



## Edgumbe Presbyterian Church

### *Midweek Update - April 21, 2021*

In this issue: Today's Verdict, Sabbatical update, So Many Ideas!, Zoom, April Backwoods Mission, RJAM, Presbytery Statement on Trial of Derek Chauvin

#### **Today's Verdict**

If you are anything like me and Luna, you have experienced a range and swirl of thoughts and emotions as the verdict was announced in the trial of Derek Chauvin. This is a landmark decision and one that we hope leads to more accountability and a step toward enduring change in policing and in the deep-seated inequalities in our neighborhoods, cities, state, and beyond. As the Presbytery statement says (see the end of this Update), "let us not mistake a *verdict* for God's liberative *justice*." Can we keep stepping forward in the hope of God's justice that obliterates any barrier to our love and oneness with each other?

Today, once again, we put our lives and our world into God's loving hands, trusting that God's way leads to peace. Jesus says: "*Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid.*" (John 14:27)

#### **Pastor Sabbatical Conversation Pushed Back**

This past Sunday and Monday, the sabbatical team of Meredith, Carol, Luna and Phil began seriously working on the grant proposal that was due on Wednesday (!), but the team gradually realized that our conversations about the narrative, budget, and documentation were raising more questions than we had answers. With this realization, we have all agreed that we will continue to work on the grant at a more reasonable pace and apply another time, or find other resources to support a sabbatical.

We were very encouraged by the creativity and enthusiasm of the congregation on Sunday and that many of the suggestions generated at the post-worship forum require no funds to bring to fruition (see next article).

*Thank you again for all of your support, Meredith and the Sabbatical team*

#### **Sabbatical Forum Idea Extravaganza!**

The personnel committee (Meredith & Carol) and the pastors wish to thank all of the congregation who participated with ideas for the sabbatical. We were so impressed with your enthusiasm and support. So many of the ideas that were expressed would not need to wait for a sabbatical for more exploration! With the proposed sabbatical theme of Spirituality & Nature

and the wonderful resource of the church backwoods, much of the conversation concerned using and sharing our wonderful property. Some of the ideas are:

## **Notes from Sunday a.m. discussion about sabbatical activities for congregation**

### **Use of backwoods**

- As outreach to community, gathering with food trucks and music
- Worship services
- Research outdoor services other places
- Offer use of outdoor space for community activities, camping
- Create a menu of offerings we can provide.
- Invite other churches: small or large
- Outdoor concerts
- Share the woods
- Explore permaculture options for church property
- Research history of the land, develop Land Acknowledgement
- Memorial Garden (explore legality of spreading ashes here)
- High school biology classes (Leslie knows the bio teacher over there) or other connections with neighboring schools

### **Retreats**

- Get away together!
- Be somewhere long enough to form new rhythms and connections together
- Retreat at Shelley's friends place in Northfield
- Retreat at Clearwater Forest
- Retreat at Benedictine Center
- Visit Forest History museum in Grand Rapids, stay at Ruth's place up there.

### **Worship / Pastor Coverage Ideas**

- Hymn sings
- Open, discussion-based Bible study
- Have guest pastors but also use the gifts of leadership with the congregation
- Spiritual "show-and-tell" from different members
- Overlap or stagger sabbaticals with other churches to use their pastor for our emergency pastoral needs.

### **Zoom Gatherings Schedule**

We have four Zoom meetings scheduled for our congregation for each week. All of these meetings have been updated and are open to you and to everyone. The links can be found on our church website homepage. Here is our current schedule:



- Sunday morning **Worship** at 10am
- Sunday evening **Bible Study** at 6:30pm
- Tuesday **Centering Prayer** at 3pm

- Wednesday Evening **Gathering** at 7pm

## **April Mission Focus: EPC Backwoods & Workday**

Our focus for April is the EPC backwoods. We plan a work day on **April 24th, Saturday, from 9:00am to 1:00pm**. Our goal for the day is to get a jump on the work that is needed to maintain and beautify the backwoods. Tasks performed will include the following:

- Pulling buckthorn
- Clearing logs/brush into piles or hauling to the compost.
- Removing plastic sheeting that's been keeping the mustard weed at bay
- Planting grass seed and THE MOST FUN OF ALL, planting new plants!!

Here's what you might bring, if you have it: work gloves, long sleeves to avoid being scratched by branches, hand trowels for planting, and your appetite for yummy snacks.

Thank you in advance for any time/funds you can consider donating! -Lisa Holden



## **Racial Justice And Me**

RJAM will meet Wednesday, April 21, at 7pm to discuss the next chapter in *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Chapter 12 focusses on microaggressions. While microaggressions can occur in any situation, the quantity and pervasiveness of microaggressions that BIPOC are made to endure is a key aspect of racism. Furthermore, microaggressions are likely the way many people who might consider themselves to not be racist to actually behave in a racist manner, because we do so in ignorance. Lots to unlearn and learn in this chapter, so please join us, even if you haven't had a chance to read the chapter. The format will be as before - smaller groups with safe conversation.

*Liz & The RJAM team (Connie, Leslie, Luna, Liz & Rich)*

## **Statement Regarding the Trial of Derek Chauvin**

### **From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area**

Nothing will bring George Floyd back. Nothing will undo the trauma to his family or to our wider community -- especially to our Black friends, family, and colleagues.

Consequences matter, but let us not mistake a *verdict* for God's liberative *justice*.

While Derek Chauvin will have consequences for this soul-stealing act, we pray that our community does not mistake this moment as "the conclusion" to a deeply painful and contentious year. The work of justice-seeking is wider than one trial alone; it must be part of our lifelong daily spiritual practice.

The truth is that we are still at *the beginning of a journey* as a community -- one to which people of color have been calling us for over 500 years. In particular, the long history of Black resilience, resistance, joy, wisdom and wholeness is powerful testimony.

We are living through an *era* of reckoning with a long and painful history in Minnesota that dates back to before its founding and which has allowed the conditions for racist violence to flourish.

As a majority-white presbytery, our particular journey is one of asking ourselves hard questions about our own systems, as well as our complicity in the brutal systems in our communities. and committing ourselves to the work of eradicating them.

So let's not stop now. Let's move beyond a Minnesota "Nice" that likes things comfortable, polite and quiet, toward being a Minnesota willing to *get real* about our deep issues and engage in powerful conversations. As Christians, we look to the kin-dom of God while also striving to reimagine community systems so that we might embody peace and wholeness *now*.

Dreams of a better way to live together may seem audacious at this painful moment in our common lives, but we worship a God who does powerful, audacious things. So we hold onto this hope, a fire that burns in our souls, unsettling us from our previous ways and fueling our conviction as we move forward.

**Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area**