



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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The Gift of Advent

“The special note of Advent is its primary focus on the second coming of Christ, who will arrive in glory on the last day to consummate the kingdom of God — its orientation toward the promised future. Advent... differs from the other seasons in that it looks beyond history altogether and awaits Jesus Christ’s coming again ‘in glory to judge the living and the dead.’” — Fleming Rutledge, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*



This past Sunday, November 29, was the First Sunday in Advent. It marks the beginning of the Christian year. For most of us, Advent is the season preparing us for Christmas, as if it were simply the pre-Christmas season... after all, it does end on Christmas *Eve*. But Advent isn’t pointing to Christmas at all, it points far past Christmas. As the quote from Fleming Rutledge above states, Advent points not to Christ’s First Coming, but to his Second. While we tend to treat Advent as a “countdown to Christmas,” it’s actually far deeper and more meaningful.

It seems that, each year, we are in a bigger and bigger rush to get to Christmas. Stores have been pushing the “unofficial” beginning of the Christmas season earlier and earlier, and this year has pushed it even further—I saw Christmas decorations in stores this year weeks before Halloween! It is a strange and confusing thing to see Halloween and Christmas decorations side-by-side. Jack Skellington would be furious! But I also get it—2020 has been an amazingly difficult year (although not even close to the worst year ever. That honor goes to 536 AD. No, seriously. Look it up). After months and months of the pandemic and social distancing, a terribly contentious presidential election cycle, murder hornets, and record-breaking natural disasters, we’re all pretty desperate for a little light and a dash of Christmas cheer. While I’m personally a staunch “no Christmas music until after Thanksgiving” Scrooge, I won’t judge anyone who has already put up a Christmas tree, some decorations, or gone all-in on Christmas music.

But don’t rush past Advent in order to get to Christmas. While Advent has a particular emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ, it does so with its feet firmly grounded in the present reality. As Fleming Rutledge explains, “Advent contains within itself the crucial balance of the now and the not-yet that our faith requires. [T]his book will explore this theme in relation to the yearly frenzy of ‘holiday’ time in which the commercial Christmas music

insists that 'it's the most wonderful time of the year' and Starbucks invites everyone to 'feel the merry.' The disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain that characterize life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come. In that Advent tension, the church lives its life...The Advent season encourages us to resist denial and face our situation as it really is" (*Advent* pp. 7-8). The hope of Christ's Second Coming, even the joy of celebrating his First Coming at Christmas, is all the more bright and joyous *because of* the dark, brokenness of this present world, not in spite of it.

Advent is not for the faint of heart. But there is a gift waiting for you, if you are willing to slow down and find it. They say it's always darkest just before the dawn... Is it not the darkness of the night that causes us to appreciate the light all the more? Allow yourself to be present in the hardness and pain of 2020 *and* in Advent's much-needed reminder that, one day, Jesus Christ will come back and make everything sad untrue and make everything broken whole. In doing so, we find that Christmas takes a place in our life and our hearts far more true than decorations, songs, and presents.

"The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." (John 1:5)

Blessings,

Rev. David Garrison

Pastor's Midweek Bible Study

Every Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

Join us in person or online for a midweek Bible study with Pastor David! We're working our way through the book of Judges, with a focus on learning to study the Bible ourselves and apply it to our daily lives. As 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." It's easier to see this in some passages than others, but together we'll be encouraged and equipped. We look forward to seeing you there!



Sign up at <https://npcmh.churchcenter.com/groups/small-groups>

Life Together

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
- 19 Jeff & Joan Porter, 1987



*Thanks be to God for
His indescribable gift.
2 Corinthians 9:15*

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



Prayer Requests:

Larry Irvine continues testing for heart valve issues. A treatment plan is being developed.

Ron Reyburn has received treatment for prostate cancer.

Mary Wilhelm's son, Stan, continues treatments for an immune deficiency. He underwent a bone marrow transplant on July 21.

Sue Burnett continues chemotherapy for lung cancer.

All medical personnel who have continued serving those with coronavirus in spite of the possibility of getting infected themselves.

Remember others who cannot be with us in church: **Dot Stinnett, Leonard Rowe, Margaret Watts, and Dot Rucker.**

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2020		
	October	Y-T-D
Income*	12,209	110,891
Expenses	<u>10,035</u>	<u>104,665</u>
Balance	2,174	6,226
<u>PC USA DEBT – 50,420</u>		

www.facebook.com/npcmh
Website: www.npcmh.com

DAVID GARRISON, Pastor

ELDERS

Ron Reyburn, Clerk of Session,
Michael Babcock, George Brine, Maggie Brockman
Sharon Bryant, John Lange, Anne Wilkins

Bob Mills, Director of Music
Liz Boothe, Organist
Sharon Bryant, Superintendent
of Sunday School
Vonnie Rucker, Treasurer

Drive-in Food Drive & Caroling

Sunday, December 13 @ 1 p.m. in the back church parking lot

Food Drive Drive-in

Mark your calendars! It's coming—the first ever Northminster Food Drive Drive-in! We will be collecting for Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN). The items most needed are listed below. Please bring your donation to the back parking lot at 1 p.m. on Sunday, December 13, and stay to sing some favorite songs of the season with Gospel on the Grounds.

Items requested by NHN:

- 14oz. yellow mustard
- 32oz. pancake mix
- 4 lbs. sugar
- 24 oz. pancake syrup
- 15 oz. ketchup
- 6 pack of fruit cups
- 15 oz. mayonnaise



Drive-in Caroling

We invite you to enjoy the songs of the season on Sunday, December 13, at 1 p.m.

