



# 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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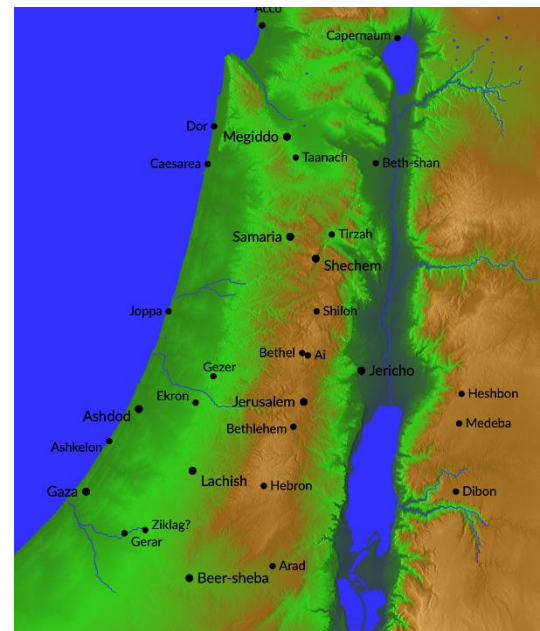


## Pilgrimage

*For the LORD has chosen Zion;  
he has desired it for his dwelling place:  
"This is my resting place forever;  
here I will dwell, for I have desired it."*

— Psalm 132:13–14

A faithful Hebrew was expected to make the trek to the temple in Jerusalem three times a year for the Festivals of Passover (Pesach), Pentecost (Shavuot) and Tabernacles (Succoth). In Islam, one of the pillars is Pilgrimage, in which a faithful Muslim is expected to travel to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. In both cases, these pilgrimages are a necessary part of the sanctification of the Hebrew or Muslim. However, there is no such expectation or requirement in Christianity. Have you ever wondered why?



The short answer, which you can probably guess, is because of Jesus. The longer answer is this:

*For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9:24–26)*

In other words, because of Jesus, we no longer need to make sacrifices and pilgrimages to an earthly, geographically bound and physically located temple. We are the temple of God (1 Peter 2:4-5), and Jesus offered the last and final sacrifice through his death on the cross (see above,

and Hebrews 10:12-14). We don't have to make a pilgrimage because our salvation is through faith in Christ alone, not through any work or effort on our part (Ephesians 2:8-10).

However, that doesn't mean that going on pilgrimage isn't worthwhile for the Christian. Doing so can't and won't affect your salvation, but it could well be of great benefit to your spiritual walk with the Lord. Just like reading a book about a place is different from actually visiting it, when we go and walk in the same places that Jesus and the disciples walked, when we stand where King David stood, when we see what Moses and Joshua saw, it can transform our understanding of Scripture.

To be honest, I don't know how transformative it can be. Many have told me that it's invaluable. But by the time you read this, I'll be doing that very thing. Thanks to your generous provision of study leave funds and time, I'll spend ten days in Israel, visiting many of the places you see in the map above. I look forward to sharing with you what I've seen, experienced and learned. And who knows? Maybe you'll have an opportunity to take a pilgrimage to Israel yourself. Not because it's necessary to save your soul, but to help you grow in fullness, grace and truth. Keep me in your prayers while I'm gone (from June 27-July 6), and I look forward to seeing you when I get back.

Blessings,  
Rev. David Garrison

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## **Three Steps Toward God: Beauty, Goodness, and Truth**

While Pastor David is away, Bob Mills will be leading us in worship. Beginning Sunday, June 26, he will start a three-part sermon series titled "Three Steps Toward God: Beauty, Goodness, and Truth." We'll explore ways in which these three transcendental qualities each draw us closer to God. And we'll discover ways in which we can encourage others to join us on this journey.



### **With Sympathy**

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Margaret Watts who departed this life on Wednesday, June 1, for her eternal Home. While she will be deeply missed on Earth, we rejoice that she is now face-to-face with her Savior in Heaven.

# 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
- Michael & Janel Babcock, July 27, 1997

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

## Prayer Requests:



**Tim Wright** will be having knee surgery. Please pray for a successful surgery and a smooth recovery.

**Debbie Moore** will be having surgery later this summer to address a severe case of carpal tunnel syndrome.

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

Barbara Baker asks for prayers for her niece, **Sheila Layton**, who is recovering from breast cancer surgery. This was to address a recurrence of the cancer after 26 years.

