



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEIGHTS

NORTHMINSTER EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

JULY 2023

Volume 41, Issue 7



PASTOR'S CORNER

Priceless

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field in which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

— Matthew 13:44–46



*field,
goes*

Much like a pearl inside an oyster, sometimes the greatest and most profound truths come in the pithiest of sayings. These two sayings of Jesus are fantastic examples of that. They are very simple parables that are easy to grasp and understand. And yet, just like the point they are making, there is so much more within once we slow down and enter the story.

Imagine yourself as the man or the merchant. Smell the soil of the field or the salty water where the oysters are. Visualize coming across the treasure in the field — did you have to dig to find it, or was it poking out of the ground? What was it about the pearl that caught your eye as it sat under the water? What could possibly be found in that treasure, how large must that pearl have been, to motivate you to (don't miss this) *sell everything you have* in order to purchase the field or the treasure? Not just doing that, but doing it with great joy and excitement? Take a moment more — when was the last time you felt *that kind* of joy about, well, anything? Honestly, this is a ridiculous story, almost ludicrous. No one in their right mind would actually do anything like that, right? That is exactly the point, but not the entire point.

Now consider *what* Jesus says is the treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great value. Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. Often, we think the treasure being spoken of is salvation, which it is. But it's also so much more. The treasure that's worth more than anything else in our lives is more than just accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior; it's embracing the way of life that Jesus introduced to us and the world. Walking in the way of Jesus — loving God with all our being (Matt. 22:37-38), loving our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39), loving even our enemies and praying for those who persecute us (Matt 5:43-48), living a life of Christ-like service to the rejected and hurting (James 1:27), resting in the grace of Christ (Matt 11:28-30) — *that* is the treasure beyond all value. *That* is worth more than all of our earthly possessions or dreams.

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The apostles and countless saints throughout the centuries have experienced the truth of these parables. Paul experienced this so viscerally he proclaims, *"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my*

Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:8) Most of us, though, are scared off by that idea. As Brennan Manning once said, "We want to draw close enough to the blazing inferno of the love of God that we stay warm, but not so close that we might get burned." It makes you wonder if we're missing something, doesn't it?

As we continue through this summer, be intentional in reflecting on your walk with the Lord. Have you found your relationship with Jesus to be a treasure worth selling everything you have to gain? What is holding you back from knowing Jesus so well that everything else becomes "rubbish?" How would it actually feel to let yourself be burned by the blazing inferno of the love of God? There's more to this life than just living and dying, waking and sleeping. Jesus didn't die on the cross so you could merely be forgiven of your sins and receive the promise of eternal life. He meant for you to have more and better life than you've ever dreamed of (John 10:10), and that life is best found and pursued together (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.

— Psalm 51:12

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Youth Ministry

FUNQUEST

July 11 6:00 – 8:00 PM FunQuest

\$2 to skate, \$6 to rent skates. Bring additional \$ for food or other activities (Laser Tag, Arcade, etc.).
If you need a ride, meet at the church at 5:30 PM or meet up at FunQuest at 6 PM.



July 19 8:30 – 11:30 AM Gleaning For The World

Join volunteers from our church to serve at the Gleaning For The World Warehouse in Concord, VA.
Meet at the church at 8:30 AM to carpool.



July 28 8:00 – 10:00 PM Tiny Town Glow in the Dark Mini-Golf – \$10 per round.
If you need a ride, meet at the church at 7:30 PM or meet up at Tiny Town.

COMING SOON – A PRAYER PARTNER PROGRAM FOR ADULT CHURCH MEMBERS AND OUR 6th-12th GRADERS!

Life Together

JULY BIRTHDAYS:

7 Don Hedrick
11 Henry Sechler
29 Margie Seal



JULY ANNIVERSARIES:

Gerald & Sharon Bryant, July 10, 1976
Ernie & Barbara Baker, June 14, 1973



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT **2023 GENERAL FUND**

	May	Y-T-D
Income	8,950	50,133
Expenses	14,143	54,821
Balance	-5,193	-4,688

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

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 was moved to Forest Health and rehab on Friday, May 19. Pray for her transition as she settles into her new environment.

