat astoundingly, most people are more comfortable with the idea that a whole bunch of things are wrong about themselves, then the possibility that they might be completely innocent and loveable. In my experience, this is equally true amongst both Presbyterians and prisoners.

My proposal for you all today is to do a "Flat Earth" exercise with your beliefs about yourself. On a piece of paper, create a chart similar to the one above, with WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME on the left and WHAT MIGHT BE MORE TRUE on the right. On the left, write whatever comes to your mind or heart. Feel free to put down 8-10 things, or 200 things. After each thing that you perceive is wrong with you, put one of the following: What if there is nothing wrong with me?; or I am not a body, I am free; or What if I am completely innocent and loveable?; or make up your own loving response. If, while you do this exercise, you run into a roadblock of resistance or shame or terror, then take a deep breath and say to yourself, "*Oh, hello \_\_\_\_\_ (resistance, shame, terror etc). I welcome you. You have worked for years to protect me, but right now I don't need your alarm bell sounding in my body. I'm not in any danger—I'm simply trying to learn a new thing. I'm trying to learn how to love and accept myself as God loves and accepts me. Let's talk again tomorrow.*"

I'll do a short version myself, so you can get the idea and hopefully the inspiration to try it yourself. =)

### WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME

- >I'm overweight
- >I'm too overbearing
- >I get angry too quickly
- >My right foot is crooked
- >I am separate and alone
- >I am addicted to sugar and dairy
- >And white flour and junk food
- >I left my young kids alone too much

### WHAT MIGHT BE MORE TRUE

- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am
- >I am completely innocent and loveable, just as I am

Once you create your chart (feel free to keep adding to it as new insights emerge!), then the last step in the exercise is to read each line to yourself, both the left hand column, followed each time by the right hand response, giving a moment to let the right hand response sink into our hearts and minds and bodies. Repeat any line as necessary. Try it with my list, just to give yourself a taste of "spirit-thinking!" We are relearning how to think, how to be, and repetition is one of the most powerful tools at our disposal. May God bless us all.



## Backwoods Appreciation

**Thank you** to the various folk who are able to continue to steward our backwoods! Your time and intention is creating such a vital ministry here at Edgcumbe!!

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!! 🌱 🦌 🌳 🦃 🌲

## 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.