

Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

July 15, 2026

In this issue: Backwoods Worship, Saying Yes, Update Submissions, Bible Study Update, Prayers, July Mission, July Session, October Retreat Payments, Play invite

Backwoods Worship with FPC

Our first worship service of the sabbatical will be a joint service with First Presbyterian Church-S St Paul in the EPC backwoods this Sunday, July 19. Enjoy the trees and singing and breeze and the preaching of Rev. Tom Watson. Hope to see you there.



Saying Yes to God

Driving to church this past Sunday, Luna suggested to me, What if we make every day of this sabbatical a chance to say Yes to God? God's cosmic and love-filled YES has been ringing through the universe and our own hearts for all time. When we lay down our usual schedules and agendas; when we lay down our usual resistances; when we lay down whatever blocks us from love's presence; then we have the chance to say a humble yet powerful Yes in return.

I have two super-simple exercises to practice this Luna-suggestion.

- **The Yes-Yes Breathing exercise.** For this exercise, anytime you have a moment in your day, become aware of your own breathing. With each inhale, say the word YES. And then on each exhale, again say the word YES. I don't usually say the word out loud; I let it fill my mind, my heart, and my body. For me, after I did the inhale-YES / exhale-YES about five times, the word very naturally changed to LOVE-LOVE. Allow this exercise to evolve naturally within your own breathing, always starting and ending with YES-YES.
- Every morning when you wake up, before checking your phone or drinking your coffee (you have to be the judge of your own bladder tolerance...), say the **Holy Spirit prayer**:

**Holy Spirit, in this Holy moment, You be in charge,
And we/I will follow you, trusting that Your direction will lead to peace!!**

Like every spiritual practice, just doing the practice, even mindlessly, will start to have an immediate impact. Don't believe me? Pick either of the above practices and do it for one week and see what you notice. Don't tell me about the result; I'll be on sabbatical doing my own exercises—just notice. If it has zero effect, feel free to stop. Would you like to have your mind blown open? Then do the above practices and really mean it. Say Yes to God with your heart wide open with hope and trust. Give your whole life and will over the Holy Spirit. And then be prepared for miracles.

May God guide our steps and bless our hearts every single day. Until October, Pastor Phil

Submissions to this Update during Sabbatical

If you have an announcement or article for the midweek Update during the pastors' sabbatical, please submit it to Office Manager Krysta Niznick by Tuesday morning at epchurch2149@gmail.com.

Bible Study Continues

We'll continue bible study during Phil and Luna's absence. I will send out the texts early on Sundays or they are available here: <https://epchurch.org/lectionary-.pdf> . Access to the bible study Zoom is here: <https://epchurch.org/> . Hope to see you there! -Ron

Prayers for...

- Jeremy's mother Cheryl, who is gravely ill.
- For Pastors Luna & Phil as they begin their sabbatical time.

July Mission: Threshold to New Life

Our mission focus for July is Threshold to New Life. Their website is: Threshold2newlife.org. Richard Bahr, director, will be visiting EPC on July 19th.



The number of people experiencing homelessness is up 10% since 2015. Losing housing creates new barriers to regaining housing. We find it both humane and smart to help people keep the housing they already have.

A homeless person can cost taxpayers almost \$3,000 a month. We give grants to individuals and families who need help making ends meet with their housing...helping them pay a portion of their rent. 97% of donations go directly to help families with their living situations. More than 1,000 Twin Cities families received assistance in the last 3 years.

To donate, you can put cash or check in the offering plate during worship or give online, designating any gifts to "July Mission."

July Session Update

Submitted by Clerk of Session, Elder Ratchet Mattison
EPC's monthly Session meeting was held on Thursday, July 9 at 6pm. Pastors and Elders were present except Elder Ingrid Eggert and Treasurer Ron Eggert, who were traveling.

Discussion items:

- Session voted unanimously to approve new members, Clyde Green and Jaentra Gardener, and planned the details of receiving Clyde and Jaentra during the Sunday July 12th worship service.
- The financial report was reviewed with no questions.
- Session voted unanimously to purchase a portable power supply to power sound equipment outside / in the backwoods. With this purchase, we take advantage of a 46%-off sale, reduce wear and tear on sound equipment, and eliminate the need for long,



heavy extension cords.

- Much of the Session meeting discussed and finalized details for Elders, teams, and the EPC community to carry on all aspects of EPC while Pastors Luna and Phil are on sabbatical, including: Sunday worship, the mid-week email, pastoral care, primary contacts for other groups using EPC facilities, building and grounds tasks, and other needs.
- Reminder of outdoor worship dates, weather permitting, July 19 (with 1st Pres. South St. Paul), August 9, and September 6.
- Session will not meet in August. The next meeting is September 17 with Pastor Matthias Peterson-Brandt of Cherokee Park United Church as moderator.
- Pastor Phil and Pastor Luna shared that they feel loved and supported as they go on sabbatical because of all the good things happening at EPC!
- Along with a closing prayer, Elder Jay shared this picture he took of Dignity, a stunning sculpture near Chamberlain, South Dakota. Read about Dignity here:
<https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/trip-ideas/dignity-earth-sky>

October Retreat: Payments are due (and Planning Help)

Hi all, Chelsea W here! This is a reminder to **please send in your full payments for the EPC October Retreat by the end of this week.** If you need an extension, or if you need financial support, please email me at chelsea.witbrook@gmail.com and we can get you covered.

In case you're wondering who is signed up, here's the list (and after seeing this list, if you're feeling left out and want to register, there's still room in the dorm rooms, or you can commute. Just shoot me an email!)

Phil, Luna, Mark W, Shelley, Chelsea W, James, Rachel, Ratchet, Connie, Dave, Jan, Leslie, Jay, Lisa, Ron, Ingrid, Mark T, Jane, Emily, Sheila, Anna, LaGretta, Ruth, Michelle, John

Note: for payments, please send \$182.19 per person if you're in a hotel style room, \$149.75 if you're in the dorms, and \$128.13 if you're commuting. Thank you!

Retreat Planning Committee

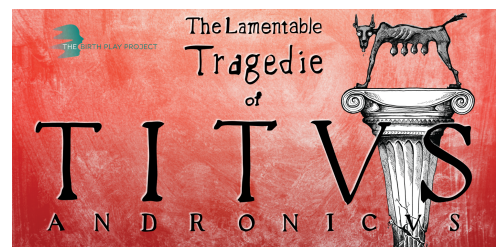
If you are interested in helping with the October retreat, please let me know. Some tasks that will need filling are: leading a prayer, helping set up/clean up certain activities, creating a photo slideshow of our community's Sabbatical, or leading a fun activity. Shoot me an email at chelsea.witbrook@gmail.com if you're interested!



MOUNT OLIVET CONFERENCE
& RETREAT CENTER

Birth Play Project ready to perform

The young people who have been rehearsing Shakespeare's darkest play, Titus Andronicus, in our sanctuary will be finishing up over the next week in preparation for their six performances at the Black Forest Inn in Minneapolis, running from July 23 - Aug 1. If you are interested in attending, go to [THIS LINK](#). They do the whole play in under 90 minutes.



The director of this play told us that putting on this production has been filled with both challenges and growth—emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually—for the whole cast and crew. She also mentioned that doing the rehearsals in our sanctuary added to the sense of holiness and support for their work!