Jimmy Wright will have surgery on Friday, July 10 to relieve pressure and improve mobility. Pray he continues to improve.

Julie Lerner is still recovering from her recent illness and asks prayers for relief from the side effects of the medicine she's been taking.

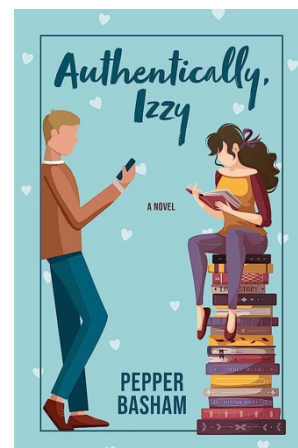
Remember others who cannot be with us in church: **Pat Callahan, Arlene Horton, Mary Murray, Margie Seal, Dot Stinnett, Delores Wright** and **Peggy Wright**.

The Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club will meet at the Bryants' River Place on Thursday, July 20 at 10:00 AM. This month's book is Authentically, Izzy by Pepper Basham.

Izzy Edgewood is a wannabe bookstore owner, quote queen, and Lord of the Rings nerd who has been waiting for Prince Charming to sweep her off her sneakered feet. But it's hard to meet people when you spend more time with fictional humans than real ones. Which is why her pragmatist cousin Josephine decides to take Izzy's future into her own meddling hands and create an online dating profile for the hopeful romantic. To Izzy's shock (and suspicion), Josie's plan works. Soon, she's dialoguing with a Hobbit-loving man named Brodie who lives in a small town an ocean away from her home in the Blue Ridge Mountains. But is their shared love of books, family, and correspondence enough to overcome Izzy's fear of flying and the literal distance between them? And is a long-distance relationship even worth considering when a local author has been frequenting the library where she works and is proving to be a perfectly fine gentleman? In this epistolary novel from award-winning author Pepper Basham, bookish dreams and happily-ever-afters collide to create a beautiful sort of magic that's even better than fiction.

All women are welcome!



Northminster Online Worship and Giving

Wondering how to find and connect with the life of Northminster online? There are several ways to do so. Read on to find out how!

Worshipping With Us Through YouTube

Beginning Sunday, June 2, 2023 we will be live-streaming our worship services through YouTube instead of Facebook. We will continue to provide a link to each service on Facebook, but the easiest way to find the service is to subscribe to our YouTube channel.

Finding Us On YouTube

On Your Phone or Computer

Simply go to www.youtube.com/@npcmh (don't forget the '@' symbol) and click the subscribe button. If you have notifications enabled, YouTube will send you a notification when the service begins. The service will also show up on your YouTube homepage.

On Your TV, Cable Box, or Streaming Device (Recommended)

You can also watch the service on your internet-connected smart TV or cable box. Open the YouTube app, and search for 'npcmh.' You can then select our channel (look for the church logo) to find our videos and livestreams.

Download the Bulletin Each Week

To assist your worship, the bulletin will be available on our website at www.npcmh.com/sunday-bulletins. Be sure to download and print it off prior to worship. The bulletin will have all liturgical elements as well as hymn and song lyrics included each week.

Making Donations Online Through tithe.ly

You can now make donations online! You can do this on a computer, phone or tablet. On our homepage, www.npcmh.com, scroll down until you see the blue "Online Giving" button (pictured on the right). Clicking on it will send you to a secure donation page. Once there, you can make a one-time donation or set up a recurring donation. There is a small processing fee for each transaction, and you can choose to include those fees in your donation if you would like (otherwise the church absorbs those fees).

Download the Church Center App

Scan the QR code to the right with the camera on your smartphone to download our app! In the app are the church calendar, small group and volunteer opportunities, the online church directory, and more. If you need help, see Peter Garrison before or after the worship service.

NORTHMINSTER ON THE 'NET

Website

www.npcmh.com

Calendar, Directory & more

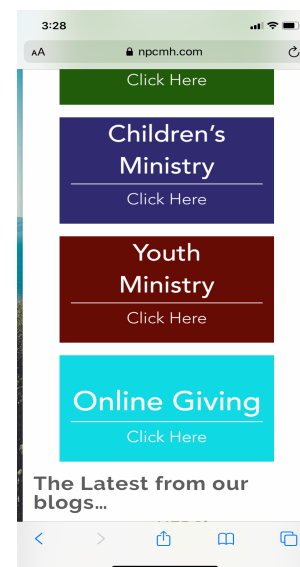
npcmh.churchcenter.com
(see below for how to find our app!)

