

# Edgcumbe

## Presbyterian Church

### Midweek Update April 2, 2025

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### Forgiveness is about Perception

This Lent, we continue to explore the theme of forgiveness, using this simple exercise:

***God is the love in which I forgive.***

***God is the love in which I forgive you, \_\_\_\_\_.***

Today, let's look at a famous moment of forgiveness in the Bible. In Luke 23, immediately after being crucified, Jesus says, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." This profound moment demonstrates the futility of two beliefs that tend to block our own forgiveness: the belief that my forgiveness is a justification of bad or hurtful behavior, and the belief that intent must be admitted before forgiveness can be given.

1. In Luke 23, is Jesus saying, "Father, forgive them because I now see that crucifixion is actually a wonderful thing and everyone should experience it"? By no means! In a moment of great distress, Jesus chooses forgiveness. I can't overemphasize how important this is. We have legions of voices telling us why we can't forgive someone or something. Jesus chooses forgiveness while he is being tortured and killed. Am I willing to follow Jesus' lead?
2. Here are a whole bunch of other things that Jesus does not do. He does not figure out who is to blame. He does not demand that the "guilty parties" admit that they were wrong. He does not ask if those who crucified him deserve forgiveness. He does not gather those responsible so they can hear his generosity as he kindly forgives them. He just does it, with a simple sentence uttered to God. Astoundingly, he even excuses their behavior for them: "They don't know what they're doing." This is rash, profligate, irresponsible forgiveness. If Jesus lets them off the hook so easily, what is to keep them from torturing and killing more people?!

Tragically, over the past 2000 years, most Christians have followed the logic of that last sentence and not Jesus himself, blaming all Jews for Jesus' death and causing immense suffering. Do you see the irony? We tell ourselves that we are trying to prevent suffering by not forgiving, when it is the lack of forgiveness that causes so much suffering.

The motivation and purpose of forgiveness is actually very simple. Whenever I am distressed or offended or hurt in any way, I can choose forgiveness as my primary tool to remember that I am loved and loveable and that everyone is loved and loveable. That's it. Forgiveness is a choice to move my attention from distress and grievance to love and connection. It has nothing to do with blame or fault or intent or guilt or controlling future behavior. What happens when I shift my perception to love and connection? Miracles happen. Light pours in. Resurrection happens. Healing happens. How do we experience this? It starts with a willingness to shift my perception.

Or—and this is important—ignore everything I wrote today, and go back to the top and simply pray the lenten forgiveness exercise. If you find yourself caught up and confused about forgiveness, please please do not let your confusion or my reflections keep you from the miracle of God's love in your life today. God has plenty of love to share, and she wants to share it with you right now.

### Easter Flowers!

This year we have ordered white (6), yellow (6) and pink (2) mums to decorate the sanctuary for Easter. If you would like to purchase one or more to take home after the season, they will be \$12.00 each. Attached to this email is an order form, Please send your money with the completed form to the church office, or place it in the offering plate.

### Gratitude from Michelle Trebtoske

I wanted to thank everyone from the community who donated to my moving expenses . I just got a final donation in the mail and it blessed me greatly at such a time of need. The moving costs and transition was way more expensive than I imagined and your generosity meant the world to me and more. Thank you thank you from the bottom of my heart to yours! *[The photo on top of this Update is from Michelle's current place in Wisconsin.]*

Also, Shiloh is in need of rides to church and back home in April and May when his Dad is on call for work. He lives in Woodbury near the borders of Newport and Cottage Grove. If you can help out, please call or text me at 612-990-1448.

### April Mission: One Great Hour of Sharing

**One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)** is a Special Offering

received through our denomination, the PC(USA) during Lent. The theme of this special offering is **Love Repairs the Breach**. In Isaiah 58, we are called to be repairers of the breach. Showing and sharing our love, is how we are repairing the breach in so many of our interactions in this world, opening the path to a new season of justice, freedom and peace.

Each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to:



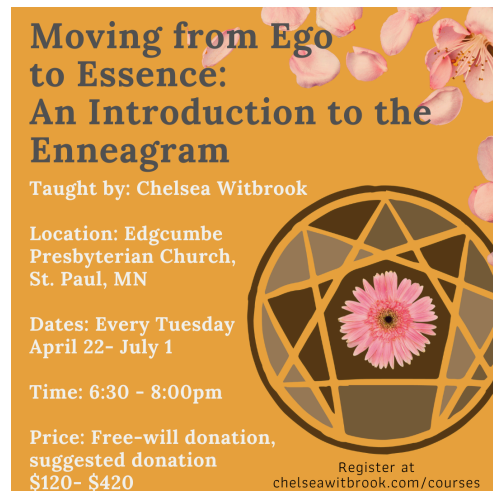
1. Relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program
2. Promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and
3. Assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

One Great Hour supports programs in over 100 countries. Watch this space during April for more info and a video on OGHS. Please consider a mission donation during April. You can indicate "One Great Hour" or "April Mission" on the memo line with a check, or on the Give Now application on [www.epchurch.org](http://www.epchurch.org). Thanks for your support!

## Looking Ahead

- Anyone who wants to **join Edgcumbe Church** is being asked to attend a meeting with the Session after worship on Sunday, April 13. Check your email inbox for a survey sent to everyone who is exploring membership.
- On **Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, April 17**, we will have a potluck meal and worship in the church sanctuary, starting at 6:00pm.
- Highland Park Sr High could use **exam proctors** in April and May. If you can help out, visit this link to sign up: <https://signup.com/go/kaRfOTG>
- Amicus is a local program (thru Volunteers of America) that helps support people as they re-enter society from incarceration. Jane Tafel has volunteered with this organization, and she recommends their Amicus: Champions of Change event on Thursday, May 1, at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. See event details [HERE](#).

## Enneagram Class with Chelsea Witbrook



**Moving from Ego to Essence:  
An Introduction to the Enneagram**

Taught by: Chelsea Witbrook

Location: Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, MN

Dates: Every Tuesday April 22- July 1

Time: 6:30 - 8:00pm

Price: Free-will donation, suggested donation \$120- \$420

Register at [chelseawitbrook.com/courses](http://chelseawitbrook.com/courses)

EPC is offering an Introduction to the Enneagram facilitated by Chelsea Witbrook. The course will meet every Tuesday evening from April 22-July 1, from 6:30-8:00pm in the EPC sanctuary.

The cost is free and open to anyone. Please register yourself and reach out to anyone who might be interested. All you need to register is to go to:

[chelseawitbrook.com/courses](http://chelseawitbrook.com/courses)

and fill out the simple registration form. We will ask for free-will donations to help cover the cost of this course, but please do not let money keep you from coming or from inviting anyone to attend.

## Backwoods All Church Workdays in May

This year will give us an opportunity to add more wood chips to the meditation path in the backwoods. We will order 25 yards of wood chip material to be delivered, and plan to host 2 all church backwoods days to help spread the material. Please put **Saturday, May 10th** on your

calendar for the first of these days. And then, a question to you—would you be interested in attending, but are not available on Saturdays?? We could schedule one of the gatherings on a weekday, if there was interest. Please contact Pastor Luna with specific weekday availabilities....thank you!