



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEIGHTS

NORTHMINSTER EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

SEPTEMBER 2023

Volume 41, Issue 9



PASTOR'S CORNER

Restructure, Recast, Release

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

— Is. 43:19



If you weren't able to join us for the Rally Day & Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, August 27, I wanted to share with you what God has been doing in and through the Session over the past several months. At the Annual Meeting in February, we looked at the challenges we are facing as a church and anticipated some of what we thought God might be leading us toward in the months to come. That work is ongoing, but the picture is beginning to come into better focus. While there is concern about the future of Northminster, God is making a way for us to follow as He continues to use Northminster to "experience and share the love of God in order to transform our homes, our community, and our world." As we said in February, that work involves Restructuring, Recasting, and Releasing.

Restructuring

As a church, we are facing a very pragmatic problem: As a congregation whose worship attendance currently averages in the low- to mid-30s, we are not able to find enough people willing and qualified to serve as Ruling Elders on the Session. This has led the Session to ask, just what is an Elder *supposed* to be and do? Does the way our Elders currently function match what Scripture says and what the EPC Book of Order describes? With the help of the leadership of the New River Presbytery, we have worked hard to answer those questions. We've learned that the primary work of an elder is that of "under-shepherd" (1 Peter 5:1-5), but our elders have more often functioned as committee chairs. The duties and responsibilities of managing committees prevents our elders from being shepherds (see Acts 6:1-6 for how the early church addressed this same problem) — and that has only been compounded as we've combined committees due to the lack of willing and qualified elder candidates over the years.

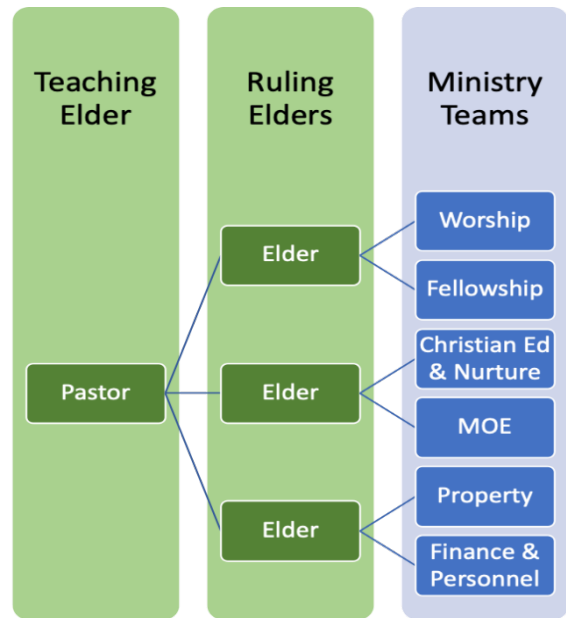
In order to address these issues, we are going to reduce the number of elders seated on Session to three. This means that the elders will no longer be able to serve as chairs of the various committees, which will free them to serve as shepherds. While we have extensive examples and descriptions of what this might look like, there's a lot of it we're going to figure out as we go along. But the only way this works is if we recast the work of the various committees.

Recasting

Our “committees” will be recasted as “ministry teams.” While initially this might sound like a new name for the same thing, it actually represents a culture shift. A committee is a group of people who are responsible for taking action on a particular matter; it “does the work” on behalf of the organization. A ministry team, however, is committed to take action on the vision entrusted to it through the experience of Christian Fellowship, and the discipleship of its members. Ministry teams are exceptionally flexible, dynamic means of aligning people for effective ministry, while providing ongoing encouragement to each person. A ministry team invites the congregation to join and participate in the work of the Kingdom of God. Instead of having “chairs,” we will have team leaders, which do not have to be (and will not be able to be) the seated elders on Session. The elders will exist to resource and support (shepherd) the ministry teams. The ministry teams will help equip and release the church for mission and ministry.

Releasing

In the Great Commission, Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:18-20) He has released his disciples to do the work of the Kingdom of God. It is a work every believer is called and released to do, and it doesn’t require a committee approving it beforehand. We want to be a church that is equipping, releasing and sending disciples into our homes, community and world in order to transform them through experiencing and sharing God’s love. We believe that the Holy Spirit is already at work in and around us, and is inviting us to join Him in that work today. For Northminster to continue to impact our community for the Kingdom of God, we need to embrace our calling as disciples of Jesus to “go.”



