



Dear Small Church Friends,

Last fall I came to the realization that one way to describe what I do as pastor to my beloved small congregation is that I serve as both a hospice nurse and a nurse midwife at the same time. I am walking with my people through great grief and loss, while also trying to coach them through the labor of impending birth. Through it all, I'm trying to breathe the life-giving Spirit myself as I encourage them to keep breathing deeply. It's fulfilling and demanding and sometimes brings me to tears. Going on retreat at Cedar Cross near Louisburg, NC has been life-giving for me for many years. God helps me take deep, healing breaths there.

I'm writing to invite you to join Katie Cashwell and me and other small church pastors on retreat at Cedar Cross starting on Monday evening, November 17 and through the day on Tuesday, November 18. New Hope Presbytery's Church Development and Evangelism Committee is our sponsor, and the presbytery is bearing most of the cost. We are asking each participant to chip in \$30.00 to help with expenses.

We will stay in Cedar Cross's beautiful Lodge, which has three suites, each consisting of a large bedroom with three or four beds, a bathroom, and one bed located in a private area; a comfortable common room, and an eat-in kitchen.



Dinner on Monday night and breakfast and lunch on Tuesday will be provided. Please plan to bring your own towels, sheets, and pillowcases. Most of the beds are single, but some are double, so I recommend bringing double bed size. Go here to learn more about Cedar Cross and Covenant Community Church, the small congregation that created and maintains it: <https://www.cedarcrossretreat.info>.



Our schedule will allow plenty of time for you to enjoy the many gifts Cedar Cross offers, such as walks in the woods, time in the art studio or library, walking the labyrinth, or walking the Way of Jesus, which is a guided prayer walk based on Jesus' life and ministry. You can also simply rest and nap in God's peaceful presence. You will likely see some wildlife friends there, perhaps even a great blue heron.

I am planning to stay on until Thursday morning, November 20. If you would like to join me in staying on another night or two, the cost will be \$65 per night, and you can directly reserve your

place for the extra nights with the Cedar Cross's registrar, Jimmy Allen at cedarcrossregistrar@gmail.com. Once I know who plans to stay on, we can confer about how we would like to organize our meals. I like to freeze food ahead of time to bring, but the fully equipped kitchen allows for cooking from scratch, too.

Jesus frequently took time apart and urged his disciples to do the same. We invite you to do that at Cedar Cross in November before the busy-ness of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. As one of the stations of the Way of Jesus puts it, you are the beloved. Come and hear God speak that word to you again.

Grace and peace,



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