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www.facebook.com/npcmh

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(don't forget the '@')



church center

- Service Times
- Easy Giving
- Event Signups
- Community Connection
- Family Pre-Check

Download the app



Scan the QR code to get started and connect with the life of your church.

Sunday Morning Worship Service & Sunday School Schedule Change

Beginning Sunday, August 27



Sunday School moves to 9:00 AM Worship moves to 10:30 AM

Beginning on Sunday, August 27, we are changing the Sunday morning schedule. Sunday School will now start at 9 AM, and the worship service will start at 10:30 AM. We believe this will enable us to be more effective in our discipleship, fellowship and worship.

Discipleship: With a Sunday school time of 9-10 AM, we are able to provide a full, unhurried hour of discipling opportunities. While we currently schedule an hour of Sunday school each week, practically speaking it's usually 30-40 minutes. By spreading out the end of Sunday school and the beginning of the worship service, we will be able to focus more fully on our study and application of the Word of God to our lives.

Fellowship: With a "break" in the schedule from 10-10:30, we are able to offer a time of "purposefully unstructured" fellowship to the congregation. This provides time for those who attended Sunday School and those who are arriving for worship to visit together prior to the start of the worship service. This is separate from the regular fellowship receptions we offer, since with the earlier start time for worship, there will be ample opportunity for the receptions after the service without feeling like we need to dash off to lunch.

Worship: One of the challenges we face every Sunday is the transition from Sunday School to worship. Many of those attending Sunday School are also involved in leading the service, and often the transition is rushed and harried. By starting the service at 10:30, those who need to prepare for worship are able to do so without missing out on Sunday School and without feeling rushed. This also provides a better opportunity for us to be fully present in worship, knowing that the service will end earlier, leaving us with the sense that most of the day is still available. The service itself will also feel less hurried as a result.

Sometimes when we settle into a routine, it becomes comfortable. This change provides us with an opportunity to think intentionally about the rhythms of how we seek to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). There are a lot of things in our lives that "compete" with Sundays — chores, sports, family gatherings, and the always important Sunday nap. Nevertheless, Sunday is meant to be given to the Lord and to worshipping Him first and foremost. Please let us know if you have any questions, and we look forward to seeing you at 10:30am for worship on August 27!

web - npcmh.com * facebook – [npcmh](https://www.facebook.com/npcmh) * phone - 434-929-2713 * contact – office@npcmh.com

DAVID GARRISON, *Pastor*

ELDERS

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

STAFF

Bob Mills, *Director of Music*
Sharon Bryant, *Sunday School Superintendent*
Christy Sechler, *Secretary*
Mike Henderson & Barbara Baker, *Treasurers*



THE TEMPLE MOUNT AS SEEN FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

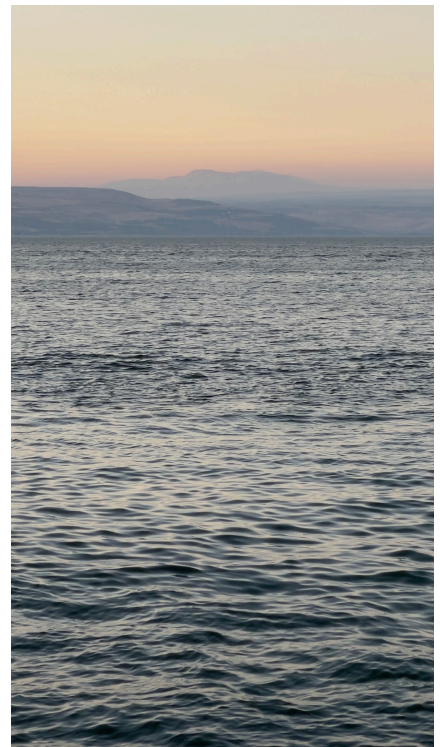
Holy Land Pilgrimage with Pastor David

June 21-30, 2024

If anything becomes clear when visiting the Holy Land, it's how precious this particular place is to the Lord. While "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1), God chose this particular portion of land on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean Sea and made it holy unto Him, then gave it to the people He has chosen for Himself. We know that God has worked purposefully and intentionally throughout history, but you experience that tangibly when you visit these incredible places we've read so much about in our Bibles. Faith comes alive in a visceral way.

