



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Experiencing and sharing God's love to transform our homes, community and world

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Stay Thirsty

*"As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.*

When shall I come and appear before God?"

— Psalm 42:1–2

As many of you know, I am an avid coffee drinker. While medical tests have never proved it, there have been times I've been pretty sure there's more coffee running through my veins than blood. It's not so much about the caffeine (caffeine doesn't really wake me up, it just keeps me from going to sleep), I just simply love the taste and the smell.



For no particular reason a couple of weeks ago, I didn't drink any coffee for three or four days and instead drank several glasses of water. Just water, with nothing added. A few days later, I noticed that my quality of sleep had significantly improved and that some of the aches and pains that come with middle age had lessened. The only thing I had changed was decreasing the amount of coffee consumed each day. It's not that I had been dehydrated; I was definitely getting plenty of fluids. There's simply no substitute for a nice, cool glass of perfectly mixed dihydrogen monoxide.

I've often said that going to church for Christians is the air we breathe. I think that was the wrong analogy because you can only go without air for a few minutes. However, one can live and exist just fine without water. As long as you're still getting fluids (coffee, tea, your carbonated beverage of choice, so on and so forth), your body will continue to function, and probably fairly decently. But if you want your body to be at its best, then we need water. You don't need water in order to be human (most any fluid will suffice), but the human body can't be at its best without water. For the Christian, going to church isn't the air we breathe, it's the water we drink. Going to church won't make you a Christian, but I don't know how to be a Christian without going to church.

In the Psalm at the beginning, the psalmist is in exile in a far-off land. He is unable to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem; he hasn't been able to go to church for a very, very long time. As a result, his soul is drying up. Three times in the Psalm he says his soul is "cast down within me." In addition to sleeping better and the aches and pains lessening as I drank more water, my mind also seems a bit sharper and clearer. Who knew that sometimes depression can be eased by drinking water? The same is true spiritually. We were created to worship God, together, with the other saints, on a regular basis. We need water daily. Our spirit needs corporate worship at least weekly.

If your spiritual life seems a bit dry lately or if you've found your soul "thirsting for the living God," maybe it's because you've "neglected meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25) with the saints in worship, prayer and Bible study. I didn't realize how much my body was craving pure water until I started drinking more. Sometimes, we don't even realize how thirsty our soul is until we gather together with other believers to worship the Lord and pray together. We drink best from the well of living water when we do so together with other believers.

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

— John 4:13–14

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

2023 March Youth Ministry News & Info

Sundays from 6:30-7:45 pm

There is no shortage of opinions or ideas about what's right, what's wrong, and what's actually best when it comes to the topic of sex. But, what if there's more to it than we commonly think? What if sex is meant to be seen as good and powerful, because it's actually God's idea? In this four-week series we'll discuss God's design for sex and then talk about the way technology, confession, and boundaries intersect with the idea of living with "sexual integrity".

March 5: Sex is good and sex is powerful.

March 12: Technology is good and technology is powerful.

March 19: Confession is good and confession is powerful.

March 26: Boundaries are good and boundaries are powerful.

Join us @ Youth Group, Sundays, 6:30 PM.



Life Together

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

7 Ron Reyburn
 8 Beverly O'Brien
 15 Clellan Vandevander
 24 Ernie Baker
 26 Maggie Brockman
 28 David Garrison
 31 Bryce Brine
 31 Wyatt Sievwright



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Caiti & Carlos Vera, March 20, 2014

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2023 GENERAL FUND

| | January | Y-T-D |
|----------|---------------|---------------|
| Income | 9,006 | 9,006 |
| Expenses | <u>10,970</u> | <u>10,970</u> |
| Balance | -1,964 | -1,964 |

I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4 NIV

Prayer Requests:

Several members have asked for prayers for needs that they'd prefer not to share publicly. Please lift up these prayers, knowing that God knows for whom you pray and just what they need.



Dot Stinnett is healing from a broken femur. Please pray for comfort and a relief from pain.

Lorraine Ledden is recovering from a fall. Praise the Lord that she experienced no major injuries.

Arlene Horton continues healing from hip surgery. Praise the Lord that she is doing well.

Ray Vandall continues to heal from his hip replacement surgery. Praise the Lord, the surgery went well!

Remember others who cannot be with us in church: **Arlene Horton, Mary Murray, Margie Seal, Dot Stinnett, Delores Wright and Peggy Wright.**

IMPORTANT MESSAGE — Preparing for Presbytery

This spring, Northminster will be hosting third stated meeting of the New River Presbytery on Friday, May 5, and Saturday, May 6. As we look forward to this special time of fellowship with our regional pastors and church leaders, we want to prepare our church to be as welcoming and inviting as possible. With that in mind, if you have personal items at the church, please be sure to pick them up in March. We are planning to have a lost and found table set up in the fellowship hall for items that you may not remember losing.

