



# 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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JULY 2020

Volume 39,

Issue 7



## Masking Our Freedom?

A rather surprisingly enormous debate has erupted over whether the government should or should not mandate the wearing of masks. As Romans 13:1-7 makes clear, we should submit to our governing authorities, and the Commonwealth has instituted a mandatory mask policy. Now, there is some question whether this is an example of government overreach, but I'd like to look at the issue from a different angle. While we are citizens of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, and should therefore abide by its governance, we are first and foremost citizens of the Kingdom of God. How might wearing a mask fit into the values of the Kingdom of God? Conveniently, Paul points us toward an answer in the verses following the passage I just referenced.

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:8-10)*



Some argue that we are obligated to wear a mask, but I think Paul would disagree ("Owe no one anything..."). Rather than obligation, Paul points to the rule of love: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor." Yes, there is a lot of debate about the efficacy of mask wearing, but there is a lot of agreement that it goes a long way toward protecting others from what germs you may have. And there is even more evidence that we become contagious before we exhibit symptoms, meaning I can make others sick before I am aware that I am sick. I might be doing wrong to my neighbor without even knowing it, so to love my neighbor as myself means I should wear a mask. Not because I owe them or am obligated to do so, but as an act of love and service.

A few verses later, Paul makes an equally important point: "As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions," (Rom. 14:1) and then a few verses after that: "Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance

*in the way of a brother.” (Rom. 14:13) We may disagree over whether masks are truly effective or whether the mandate is an example of government overreach, but it does no harm to the individual to wear a mask and is quite likely to do a lot of good in protecting others from what we might not know we have. Be entitled to your opinion, but let us not make our opinions into a stumbling block or hindrance that might keep someone else from growing in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Blessings,  
Rev. David Garrison

## Life Together

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Don Hedrick
- 11 Henry Sechler
- 29 Margie Seal



### JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Gerald & Sharon Bryant, 1976
- 14 Ernie & Barbara Baker, 1973
- 27 Michael & Janel Babcock, 1997



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

### Prayer Requests:

**Jennifer Tucker, Joel & Virginia**

Carnefix's daughter has stage 3 breast cancer. Chemo began the first week of March.

**John Ledden** is dealing with congestive heart failure.

**Ron Reyburn** has received treatment for prostate cancer.

**Mary Wilhelm's son, Stan**, continues treatments for an immune deficiency. He will undergo 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: Dick Collins, Dot Stinnett, Leonard Rowe, Margaret Watts, Dot Rucker, and Betty Reed.**



### **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2020**

	May	Y-T-D
Income	11,286	56,755
Expenses	<u>10,469</u>	<u>51,801</u>
Balance	+817	+4,954

**PC USA DEBT – 50,151**



## With Sympathy

Our sympathy and Christian love are extended to Albert Garrett and the rest of Bobbie Garrett's family and friends upon her Homegoing.



## What In-Person Worship Looks Like At Northminster

As of Sunday, June 28, we have resumed in-person worship at Northminster. We've missed seeing you each and every Sunday and are glad to have you with us. As with most other places, things aren't entirely normal, so here's what to expect when you join us on Sundays:

- **Social Distancing**

- Plan to practice appropriate social distancing.
- Try to limit hand shaking and hugs.
- Every other pew will be closed to help facilitate social distancing.
- Bulletins will be placed on the table outside the sanctuary. Please pick one up on your way in as we will not be handing them out.
- Offering plates will be on a table just inside the sanctuary doors. Please place your offering in the plate on your way in or out of the sanctuary. We will not be passing them during the service.



- **Masks**

- Masks are encouraged, per the request of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- **Communion** (celebrated the first Sunday of each month)

- Instead of passing the elements out, each person will come forward to pick up the elements.
- An elder will dismiss each row at the appropriate time.
- Please come down the center aisle, and return to your seat by way of the outside aisles, maintaining appropriate social distancing with the person(s) in front of you.
- The bread and juice will be served in individual, disposable cups. Please pick up both elements and take them back to your seat. We will partake of them together as is our custom.

- **Sanitation**

- The church will be thoroughly cleaned before and after the service.
- Most doors will be propped open to minimize contact with surfaces.

If you have symptoms similar to those of COVID-19, we encourage you to err on the side of caution and stay home. If you are anxious about returning to public spaces, please feel free to stay home. We will continue to broadcast the livestream on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/npcmh](https://www.facebook.com/npcmh)) for those who are not able to join us in person.

At this time, all other programs and ministries are still postponed. The Session will continue to monitor how things are going and make further decisions at their meeting in August. We appreciate your prayers and support for one another during these highly unusual times, and look forward to seeing you in worship!

[www.facebook.com/npcmh](https://www.facebook.com/npcmh)

Website: [www.npcmh.com](http://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*

