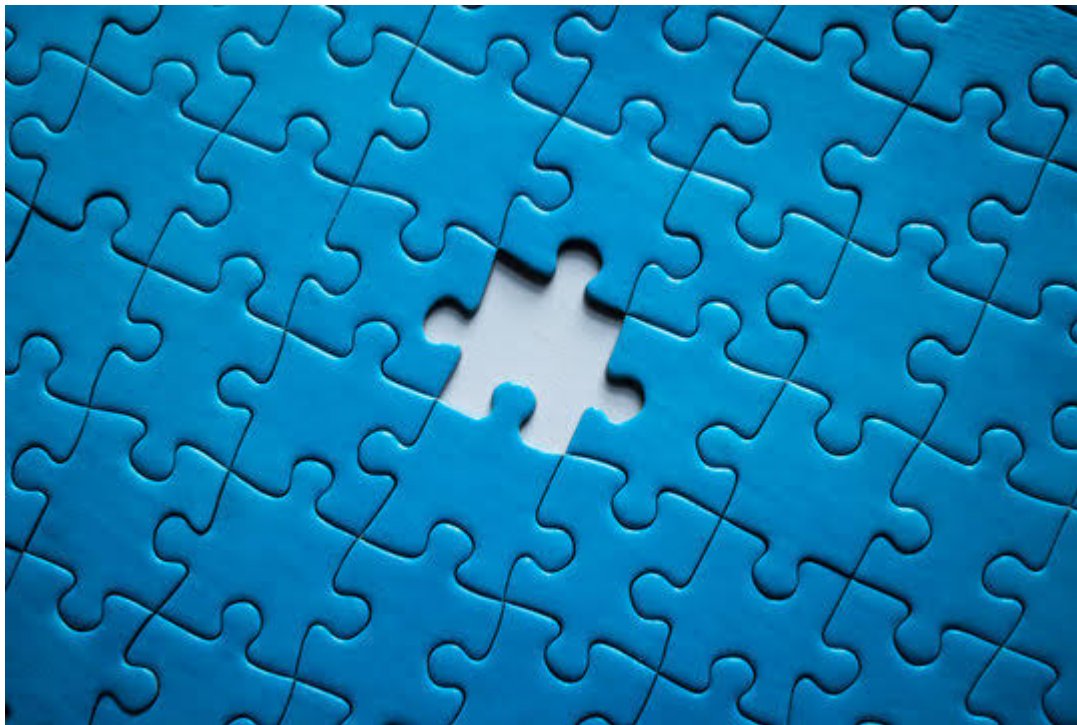




Edgcumbe

Presbyterian Church

July 29, 2026

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What Does it Mean to be The Body of Christ? - Reflection by Elder Chelsea Witbrook

***"Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours."
- St. Teresa of Avila, 16th Century Mystic Saint***

With our pastors gone, I've been noticing just how incredible this Edgcumbe community truly is. So many people have stepped in to say, "I can help with that," whether it's planning the October Retreat, leading parts of worship, making sure the building and grounds are taken care of, stewarding the backwoods, maintaining our mission fundraising, praying for community members, and checking in on each other. I'm already seeing and feeling the sanctity of community as we continue to come together in meaningful ways during this Sabbatical period.

What I most want you to know is that your presence matters here. Not just if you're an elder. Not just if you chair a committee. Not just if you provide music or a message in a worship service. But your presence matters simply because you belong here. Your belonging is not conditional. It does not depend on you needing to say "Yes" to every request for service, or needing to be in a visible leadership role. Your belonging is inherent in who you are: a child of the Beloved, which makes us family, which makes us One.

This One-ness doesn't just mean that we need each other to survive. It doesn't just mean that the puzzle is incomplete without you adding your piece. It means those things and so much more. Our interconnectedness as a Beloved Community is based on Divine Love. When we are truly present to the moment, when we show up with open hearts and minds and relaxed bodies, something amazing happens: Love is birthed into the world. When we are present, God's Love can flow through us in miraculous ways. As the body of Christ, it doesn't matter how "small" or "large" your role is during this Sabbatical time, for "the hand cannot say to the eye 'I don't need you'." (1 Corinthians 12:21)

So, with this in mind, let's see if we can all commit to being the Body of Christ during this Sabbatical time and remember:

- my presence, gifts, and offerings matter, no matter how small!
- if I need help, I will reach out to someone, knowing I'm never alone (the elders are on call for this purpose)
- if someone in the community is struggling, I will support them- maybe through a text, a card, a prayer, or a meal
- if a newcomer shows up to a Sunday service, I will go out of my way to meet and welcome them
- to pray for each other, our pastors, and our community

Thank you for being my chosen family, and Beloved Community. Let's grow and thrive together during this Sabbatical time!

