



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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CONSUMED BY CONSUMING

I received my first email announcing Black Friday, the annual celebration of greed and gluttony that defines the day after Thanksgiving (a day of gratitude for all God has provided for us), on November 2. Not only that, but the email announced that the Black Friday deals were available NOW! Of course, for years the stores have been opening on Thanksgiving to offer Black Friday “doorbuster” sales (full confession: I went shopping on Thanksgiving to get one of those deals). The mentality that comes from shopping for the best deal leads to two consequences. First, we live in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction and discontent. Second, we apply the consumer mindset to other areas of life - we just keep looking for the best “deal” that will better meet our “needs.” We are a consumer-based culture. And we are being consumed by it. One might say we are literally selling our souls to satisfy our consuming.

A Prescription for A Better Way

There are times when something happens to our bodies, maybe a deep-set illness is discovered, and the doctor issues us a prescription for medicine to help return us to physical health. It often doesn't happen overnight, but through faithfully following the prescription, over time we begin to notice a difference and feel better. Eventually, we are restored to full health. The prescription to our rampant consumerism is the Christian season of Advent. Advent comes from a Latin word that means “coming.” It is a 4-week season that leads up to Christmas and is meant to be a time of intentional reflection and preparation for the coming of the Messiah - both celebrating his first Advent 2,000 years ago, and hopefully anticipating his second coming. The giving of gifts (started by the Magi that first Christmas) is a good tradition, but this one aspect has taken over the entire season.



There are rituals and traditions surrounding our celebrations of Advent and Christmas. Some of those are particular to our families, others are more broadly practiced by churches or communities. Many of them have their roots in centuries past, or maybe they are new traditions only a few years old. The rituals of putting up and decorating the Christmas tree, of lighting the Advent candles (both in worship and at home as a family), of going caroling are all great ways to slow down this holiday (holy-day) season. Consider other activities and start new traditions that your family (both nuclear and extended) can practice and celebrate each year to move us deeper in our understanding of what this season is supposed to be about and find ourselves moving away from consuming and toward joy and contentment in Christ.

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Phil. 4:11–13)

Blessings, Rev. David Garrison

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

- 3 Karey Garrison
Jackson Moore
- 5 Joan Porter
- 10 John Seal
- 12 George O'Brien
- 16 Bonnie Wine
- 20 Dolores Wright
- 24 Matt Brine
- 27 Gerald Bryant

**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:**

- 1 Ron & Judy Reyburn, 1962
- 13 John & Lorraine Ledden, 1944
- 19 Jeff & Joan Porter, 1987

DECEMBER NURSERY**ATTENDANTS**

- 2 Ernie & Barbara Baker
- 9 Linda Lange, Judy Reyburn
- 16 Debbie Irvine, Sandy Stafford
- 23 Gerald & Sharon Bryant
- 30 Marge Mills, Karen Aspengren



More attendants are needed. Please see Sharon Bryant if you can volunteer once every 2 months.

SPECIAL REQUEST:

Please keep George and Mickie Brine in your prayers as they travel to Dubai to spend Christmas with their son and his family. They wish everyone a wonderful Christmas season and will miss you all.

I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 34:4 NIV

**Prayer requests:**

Betty Reed has moved to Valley View Retirement Community. She would love to hear from you. She has the same phone number.

Sue Burnett is being treated for lung cancer.

Bobbie Garrett is in Guggenheimer Nursing Home receiving physical therapy and is seeing some improvement in mobility. This is great encouragement to her and Albert!

Anita Moore is receiving chemotherapy for colon cancer.

Will Thomasson is in school in Lima, Ohio to become a mechanic. He is looking for work.

John & Lorraine Ledden have moved to English Meadows in Bedford (formerly the Elk's Home). The church sent them off with our prayers and good wishes and a reception in their honor on November 25.

The Leddens' grandchildren, Keith & Denna Crumrine, and children are in Papua New Guinea.

