

Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

September 6, 2023

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Worship & Vacation Schedules

WORSHIP

- This Sunday Sept 10 - Worship, **without Zoom** (due to limited availability to monitor), and **with** Jenya!
- Sept 17 - possibility of outdoor worship (it's the time of year where we stay especially flexible and watch the weather forecasts...) Pastors Phil & Luna will be gone for both Sept 17 and Sept 24.

STAFF VACATIONS

- **Prayers for Music Director Jenya** who is traveling back from Belarus this week and plans to join us for worship this Sunday.
- **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! Phil will also be gone this Sunday, Sept 10, for an EPP faculty retreat in California.
- **Custodian Sol Guevara** is taking time off from Sept 13-18.

Failure as Salvation

Romans 11 says, *"We haven't stumbled so that we've fallen permanently, have we? Absolutely not! Rather, salvation has come to us by our failure, in order to make others jealous."* Salvation has come to us by our failure. The Greek word translated as "failure" actually means, "mis-step." When I mis-step, when I make a mistake, when I make a bad decision—that is exactly the moment when God's grace and mercy and healing are the most real and alive for me. Let's briefly reflect on this important truth in three ways.

First, consider these familiar Bible stories.



- Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, after Lazarus had died (a pretty serious mis-step on Lazarus' part). In order to experience resurrection, first we need to die.
- What leads to the conversion of Paul, the greatest missionary in Christian history. Why, it's persecution of Christians! A very bad life choice leads to the New Testament and Christianity as we know it.
- When does the prodigal son experience reunion with his father? I'll let you answer this one on your own.

Second, imagine walking through the Backwoods and every tree was perfectly straight, every leaf identical, the ground clear, and the wildlife gone. Like walking through a tree farm. You know what this would feel like? Boring, is the answer. Perfectionism is the enemy of grace. Acceptance and forgiveness don't just work on wasps; they work with people too.

Finally, bring your own life story to mind. Think of all the mis-steps that have led to who you are right now. At every mis-step, every mistake, every failure, God is waiting with a heart full of mercy and love. *"God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge are so deep! They are as mysterious as his judgments, and they are as hard to track as his paths!"* (Romans 11:33)

What would happen if you let yourself off the hook, and began accepting God's grace as the thing that is most true about you? If you want a journaling exercise, try this: Write down the biggest failures of your life (fun, right?). Then list all of the learnings and opportunities and growth that have come into your life from that failure. Allow space for God's mysterious mercy to become a part of your story about who you are right now.

Looking Ahead at 2024

The Session is aware that both the loss of rental income from the Saint Paul Conservatory and a decrease in pledge income may lead to a budget shortfall next year. Session meets on next Tuesday, Sept 12, to formulate an approach to this fall's stewardship campaign and congregational conversations about the church's call and needs moving forward. Here are a few invitations and noticings from me (Phil) as we approach these conversations.

- *God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge are so deep!* This is the truest and most-trustworthy thing in the universe.
- The conversations I'm having with EPC folk are filled with hope and excitement about who we are, what is happening at EPC right now, and what God has in store for us.
- We had EIGHT visitors this past Sunday worship.
- Invitation: write down what you find most inspiring and unique about Edgumbe Church. We have a re-invigorated Outreach Team who can use these nuggets to spread the word about how the Spirit is working at EPC.

Prepare your hearts and minds to hear more from your Treasurer and the Elders in the coming weeks. As always, we follow the Holy Spirit, trusting that the Spirit's way is what leads us to peace.

Bible Study Reminder

Pastor Phil will be gone for the next three Sunday evenings, so Bible Study will be taking a break until September 30. The Bible Study Zoom room will still be available every Sunday at 6:30 PM, so please feel free to meet on your own!

Backwoods Angels

Thank you to the continued work of various folk who steward our backwoods! This time of the year is great buckthorn and first-year burdock pulling!! In the past months, stations 4, 6, 10 have been given attention, which are the stations that have the words courage, willingness and awakening. How might these words be a guide for our community in this season??

If you have an interest in sharing some of your time and being someone who can steward the backwoods, please connect with Pastor Luna! And a gentle reminder: the backwoods is meant to be a support for your connection to the Creator.... you are always encouraged to linger, dally, pray and rest amongst the flora and fauna!! 🌱 🐮 🌲 🍄 🌲

September Mission - First Nations Kitchen

Mission for September is First Nations Kitchen. We have supported this group before, and will do so again this year. From their website: First Nations Kitchen is primarily a justice-focused, Gospel-based ministry. Its primary intent is to provide food to indigenous people who would not otherwise have access to high-quality, fresh organic food in an environment of radical hospitality and cultural empowerment. We understand that food is medicine and want to bring back the ancestral foods of the peoples indigenous to this land to eradicate heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity from the native community.



In addition to monetary donations, this is a beautiful way to use our bodies to help with the mission. They rely on volunteers to sort and package donated produce, and package the meals that are given away to the community each Sunday. Each person who gets a meal also gets a bag of fresh produce. On Sunday, Sept. 24th, 5 or 6 of us (EPC folk) have already signed up to volunteer during the prep shift, 12:30 to 3:00. If you're interested in joining us, please visit their website and sign up! There is another shift a bit later, 3:30 to 5:00, which is the give-away shift. It's fun because you

get to pass out bags of yummy food and veggies to those in need.

