



Dear Small Church Friends.

2 Timothy 1:6 is an invitation to tend the fire of the Holy Spirit within our spirits. Sometimes we are so busy helping others to do this that our own embers grow dim, and may even be on the verge of turning to ash. I'm writing to invite you to come away with me and other small church ministry leaders on retreat to tend the fires of our souls. We will gather at Cedar Cross Retreat Center near Louisburg, North Carolina beginning with dinner on Monday, September 14 and going through the day on Tuesday, September 15. This invitation includes the option of staying on an extra night for more personal retreat time. The Rev. Elizabeth Whitmer, pastor of the Bear Grass Presbyterian Church, will guide us in reflection on the theme *Embers and Flame: Rekindling the Gift Within*. It will be a time to rest and receive. As

Elizabeth writes, "For even the smallest ember, tended with care, can become a steady and sustaining flame."

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 be staying in the 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 a couple of them are double. Insect

repellants, walking sticks, and flashlights are available, but if you have favorites, you might want to bring them. 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. Every space has been carefully curated and prayed over.

I will be staying the extra night. Once you have registered with the presbytery for the retreat, you can reserve that second night with Cedar Cross's registrar, Jane Williams, at cedarcrossregistrar@gmail.com, and leave your payment at Cedar Cross upon departure. (Last year it was \$65 for the extra night.) Once I know who else plans to stay on, we can confer about how we would like to organize our meals.

I've watched enough fires to know how the coals can sustain each other and help each other burn brightly again. That's what we will be doing at Cedar Cross even as we feed our flames with good fuel. I hope to see you there!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary".

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