

Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

Midweek Update

September 11, 2024



In this issue: **NO Zoom & No Lines** this Sunday, Three Proposals, Camping & Wedding, EPC Labyrinth, Sept Mission: First Nations Kitchen, Music Invitation, Sept Session Notes

Note: No Zoom Broadcast of Worship and No Parking Lot Lines this Sunday, Sept 15th

Jay McGregor, who is our Zoom broadcaster, will be away sailing on Lake Superior this weekend. May you encounter the Sacred One in the winds along the Lake, Jay!! So no Zoom during worship this week. See everyone the following weekend!

Plus, our parking lot will be sealcoated on Thursday. No cars can be on the lot all day Thursday. Starting on Friday morning, cars can return, but there will be no parking lines until Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, so be prepared for a bit of parking chaos this Sunday morning.

Three Proposals for What's Really True

I would like to propose three foundational truths about reality.

The only real, true thing in the universe is God's loving will. Two results:

- God loves me completely and there is nothing I can do about it. [*Corollary result: God loves everybody completely and there is nothing I can do about it.*]
- Nothing has the power to hurt or threaten me.

We are spirit, and not flesh. Two results:

- We are all one.
- We look past appearances, always.

We trust in God's love and healing. Two results:

- It's already done; salvation is not a future promise—it's a done deal.
- Our only job is acceptance, is willingness, is surrender.

On the one hand, I could quote the U.S. Declaration of Independence and claim that these truths are "self-evident." I think that's true. On the other hand, it has taken me over 30 years of diligent personal and biblical and theological work to begin to know—to trust, to hope—that these

truths are more true than everything my ego wants me to believe and trust. To rewire our brains and hearts and bodies to accept new truths takes some time and practice.

I invite you to read the three bold proposals above one more time. If you hit a bunch of internal resistance, you can always use a Phil trick and add the words, "What if..." in front of any line. If you do find some resonance or space or hope, then look at the two results listed under the statement and see if you can imagine a way for those results to manifest themselves in your life today or the rest of the week. Because when we do surrender to God's love and healing, then the result in our life is kindness, is generosity, is peace. Feel free to add your own "results" to one's I've written. Those results could be concrete things you have experienced in your life or they could be hopes or dreams for what could be. -Phil

**holy spirit, in this holy moment, you be in charge
and we will follow you, trusting that your direction leads to peace!**

Camping and Wedding and Prayers, Oh My!

Luna and I are going camping this Wednesday - Friday at Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, with a tent site on a bluff overlooking Lake Superior. Yay. Then we are going to James and Chelsea's wedding in Alexandria on Saturday. Yay again! If you have a pastoral need over those four days, please reach out to one of EPC's elders: Connie Howe-Vielmetti, Ingrid Eggert, Michelle Trebtoske, or LaGretta Lunde. I'm not going to put their email addresses into this Update because sometimes those addresses get plucked by spammers. That means it's time for an updated printed church directory.... Look for one soonish.

Speaking of James and Chelsea's wedding, let us continue the beautiful prayers we shared with the two of them on Sunday with our own prayers throughout the week. May the beautiful September weather predicted for this week be a prediction of all God's blessings on both the wedding and the lifetime vows and memories made this week. Our hearts go with you, Chelsea and James!

The EPC labyrinth reflections from Elder Connie

Mark Tafel, Luna, and myself (Connie) have been working on cleaning up the back woods labyrinth (weeding and raking and general tidying).

I encourage all of us to use this meditative walking path to Center ourselves, still our minds, and just breathe and dwell in the beauty of nature.



We can do a mini pilgrimage on the walk to the Center of the labyrinth and then out. If we have a particular issue, we can ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we walk in, and thank the Holy Spirit on our walk out knowing that we are being held and helped. OR... we can walk with no agenda and just see what happens!

What a joy to have this resource- I look forward to walking with you!

September Mission: First Nations Kitchen (FNK)



First Nations Kitchen is community-building, justice-focused, Gospel-based ministry. Our primary intent is to provide food to indigenous people, and to others, 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 center the ancestral foods of the peoples indigenous to this land to help decrease heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity within our community.

First Nations Kitchen welcomes our neighbors to our weekly Giveaway every Sunday from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm. We are a barrier free program that shares primarily organic bagged produce and fresh, organic, indigenous meals. All are welcome. If you would like to donate or volunteer, email us at director@firstnationskitchen.org.

Edgcumbe can help by donating funds to further the mission of First Nations Kitchen, or by volunteering your time to help package meals, sort and package donated produce, and hand out both the meals and the produce to those who come on Sunday afternoons. A representative of FNK will give a presentation during EPC worship on Sunday, September 22.

Also, our August mission tissue boxes will be delivered to the high school this week. =)

Choir/Music Invitation

Do you love singing? Please consider joining the EPC choir! We meet on Thursdays 3-4:15 and on Sundays 9 a.m. Attendance is important, but we are very flexible) Fun company and great music is a guarantee! Do you play an instrument or sing on occasion? If you have a song or a piece you'd like to share with the community - please reach out to EPC music director Jenya Trubnikava (jenya.trubnikava@gmail.com). Your musical offering is a gift and we appreciate it so much.

