



Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

July 22, 2026

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Beyond, Within, and Among

Last Sunday, while worshipping with First Presbyterian (in the comfort of their air-conditioned chapel), we heard a reflection from Pastor Tom Watson on Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:10–19) that will continue to accompany me this week.

Jacob awakens from his dream and says, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it." What strikes me is that nothing about the place had changed. The only thing that changed was Jacob. His eyes were opened to a Presence that had been there all along.

Pastor Tom described the Holy Presence in three beautiful ways: beyond us, within us, and among us. Beyond us, awakening awe and humility before a reality we cannot contain. Within us, breathing life into every living thing and continuing to form us in the divine image. Among us, becoming visible whenever compassion, mercy, justice, kindness, laughter and belonging take shape within a community.

As I reflected on those words, another image came to mind—one that is familiar to the EPC family—one that has become increasingly meaningful to me: the river of love.

The river begins beyond us. We did not create it. It flows from the very heart of God. Like Jacob standing before the gate of heaven, we discover that this river has always been there, inviting our wonder and our trust.

The river also flows beside us. No matter how far we wander, the moment we turn toward it, there it is—only one choice away. We don't have to manufacture love or earn it. We simply step into the current that has been flowing all along.

And perhaps this is where the sermon touched me most deeply. The river does not end with us. It flows among us. Every act of kindness, every word of forgiveness, every meal shared, every hand extended to someone who is lonely or hurting becomes another place where God's love is made visible. We don't create the river. We simply allow ourselves to be carried by it.

Maybe that is what Jacob discovered when he awoke. Holy ground is not reserved for mountaintops or extraordinary moments. It is found wherever we awaken to the Love that has always held us—and always will.

This week, my prayer is that we might pause long enough to notice. To notice the beauty of creation. To notice the sacred worth of the people around us. To notice the quiet invitations to give love and receive love that meet us each day.

And as we do, may we find ourselves standing together in the river, discovering once again what Jacob discovered long ago:

"Surely the Lord is in this place—and we did not know it."

Collecting Photos of EPC Community during Sabbatical

Please take photos of yourself and the EPC community during this unique time of Sabbatical. James Witbrook will be collecting photos to compile a slideshow to share with our community and our pastors at the October retreat during a storytelling event. Photos can be of work in the backwoods, worship services, potlucks, or 1-on-1 hangouts with EPC friends outside of Sunday mornings. Please send your photos to jameswitbrook@gmail.com with "EPC slideshow" in the subject line.

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

Prayer Updates:

- Jeremy's mother, Cheryl is now stable and awake, awaiting new treatment.
- Michelle Trebtoske & Shiloh on the recent passing of Michelle's father, Peter.
- Pastors Luna & Phil for rest and safe travels during their sabbatical.

July Mission: Threshold to New Life

Our mission focus for July is Threshold to New Life. Their website is: Threshold2newlife.org.

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."

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!

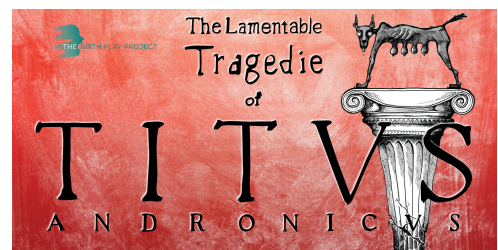
Retreat Planning Committee

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!



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!