Also, we will be contacting ministry leaders about the spaces they are using to see what can be cleaned, straightened, tossed, donated, or moved to accommodate our guests. Nearly all of our church's rooms will be used for the event. This will be a great opportunity to do some serious spring cleaning at the church, with the exciting end goal of preparing a place of beauty and peace for our brothers and sisters who are coming to fellowship with us.

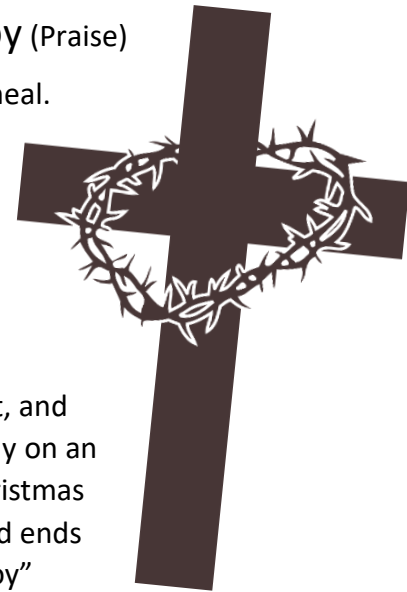


LENTEN SERVICES – WEDNESDAYS AT 12 P.M.

Please join us Wednesdays at noon for a brief time (30-40 minutes) of worship and remembrance to help us refocus on Jesus this Lent. The subject for this year is The Prayers of Lent—lament, confession, discernment, praise, plea, and faith.

| Date | Location | Preacher |
|----------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| March 1 | Randolph Memorial Baptist | Sara Hubble (Plea) |
| March 8 | Northminster EPC | Donald Hamlette (Confession) |
| March 15 | Madison Heights Christian | Dave Edinger (Faith/Creed) |
| March 22 | Rose Chapel | George Harris (Discernment) |
| March 29 | Madison Heights Baptist | Derek Hamby (Praise) |

We will share a meal on March 29. Please bring desserts; MHBC will provide the meal.



ENTERING LENT WITH JOY

By Christy S.

After the excitement of Christmas, Lent comes upon us as a time to reflect, repent, and walk through the wilderness with Jesus. In light of that, I'm trying to focus each day on an event from Jesus' life. Ash Wednesday began with a reading from Luke 2—the Christmas story. As I read it, I was struck by the realization that the Gospel of Luke begins and ends with “great joy.” The angel tells the shepherds that there is “good news of great joy” because the Savior has been born. It is the joy of new life, of hope being born, of God visiting His people; it is the joy of the shepherds.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the book ends with the disciples' great joy. “And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). It is the joy of completion—Jesus has finished the task for which He was sent, the salvation of all who call on Him. It is the joy of resurrection because death could not hold Him! It is the joy of a new purpose and new life for the disciples who will soon receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, Lent is a time of solemnity, repentance, and reflection. Let us embrace it and spend time contemplating the sacrifice Jesus made for us. But at the same time, I want to listen carefully because underneath the agony of the wilderness and cross is a quiet refrain of joy. Jesus tells His disciples at the Last Supper, “These things I have spoken to you, that My **joy** may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full” (John 15:11). May this season be a time when we hear God quietly reminding us that because of Jesus—because He met us in the wilderness and redeemed us from sin on the cross—we can always live with “great joy” no matter where we are.

LENT AND THE MUSIC OF J.S. BACH

by Bob Mills



What we now know as the Season of Lent began in the first century as a three-day fast in preparation for Easter. By the fourth century, Lent had been expanded to 40 days, beginning with Ash Wednesday and (excepting Sundays) continuing until Easter. Although we no longer fast for 40 days, as did Jesus in the wilderness, many Christians today voluntarily give up something we enjoy during Lent – TV, chocolate, Tik-Tok – as a way of being mindful of all that Jesus sacrificed for us.