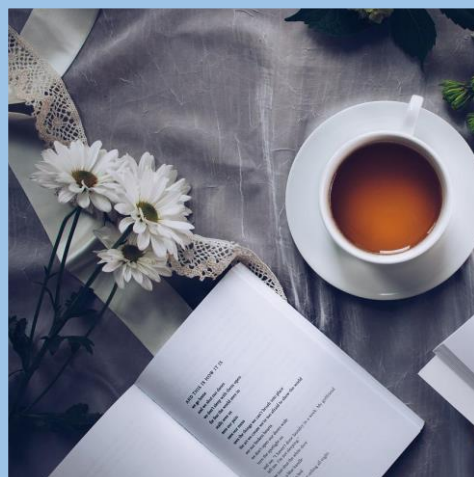
**All medical personnel** who have continued serving those with coronavirus in spite of the possibility of getting infected themselves.

Remember others who cannot be with us in church: **Leonard Rowe, Arlene Horton and Peggy Wright.**

## **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

### GENERAL FUND

	May	Y-T-D
Income	8,611	46,138
Expenses	<u>10,202</u>	<u>60,596</u>
Balance	-1,591	-14,458



## **The Women's Book Club**

The Women's Book Club will meet on **Friday, July 22, at 10 a.m. at Vonnie Rucker's.** They are reading the book *Britt-Marie Was Here: A Novel* by Fredrik Backman. When a fussy, awkward busy body finds herself in a small, backwater town, there's sure to be a story, especially when that woman is asked to coach the town's losing children's soccer team. All women are welcome to join us!

# In the News

## Birthday Box News

**Birthday Box collection for July:** toothbrush, lotion, hand soap and shampoo

This is our last month to collect for these boxes. This population of shut-ins is especially isolated from the community. Receiving this box for many is the only person-to-person interaction they have to look forward to on their birthday. Your participation in this ministry is greatly appreciated.

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**



## Youth Ministry News

Our Sunday night youth ministry will be on summer break until the fall. We'll still be holding special events, so keep watching your bulletin and newsletter for announcements about fun, upcoming activities!

Please pray for the youth trip to Hilton Head Fun In The Sun, in Hilton Head, South Carolina from July 10-15.

# Missions, Outreach, and Evangelism

## Upcoming Dates:

**MOE committee meeting:** Monday, July 11, at 1:00 p.m.

**Gleaning for the Word:** Thursday, July 21. Meet to carpool at 8:30 a.m. at the church.

[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,*

Liz Boothe, Maggie Brockman

Sharon Bryant, John Lange, Judy Reyburn

Bob Mills, *Director of Music*

Liz Boothe, *Organist*

Sharon Bryant, *Sunday school  
Superintendent*

## ***The Lesson of the Thorns*** by Christy S.

*A man with leprosy knelt before Him and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man, "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" Immediately, he was cured of his leprosy. ~ Matthew 8:2-3*



But what happens when Jesus is not willing? What happens when we pray and the cancer remains? What happens when we beg and the bombs still fall? Although my husband accuses me of being an optimist, I'm finding it harder and harder to be one these days. The world is a mess and many of our lives are a mess, whether they're touched by COVID, the war in Ukraine, cancer, depression, or a tragic accident. So what do we do when we ask God for relief and we only get silence?

Let me be honest—I have no answer. In fact, as I began typing this devotional I thought, "Where am I going with this? I need the answer myself!" God is such a patient teacher, isn't He? As I was thinking that, God reminded me of the Apostle Paul who also received a "no" from Him. In II Corinthians 12:7-10, we read that Paul had some sort of problem he mysteriously calls "a thorn in the flesh." Paul asks three times for God to remove it, and Jesus tells Paul that He won't take it away because, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9). The thorn would remain because it was vital in teaching the lessons that only a thorn can teach.

I think, too, of Jesus who begged on His knees in Gethsemane for God the Father to take away the need for the cross. How sad that Jesus had to die, but how tragic for us if God had agreed to remove the cross. Without Jesus' atoning death, we would be people without hope, destined only for an eternity of darkness. And I noticed something amazing, on the cross, Jesus wore the crown of thorns for us.

Some prayers cannot be answered with a "yes" because to do so would keep God from working out a greater good, one we won't see in its fullness until Heaven. This gives me hope. I don't want suffering for myself or those I love, but I'm encouraged that our loving, all-knowing God doesn't give us thorns without a reason. Maybe, like Paul, He wants to teach us through our suffering. Maybe, like Jesus, He wants to use our lives to bless others. I suspect that He's using the thorns to do both. Today, let's try to surrender our thorns to Jesus and ask Him to use them for a purpose and healing beyond anything we can ever imagine so that we can say with the Apostle Paul, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Cor. 12:10).