Law enforcement personnel, first responders.

Remember others who cannot be with us in church:

John and Dick Collins, Dot Stinnett, Leonard Rowe, Margaret Watts, Dot Rucker, Doris Eden, Monyeene Wood, Bob & Marie France.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN***Morning Circle:***

The morning circle will meet Monday, December 10 at 10 a.m. in the church Library. June Hedrick is the study leader. They continue their study with Max Lucado's book, *A Love Worth Giving*.

Evening Circle:

The women's evening circle will NOT meet in December. On Tuesday, December 4, at 6 p.m. they will host the **MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SUPPORT GROUP** here for their Christmas Dinner.

Their new Bible study, *Pursuing God*, by author Margaret Feinberg, will continue on January 8. This 12-session study covers the books of Genesis and the Gospel of John – 6 sessions in each.



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!!!

Decorate Sat., Dec. 1

It's that exciting time of year when we dress up our homes for Christmas. And, we also delight in being able to dress up God's house, too. We would love for you to join us Saturday, December 1, from 9 – 11:30 a.m. (or whenever during that time you are available), as we put up beautiful trees, candles, wreaths, banners, and more! Morning snacks and a light lunch will be provided. Hope to see you there!

POINSETTIAS IN HONOR OF AND MEMORY OF



We have ordered poinsettias to help decorate our church for the Advent-Christmas season. Members are welcomed to donate in memory and in honor of

loved ones. Poinsettias are \$5 each and the deadline is December 9. Please sign up on the bulletin board and fill out the form provided for your information.

Can you believe there are only 4 more Sundays until Christmas!



We will be ringing the SALVATION ARMY RED KETTLE bells at both doors of Madison Heights Walmart on Saturday, December 22 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Please take part by signing up **on the schedule posted on the bulletin board!**

CELEBRATE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVE WITH US THIS YEAR!

Advent Sermon Series

As much a part of Christmas as decorations and presents, the Christmas season is defined by song. In fact, the Bible is full of songs announcing the coming and birth of the Savior. Beginning December 2, we'll take a look at six of those songs and find ourselves connecting with the eager anticipation of that first Christmas as we look forward to and prepare for this coming celebration of the birth of our Savior.



First Sunday in Advent – December 2

We kick off the season of Advent with a wonderful worship service in which we welcome the Liberty Flute Ensemble. The Ensemble consists of over 15 flutists that will both enhance our worship service and help usher in the Christmas season. In addition to lighting the first candle of the advent wreath, we will also be celebrating the Sacrament of Communion in worship.

Second Sunday in Advent – December 9

Join us for worship on the Second Sunday in Advent as our children perform their Christmas program during the worship service. This year's program has been written by our very own Christy Sechler and features the children of our church performing, singing and speaking.



Christmas Cantata – December 9, 4 PM

The Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church choir will present the original cantata *Songs of Advent, Old and New* at 4:00 on Sunday, December 9, at Northminster.

The cantata includes readings from Isaiah’s prophecies of the coming Messiah and songs about Jesus’ advent from Luke 1-2. The first half of the cantata will feature four hymns based on Isaiah’s prophecies, using hymn tunes dating as far back as the Renaissance. For the cantata’s second half, Tim Mills has composed original settings of the songs, recorded in Luke’s gospel, that were sung by Mary, Zechariah, the angels, and Simeon.

Members and friends of the congregation are encouraged to join us as we celebrate the season in song. Following the cantata, all are invited to stay for a reception hosted by the Fellowship Committee.



Baked Goods Needed: Dec. 9

Your Fellowship committee will host a reception following our choir’s Christmas Cantata on December 9. Your help is needed to supply baked goods for this reception as we thank our choir and welcome guests.

If you can contribute any type of baked goods please have them at the church on Sunday morning of the 9th and leave them in the kitchen marked for the CANTATA.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 16
4:30 – 6:30 pm**



Join us for our annual tradition of spreading Christmas cheer by caroling to our homebound

members. We’ll divide up into groups, then come back to church and warm up with some delightful hot chocolate and wonderful fellowship. This is a great opportunity for folks of all ages to come together as we spread some Christmas cheer!