September Session Notes

Summary of Session Meeting 9/9 (held under the maple tree) by Elder Michelle

Lagretta led devotions focusing on 1 Corinthians 13:7—"Love always protects, always hopes, always trusts, always perseveres." She led Lectio Divina afterwards with Session members.

Finance update: EPC has moved into the plus side as far as pledges go, and is a little ahead. EPS's total revenue is very healthy for this time of year. A record has been made for funds given to mission so far this year, with a total of over \$17,000. Ron noted that the revenue may look different when the Music Conservatory no longer pays rent which could be in the near future.

"Stories" from Pastor Phil: Presbytery church USA has the best pension plan in the US – fully vested. In 2018 the church proposed a new medical plan where every single pastor and family member is covered. This began to push the limits and there was push back. After the pandemic, health care costs went way up and continue to do so. Either in 2025 or in 3 years, in every Presbyterian church the pastor will be covered, but encouraging spouses to get covered by another employer if possible and to have that spouse carry the children. At that time the medical coverage will be "buffet style". If the EPC's pastors and family stay on the current plan costs will increase \$2600 a year. The Presbytery may cover half of this increase (\$1300). In general the overall cost (for pension and medical) is currently 39% of pastor's salary and will be 43% of pastors salary in 2025. Phil shared that the medical insurance offered however has been great coverage.

Phil shared that part of the crisis with the Presbytery is that there are way less pastors than there used to be. Did you know that 68% of Presbyterian communities do not have an installed pastor? In communities without, a member steps up to lead. So what's happening at EPC is unique, and we are blessed! (says Michelle who is writing this).

Phil hasn't written to the new members yet about the new member's class, but plans to.

Pastor Phil had an Educational prelude on the agenda to pass along called, The Three Instincts (Sexual, Social and Self Preservation). He shared that we all lead with one of these qualities. Every leader is more dominant in one of these areas, and communities are as well. Sexual is described as the "attraction of faith", passion, intensity, and being edgy, about risk. Phil shared that he leads with this mostly. Social relates to the question of... "do I belong to a herd? I need a herd. I'm not doing this alone". This style give voices to more people and is a more inclusive energy, people who read the room, gather with disciples' energy. (like Carol was!) Self preservation – do I have the basics to survive? Questions one may consider, such as is the church building stable, do we have insurance, etc. Pastor Luna leads with this instinct.

Pastor Phil shared that the "social" isn't as intuitive for Luna and Phil – and they know they do set the tone for the community, so rely on other members for this as well. This led to an invitation for the Session to hold more "social" energy and leadership for the congregation.

Social/ Communal Activities Being Discussed and Planned: A Progressive Dinner & Bowling
The following activities were discussed to be offered in the next several months.

The Progressive Dinner is being considered where members would travel to different homes for a course of the meal and an experience there. LaGretta, Michelle and Ingrid signed up to lead this venture.

Bowling is always a good time, and was enjoyed last year by many. Connie and Phil will lead this up and come up with potential dates, maybe in the winter.

Sanctuary Dreaming

This was on the agenda and discussed briefly. Luna and Phil went to Spirit of Life Presbyterian church in Apple Valley. It made Phil start thinking about our sanctuary at EPC. He said to Session, "When in the sanctuary, start looking around, see what you can imagine". Currently there is no common multipurpose big space and need more creative space. Initial ideas were to think about removing the organ, remove the risers in the front to open it up, as this space isn't really used now.

From a building perspective, Ron mentioned that windows could be replaced in the educational part of building. This would save EPC money too. Phil wanted to encourage that kind of dreaming, but no decisions were made.

Other Topics reviewed

- The Conservatory was supposed to leave at end of summer. Now they are asking if they can use the space for the coming months, so we are in a holding pattern.
- Seal Coating of parking lot – in holding pattern. There are plans to do it, but the date is yet to be determined. [See top article for set date: THIS THURSDAY!]
- Luna's reported about the environmental concerns. The plant/ tree invasives on the west line of the high school on property line will be addressed/ removed by the school during the winter break.
- Micah GebbenGreen continues to volunteer a few days a week in the backwoods, and we are grateful!. Session discussed the possibility of giving him gift card at end of the season
- EPC Just ordered eight fan back chairs (durable, not made of wood) for the stations and under the maple tree.
- Phil and Luna will go to a "Boundary" training through the Presbytery which teaches appropriate leadership boundaries, which is a requested attendance.
- Luna just made arrangements to go to Scotland in the Spring of 2025. She has felt very called there. She will attend song-writing class while there too. In her second week there she will be working with her friend Simon for a week about Saint Columba. This will be happening May and June of next year and will be part of her continuing education.
- Phil and Micah and Luna will be gone Wed-Fri this week camping at the North Shore. Session leaders can be contacted by the community if there are needs during this time.

- Phil will be doing his work at Shakopee every Monday night moving forward.
- Phil and Luna will be at Chelsea and James' wedding in Alexandria at a Lutheran camp on Saturday.
- Next Session meeting scheduled for Thursday 10/10, but this date could change due to Connie not being able to be there then. Submitted by LaGretta Lunde