I imagine you’re feeling something similar to what I’m feeling right now: a little bit of excitement, and a little bit of anxiety as well. This is a pretty big shift in how we understand ourselves as a church as well as how to go about the work of the church. I imagine it’s not too different from what the early explorers felt when they set out from the “old world” to discover the “new.” They knew where they were headed, had a pretty good idea of what they were looking for, but also knew they’d be figuring out most of it as they went along. God has given us a strong vision for the future of Northminster, and we have a pretty good idea of what it’s going to look like, but we also know we’re going to be figuring out much of it as we go along. As we head into both the known and unknown of our future, we can step out boldly, trusting fully in the very last words Jesus spoke in the book of Matthew:

“Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” — Matt. 28:18-20

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Life Together

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

- 10 Dot Stinnett
- 11 Ian Moore I
- 16 Ray Vandall
- 19 Sharon Bryant
- 23 Peggy Wright
- 27 Tim Wright



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Anne & Vance Wilkins, 2007
- 5 Janet & Ray Vandall, 1956
- 10 George & Mickie Brine, 1977
- 10 George & Linda Sievewright III, 1977
- 13 Kristin & David Kidd, 2014
- 18 David & Karey Garrison, 1999
- 21 Beverly & George O'Brien, 1974

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.

Janet Garrison thanks you for the prayers as she recovered from knee replacement surgery. She greatly appreciated the card she received from the congregation.

Jimmy Wright continues to recover from the surgery to relieve pressure and improve mobility. Pray he continues to improve.

Dolores Wright continues healing at home from her broken leg.

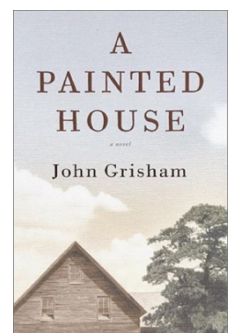
Vera Campbell continues recovering from her broken leg. She is continuing her recovery from home.

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

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT		
<u>2023 GENERAL FUND</u>		
	July	Y-T-D
Income	10,789	70,316
Expenses	<u>10,044</u>	<u>74,550</u>
Balance	745	-4,234

The Women's Book Club

Join us in September for the Women's Book Club. We will be reading *A Painted House* by John Grisham. A beautiful woman, a migrant boy, a fatherless child, and a house that is mysteriously being painted a gleaming white... But how do they all fit together in a Southern town in 1952? Read with us to find out! Date and location will be announced later.



Pancake Breakfast

*Kicking the Time Change off Right!
on Sunday, August 27*



On Sunday, August 27, bright and early at 9:00 a.m., we met for a delicious pancake breakfast courtesy of the Hospitality Ministry Team. With pancakes, sausage patties, a variety of fruits, and even whipped cream, the breakfast was delicious! When everyone was full, Pastor David spent time explaining the changes that will be coming this fall as committees become “Ministry Teams” and the governing elders are restructured to provide more opportunity for ministry and less emphasis on committees doing the work of the Church. What a wonderful morning of fellowship, food, and looking forward to what God is doing at Northminster!



Our compliments to the chef(s)!

The food was delicious!





Uplifting fellowship and fabulous food. Is there a better way to start off this new season?

Mission Focus for September: Neighbors

Helping Neighbors

Neighbors Helping Neighbors mission statement:

—Provide hot nutritious meals to the hungry of Amherst County

- Educate citizens of Amherst County on needs of the hungry
- Advocate for citizens in need.

The vision:

- Approximately 14% of all ages and 20% of children of Amherst County residents live in poverty.
WE WANT TO CHANGE THIS!
- Promote self-sufficiency and improve quality of life for those in need
- Understand the challenges of poverty.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors in Amherst County was established in the fall of 2015. Beginning in May 2018, hot meals were served until the COVID shutdown. NHN has a selective food warehouse that provides “guests” with the opportunity to shop for their groceries; it’s open the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Saturdays from 8:00-10:30 am. Funded through donations from businesses, churches, organizations, and individuals, mostly from our area, the existence of NHN is *truly* Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Food donations are accepted, and monetary contributions allow for bulk purchases of foods and to cover operational expenses. We also collect plastic grocery bags and empty egg cartons for 12 or 18 eggs. A collection receptacle is located near the coat-hanging area of the narthex. Through the month of September, you can make a donation to NHN by noting it in the memo line of your check given to Northminster or by noting it in the menu if you give to Northminster online. Thank you for giving to this important community program.