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
Mon., Dec. 24 - 7 p.m.**

On Christmas Eve, we invite you to join us for a family-friendly candlelight service, celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This service of song, carol and Scripture provides a wonderful opportunity to get a sense of how eager the Hebrews were for the coming of the Messiah so long ago, and reminds us how eager we are for his return. We look forward to seeing you, your friends and family there!



NPC YOUTH MINISTRY DECEMBER UPDATE



There's something new and different each Sunday in December for NEPC Youth Ministry! Here's what you need to know:

- **Sunday, Dec. 2, 6-7:15 pm:** Join us at NEPC as we answer the question, "What's the big deal about Christmas?" It's more than presents and decorations.
- **Sunday, Dec 9, 6-7:15 pm:** Our annual youth ministry Christmas party will be at the Garrisons. We'll send a link with directions (if you need them) in a week or two! We'll have a white elephant gift exchange, so bring a wrapped present (\$5 max...or one of last year's gifts that you no longer want).
- **Sunday, Dec 16, 4:30-7:30pm:** We're going Christmas Caroling! Join us as we visit folks in our congregation who are homebound or not able to join us in worship regularly. The more carolers we have, the better we all sound! Afterward, we'll meet at church for hot chocolate and treats. We'd love to have as many youth (and families!) as possible join us for this!
- **Sunday, Dec 23 & 30:** No Youth Group - enjoy the holidays with your family!

Look for other ways to join in the celebration of the birth of our Savior throughout the newsletter, including the Christmas Cantata and Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB



The Women's Book Club will not meet in December. They will regroup on January 12 at the home of Sherry Meng. The group is reading *The Sea Keeper's Daughters* by Lisa Wingate. Watch your bulletins and the January newsletter for reminders.



Table Talk Continues December Wednesdays 5:45 – 6:45

Our December Table Talk series will be "Aspects of Advent." There is a lot of nuance and "hidden" depths to the Advent and Christmas stories that we miss because the biblical authors assumed certain cultural, historical and prophetic knowledge that has been lost in the 2,000 years since the stories were recorded. Michael Babcock and Pastor David will explore several of these different facets in an effort to enrich and deepen our understanding and celebration of the incarnation of our Savior. Upcoming topics include:

- December 5:** Politics of the Times –
Rev. David Garrison
- December 12:** No Room in the Inn –
Rev. David Garrison
- December 19:** Questioning Christmas –
Dr. Michael Babcock
- December 26 & January 2:** No Table Talk



COMMUNION SUNDAY
December 2

We observe the Sacrament of communion on the first Sunday of each month. In December, this is also the First Sunday in Advent.

“This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” Luke 19b-20

FIRST SUNDAY COLLECTION OF
NON-PERISHABLES FOR THE
MONROE BAPTIST FOOD PANTRY

Can't bring your donations on the first Sunday? Leave your items any time in the receptacle in the foyer area. Monetary contributions are appreciated as well. Monroe Baptist volunteers can purchase food from the Blue Ridge Food Bank at a much lower price than at the grocery stores.

Don't forget items for children and pets are needed as well.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT				
	<u>General Operating Fund</u>		<u>Campaign/PC USA Debt</u>	
	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Total to date</u>
Income	9,535	106,029	1,216	48,877
Expenses	11,523	118,153		
Balance	-1,988	-12,124		

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DAVID GARRISON, *Pastor*

ELDERS

Ron Reyburn, *Clerk of Session*

Judy Reyburn, Harry Rucker, George Brine

John Lange, Sharon Bryant, Anne Wilkins

Bob Mills, *Director of Music*

Liz Boothe, *Organist*

Sharon Bryant, *Superintendent*

of Sunday School

Vonnie Rucker, *Secretary/Treas.*