What begins to stand out as you tour the Promised Land is how much the land itself proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, hence why it has earned the name, 'The Fifth Gospel.' As another pastor friend of mine said upon his return from the Holy Land, you'll never read your Bible the same again. We know the Bible is true, but when we visit the Holy Land it becomes *real*. It really is as transformative an experience as they say.

I firmly believe all followers of Christ should make plans to visit the Holy Land at least once in their lives. I promise you, it is absolutely worth it. To that end, I invite you to join me on a tour of the Holy Land next summer, June 21-30, 2024. This trip will bless you in every way, encouraging your faith and strengthening your walk with the Lord. There are few things in life that can compare to walking in the same places that Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and the Apostles went. This land has a special place in God's heart, and it should be in ours as well, even as we wait eagerly for the new heavens and new earth to come down with Christ when He returns.



**MOUNT HERMON, AS SEEN
FROM THE SEA OF GALILEE**

For more information, contact Pastor David.

Outreach & Fellowship Opportunities

I am pleased to announce that the **Amherst Senior Center** group will be meeting here in our Fellowship Hall, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 AM – 2 PM, throughout the month of July.

I invite you to stop in sometime, especially if you are here at the church on other business. I promise that you will feel welcome, and the ladies would really like to get to know you.

Come join us for two events that might be especially of interest! - Julie Lerner



Monday, July 17

Robert Cardwell will be leading us in an old-time hymn sing around the piano at 10:30 AM, followed by a potluck lunch.



Monday, July 24

We will be treated to a "Puntastic Fashions" fashion show at 11:00 AM, followed by a luncheon. The models are lovely ladies you might recognize!

Christmas in July!!!

Each month, the MOE (Missions-Outreach-and-Evangelism) Committee spotlights a project for focus. Since our lives become so busy in November and December, July seems perfect for thinking about Christmas Shoe Boxes to be sent far away and beginning to collect nonperishable foods for local Christmas Food Boxes.

Christmas Shoe Boxes have been collected and filled and mailed by the Christian Education Community for many years. Think of small toys, craft materials, games, etc that would fit into a shoe box. No food or perishable items here!

The local Christmas Food Boxes are another longtime project. Our church works with other area churches and schools to collect donations and then meet in December to sort, pack and deliver the boxes to those in need. If you know of a person or family who is in need of help please give information (names, number in family, address, and telephone number) to a member of our committee for review by the larger group. There will be collection containers in the Fellowship Hall and food suggestion for each month.

For July, we are collecting canned meats and/or peanut butter and jelly in separate jars. Thank you for your support!

A big thank you to Mark O'Brien from Gleaning for the World who spoke to us at our potluck luncheon on June 11th. He was very knowledgeable and informative and answered many of our questions.

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We had a great turn out for our Brainstorming and Pizza meeting on June 13th. We had a blessed evening with people of all ages, and no one was reluctant to share ideas. Thank you to each of you who made it out on a Tuesday evening. The next step will be to decide when to have a strategy meeting. Stay tuned!



Join us on August 5 at 2:15 PM at Regal Cinemas!
NEPC will pre-purchase a block of tickets (\$16 each).
Please reserve your spot by contacting Pastor David.

World War II. Darkness has fallen over Europe, and the boots of the Third Reich echo through the streets. But on a quiet city corner in the Netherlands, some choose to resist. Corrie Ten Boom and her family risk everything to hide Jewish refugees by the hundreds, and they ultimately face the consequences when they are discovered.

The Hiding Place is their story—a story of faith, hope, love, and forgiveness in the face of unthinkable evil.

This powerful cinematic presentation was adapted from Corrie Ten Boom's The Hiding Place for the stage by A. S. Peterson, directed for the stage by Matt Logan, and filmed for cinema audiences in Nashville, TN.

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