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, Anne Wilkins,
Mike Henderson
Ron Reyburn (Clerk of Session)

STAFF

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



Helping Daystar Junior School in Uganda Add a New School Building
A donor has offered to match up to \$100,000 of donations
made through Northminster by the end of 2023

What Difference Can We Make

As a small church, we often wonder what kind of a difference we can actually make. In a community and world with so much need, how can we, with our limited resources, make a meaningful impact?

The Miracle of Multiplication

In Mark 6, a large crowd follows Jesus and his disciples to a desolate place. Having compassion on them, Jesus begins to teach them. As the day moves to a close, the disciples encourage Jesus to send the people home, as there was nowhere to eat nearby. Instead, Jesus tells the disciples to give the people something to eat. How could they possibly do this? They are too few, and the crowd far too great. Jesus asks them to see how much food was brought with the crowd. All they are able to gather are five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus takes this meager offering, blesses it, and begins to break it apart and distribute it to the crowd. When all is said and done, everyone is full, with twelve baskets of leftovers! Mark says that the crowd consisted of 5,000 men, which easily puts the total number over 10,000 people. It's an incredible miracle that demonstrates we follow a God of ridiculous abundance and provision. He takes the little we have to offer and works miracles.

We have often seen God do this through our support of Daystar Junior School in the Makindye division of Kampala, Uganda. What is little to us becomes abundance for them. Daystar Junior School opened in 2015 with 197 students. Our relationship with Jude began when he visited our church in the fall of 2017. When Jude visited us in 2017, they had 395. This year, 2023, Daystar has 923 registered students — all squeezed into a mere 15 classes. To say the school is operating at capacity is an understatement. They are in desperate need of new facilities.

The Lord has given Jude a vision of a new building, one that can be built in levels, one at a time as funds become available. To build the first floor, the school needs \$150,000 in US dollars. The second floor would be an additional \$130,000. Such a building would cost many times that in the United States.

Turning Bread into Buildings

We are a small church, but we believe strongly in the work Daystar and Jude are doing in their community. To that end, we are seeking to raise \$100,000 for Daystar by December 31, 2023. An anonymous donor has generously offered to match any funds donated through Northminster for Daystar, up to that \$100,000 by the end of the year. If we reach our goal, Daystar will have enough for the first floor of the new education building and most of what is needed for the second.

If the Lord moves you to contribute to this project, you can do so by clicking the online giving button at the link below or by sending your donation to:

Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church
106 Clearview Road
Madison Heights, VA 24572

Please designate your giving to "Daystar." 100% of the funds received will be passed along to the school.

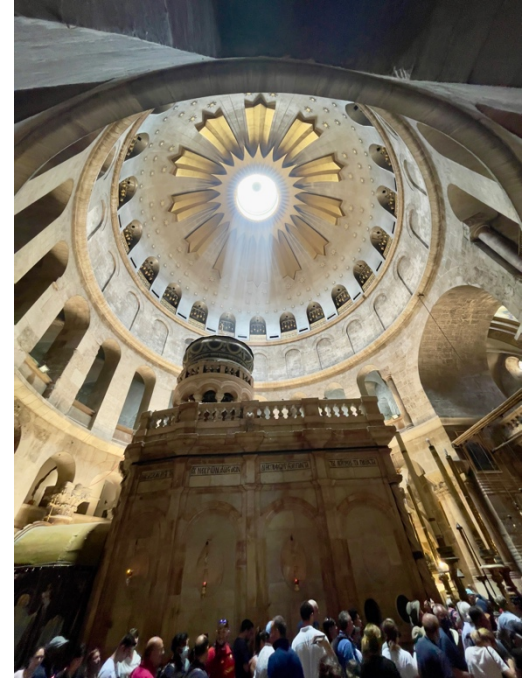
Go to this link (<http://www.npcmh.com/bread-into-buildings-fundraising-campaign/>) to learn more, and please share that link with others.

Holy Land Pilgrimage with Pastor David June 21-30, 2024

What stands 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.

You are invited 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 in ours as well, even as we wait eagerly for the new heavens and new earth to come down with Christ when He returns.

For more information, contact Pastor David.



First-
Class
Postage
Here

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