Please welcome:

Rev. Stephanie Friant to Edgcumbe this Sunday, August 2. She will be with us a total of seven times during our pastors' sabbatical.

Workday: "Ora et Labora" in the Backwoods - August 1

Saturday, Aug 1st, 8:30-10:30am (before the heat sets in!)

Bring: work gloves, bug spray, sunscreen, water bottle

Led by Chelsea and James Witbrook and the MN Wisdom Circle

All are welcome to join!

We will work at eliminating the invasive species and clearing the labyrinth and pathways of weeds. If a lot of us show up, we can accomplish a lot!

This is an opportunity both for service, AND for Self Observation. We will work with Gurdjieff's "STOP exercise" during our work period. This is a wonderful way to notice and calm unnecessary tension, emotion, and thought while doing practical work. This is then a way to transfer 3 Centered Awareness into your daily life to become more present throughout your day. (Don't know what any of that means? Come find out!)

Music in the Backwoods - Sunday, August 2



Sunday, August 2, 2026 from 5-7PM– Music in the Backwoods| outdoors at Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church | Saint Paul, MN

Music in the Backwoods is an event created in honor of Jessa Gamble Roquet of Gambler's Daughter-- a local musician and much-loved friend, sister, daughter.

Held in the beautiful backwoods, with a stage and walking trails under the trees, performances this season will be by:

Jenny Klukken, marimbist

Blaine and Leah Howard, singer/songwriter duo

Sara Groves, singer/songwriter, director of Art House North in St. Paul

Performances begin at 5PM. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for kids 12 and under!

Grab a friend, a blanket or camping chair, pack a picnic and

join us. Lemonade and cookies provided.

The address of Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church is 2149 Edgcumbe Road, St. Paul, MN 55116

Parking is located at Highland Park High School with a path leading to the church and backwoods area.

[Our rain location will be at Art House North, 793 Armstrong Ave. West, Saint Paul, MN 55102]

Funds from the event are used to fund grants for local musicians. Thank you for your support!

Ticket Link: <https://buytickets.at/arhousenorth/2228425>

<https://www.jessamusicfoundation.org/>

Instagram: @jessaroquetmusicfoundation Facebook: Jessa Roquet Music Foundation

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 at 6:30 PM every Sunday night.

-Ron

Prayers For.....

- Michelle Trebtoske & Shiloh on the recent passing of Michelle's father, Peter.
- Pastors Luna & Phil for rest and safe travels during their sabbatical.

Clothing Exchange - Free Shopping Event

First Presbyterian Church in South St Paul is hosting a free clothing exchange. Shop for free: **August 7 (9am -4pm) and August 8 (9am to 2pm).** Donations received: **July 15 to August 7.**

Anyone can donate their gently used or new clothing-type items. (All items should be in good condition and clean). You can bring them to First Presbyterian Church through August 7---a bin for collection is outside the entrance door.

Volunteers are needed for this fun community event. Please consider signing up if you are able. The link to sign up is here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444AFA92CA3FDC16-64718555-clothing>

Then on August 7 & 8, the community is invited back to FPC-SSP to shop for FREE. You do not have to donate in order to shop. FPC is at 535 20th Ave North in So St Paul. For more information call 651-451-6223.

August Mission:

Our mission focus for August is Highland Park High School. HPHS are our closest neighbors, and we have an ongoing tradition of supporting them through grocery gift cards and Kleenex boxes. We had an especially high demand for groceries last year because of the surge, but there is always a need as some students face continual financial hardships. In addition to grocery assistance, we provide Kleenex boxes so the teachers don't have to purchase them themselves. Our goal is to have one box for each classroom. Disinfectant wipes are also requested as they are also always handy.

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!

The theater company generously offered two complimentary tickets for Pastor Phil and Luna. Since they are no longer able to use them, the company has kindly made the tickets available to someone in our congregation.



If you are interested, please reply to **epchurch2149@gmail.com** with your name. The tickets will be given to the **first person to respond**.

<https://www.birthplayproject.com/upcoming-events/titus-andronicus>

August Anniversaries



Happy Anniversary to:

Ingrid & Ron Eggert
Jane & Mark Tafel

8/11

8/20