As with other liturgical seasons, notably Advent and Christmas, the Church through the centuries has built up a body of music either specifically composed for or especially appropriate during Lent. Some of the most powerful and moving Lenten music has been composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

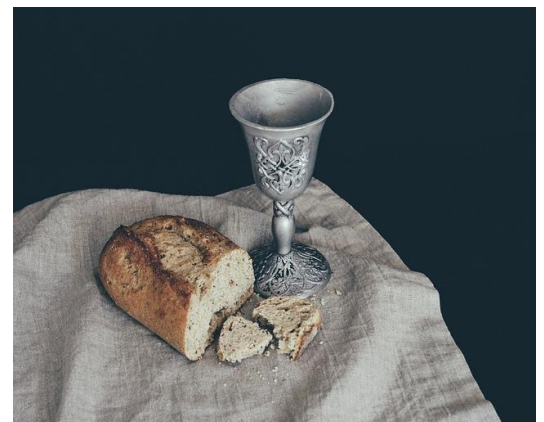
One example most of us would recognize is the hymn *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*. The version we have in our hymnal is itself the result of centuries of development. The text was written in the 12th century by the medieval Christian mystic Bernard of Clairvaux. The tune was composed Hans Leo Hassler just as the 17th century dawned. And about 130 years after that, J.S. Bach set the melody with the four-part harmony we now find as #221 in our hymnal.

(Another extraordinary work of Bach well suited to the season is the *Crucifixus* from magisterial *Mass in B Minor*, https://youtu.be/qU_a2ZgO5Ds. At the end of this piece are two of the most glorious measures of music Bach ever wrote. Listen to the piece and I'll gladly explain my reasoning.)

Finally, in keeping with the spirit of Lent, and my love of Bach's music, I give up playing hymns as offertories during Lent. Instead, I play music written by J.S. Bach, a Christian composer who, quite rightly in my view, has been called "The Fifth Evangelist."

HOLY WEEK

Let's gather together during this special week as we remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our salvation and then celebrate His victory over death on Easter morning.



Palm Sunday, April 2 – 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Good Friday, April 7 – 7:30 p.m. Service

Easter Sunday, April 9 – 7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

EASTER LILIES FOR THE SANCTUARY

Northminster members and friends, we will again provide Easter lilies in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. These lilies will decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 9, and then be available to take home. To participate, please sign your name on the church bulletin board list and follow the instructions for payment. Lilies are \$8 each, and the deadline is Sunday, April 2. Please contact Liz Boothe if you have any questions,



Minute 4 Missions

Gleaning for the World

Gleaning for the World (GFTW) was begun in 1998 with a collection of donated supplies in a basement and the vision to help the poor throughout central Virginia. Quickly this small-town ministry became a globally recognized organization. Within the first year, their work expanded from local missions to serve nationally and internationally.

GFTW acquires critically needed humanitarian aid supplies through corporate and non-profit partners. These supplies are sorted, packed, and inventoried by volunteers (such as we at Northminster) so that financial donations can be used to help those in need. These supplies are then distributed worldwide through established networks of mission-minded partners.

The four primary areas of GFTW focus are disaster relief, local aid, national aid, and international aid. At home in central VA, Gleaning partners with nearly 50 local charities to distribute perishable and nonperishable foods, bottled water, blankets, and personal care items to those in need. Gleaning has provided humanitarian aid to areas facing devastation and destruction due to natural and other disasters in over 36 states. Distribution is also made to people overseas who are facing unimaginable circumstances. One of the fastest growing projects, the WINGS program, is the sewing and assembling of sustainable feminine hygiene kits.

The GFTW mission statement is "To share the love of God at home and around the world through the efficient delivery of high quality, life-saving supplies to victims of poverty and devastation by connecting corporate surplus to critical needs."

If you are interested in helping GFTW with their vital mission you can volunteer, donate, and pray. This is a project well worth our investment. If you would like to make monetary gifts you may make checks payable to Northminster and designate for this mission. If you would like to volunteer, we typically meet at church at 8:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month to carpool to Gleaning.



The Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club will meet on **Thursday, March 16, at 10 a.m.** They will be reading *How the Penguins Saved Veronica* by Hazel Prior. When a crabby grandmother goes to Antarctica and rescues a baby penguin, her life and the life of her grandson are irreversibly changed. All women are welcome.

Next Month

April - *The Man Who Died Twice* by Richard Osman

When to Find Pastor David at Church

Now that things have returned to something resembling normal after the pandemic, Pastor David will be spending most of his time working from church instead of home. While there may be times when he has meetings or visits off campus, in general you can find him at church during these hours (and possibly a bit before and after as well):

| | |
|------------|--|
| Mondays | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. |
| Tuesdays | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (this is his primary visitation day though) |
| Wednesdays | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. |
| Thursdays | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. |
| Friday | Office Closed; Pastor's Day Off |

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DAVID GARRISON, *Pastor*

ELDERS

Ron Reyburn (Clerk of Session),
John Lange, Liz Boothe
Sharon Bryant, Judy Reyburn,
Mike Henderson, Anne Wilkins

Bob Mills, *Director of Music*

Sharon Bryant, *Sunday School Superintendent*
Mike Henderson & Barbara Baker, *Treasurers*