Maggie and her group, Gospel on the Grounds, will be playing some beloved

Christmas carols while we listen. You're welcome to sit in your car with the windows up or down to enjoy the beautiful music. You can even sit outside on your lawn chair if the weather is nice. We hope you'll join us for this out-of-the-box, drive-in Christmas caroling for 2020.



Women's Book Club

Thursday, December 3 @ 10 a.m.

The Women's Book Club will meet Thursday, Dec. 3 at 10 am at Sherry Meng's home. Participants are asked to share a favorite Christmas-themed book or story. The next book they will read together is *Before and After: The Incredible Real-Life Stories of Orphans Who Survived the Tennessee Children's Home Society*, by Judy Christie and Lisa Wingate. The date for this meeting has not been decided yet.

Merry Christmas!



Offering Envelopes

Your tithes and offering envelopes for 2021 have arrived. If you use the consecutively dated, offering envelopes for your giving, there is a box on the table in the entrance foyer with your name on it. Please pick up your box before the end of this year. If you are not able to pick it up, we will mail it to you.



Some of you will notice that your number for next year has changed. Please continue to use this year's envelopes for the remainder of 2020.

These envelopes are handy because they are pre-dated, have your number on each one, and you can write the dollar amount beside the fund where it applies. If you have not used the boxed envelopes in the past, but wish to, please ask in the office for offering envelopes for 2021.

Thank you for the generous way you have financially supported the ministries of your church. We look forward to what God has planned for us in 2021.

Youth Group in December

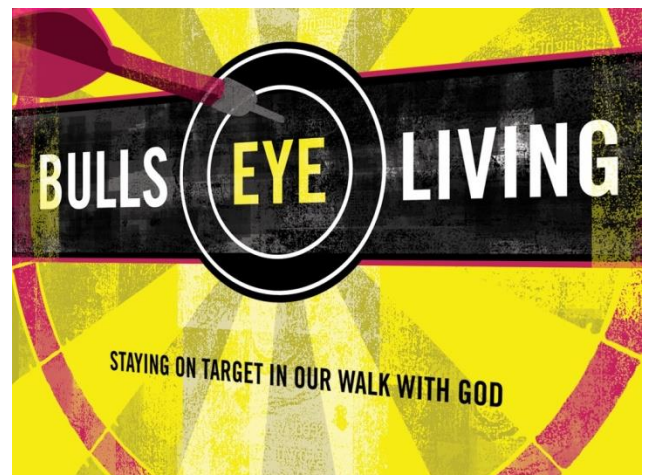
Every Sunday, 6:00-7:15 pm

Youth group (for all students 6th-12th grade) is back in action! Join us each week for fellowship, games, and digging into God's word. All done with appropriate masking and distancing, of course.

Here's what we're studying right now:

Bulls Eye Living: Staying On Target In Our Walk With God

There are many things that surround your life — friends, school, family, church, sports, band, and maybe a lot of other things. Think about a bullseye, the target an archer uses. There are different circles, but an archer's goal is to hit the bullseye right in the middle. If all of the different things that make up our lives are the circles on the target, the bullseye for our life should be God. Through this series, we'll be talking about what does it mean to have bullseye living. What does it mean to live for God?



Through this series, we'll be looking at :

What On Earth Am I Here For?

The World's Values vs. God's Values

Defining My Life's Purpose

Living Out My Life's Purpose

Join us @ Youth Group, Sundays, 6:00 PM.

Northminster Online Worship and Giving

As we continue to adjust to what is hopefully a short-term “new normal” of social distancing and quarantine, Northminster is working hard to take advantage of various online resources to help us stay connected during this season. Right now, our efforts are focusing on helping you join us for worship on Sunday mornings through live-streaming the service, and providing ways for you to make your donations to church online. Here’s a basic tutorial for these services.

Worshipping With Us Through Facebook Live

On a Phone or Computer

On any internet-connected device, go to www.npcmh.com/live to find our worship service. You *do not* need a Facebook account to access this. If you don’t see the Live feed, refresh your browser to reload the page. We expect to start the live stream about 5 minutes before the service begins, but we might be a minute or two late every once in a while.

If You Have a Facebook Account

Make sure you “Like” our page and set it to notify you whenever we go live, and Facebook will send you a notification when the service starts. You can find our page by searching for “npcmh” in the Facebook search bar.

We do encourage you to watch the service on the largest screen you have available, to help give the sense of “being there.” Many modern TVs allow you to “send” a video from your phone or laptop directly to the TV.

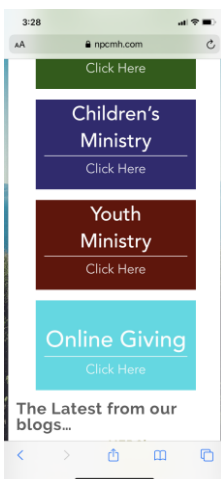
On A “Smart” TV, Roku device or Apple TV

If you’ve purchased a TV in the past 5 years or so, most likely it is a “smart” TV that includes a variety of streaming services and apps. On those TVs, or if you have a Roku or Apple TV, you can download the Facebook Watch app. Again, you shouldn’t need a Facebook account to use this app. Once downloaded, search for “npcmh” to find our page and our videos.

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. Simply go to our homepage, www.npcmh.com, and scroll down until you see the blue “Online Giving” button (pictured on the left). Tapping or 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).

If you have a smartphone with a QR scanner (built into the camera on most newer phones), you can simply scan this barcode to go directly there!

