



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HEIGHTS

NORTHMINSTER EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

MARCH 2024

Volume 42, Issue 3



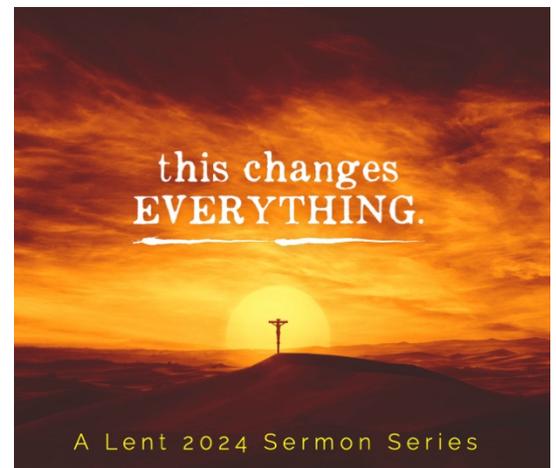
This Changes Everything

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. — 1 Corinthians 15:16-17

There are a lot of doctrines that are crucial to our Christian faith. In the EPC, we have a list of them known as "[The Essentials of Our Faith](#)." Those essentials include what we believe about the Trinity — God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), God the Holy Spirit; the problem of our sin and our salvation in Christ; the church; the return of Christ; and the purpose and mission of every Christian. All of those are important doctrines and in many respects define the boundaries of orthodox Christianity. It's not so much that believing these things make you a Presbyterian, but that Christians throughout the centuries have held these doctrines as essential. But in the paragraph about Jesus Christ is a statement that is, in many respects, more important than any other:

"[Jesus Christ] died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator."

That's it. That's the entire house of cards. Everything we believe as Christians rises and falls on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in the passage quoted above, if Christ was not raised from the dead, everything else we believe is meaningless. Conversely, in order to understand why and how Christ was raised from the dead, it's necessary to believe most everything included in the Essentials of Our Faith. As Thomas Oden writes, No aspect of Jesus' ministry was more minutely recorded than his resurrection. Due to the pivotal importance of his resurrection, the evidence for it appears to have been assiduously collected, transmitted, and embedded in the essential proclamation of salvation attested by the earliest Christian communities. The Gospel narratives seem to be saying to us that if we cannot credit the last validating episode of his life, we are not likely to grasp anything else said about him. ([The Word of Life](#), pg 495)



The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ changes everything. It is the confirmation that everything the Old Testament said about Jesus is true; that everything Jesus said about himself is true. It is the means of our sanctification, the way our sins are atoned for, the reason we are freed from the shackles of our sins. It is the promise of our redeemed and restored souls, the hope of our eternal salvation, the guarantee of our future life with Christ. It is the way God chose to restore all of broken creation to what He intended from the very beginning. And it is completely unprecedented in human history, so much so that it is “a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23).

We’ve heard the “old, old story” so many times that we can forget how radical, revolutionary and profound it really is. That’s why we have the season of Lent in the church calendar. The early church fathers recognized how important it is for believers to spend a significant period of time reflecting on what Jesus accomplished on Easter Sunday. During this season, I invite you to make a habit of reading 1 Corinthians 15 as part of your daily Scripture reading and prayer time. Spend time meditating on and contemplating the wonder of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Allow the depths of the love of God made manifest through His Son Jesus Christ settle deeply in your heart, and share that message of hope and life with those around you. That’s what we have to offer: because He lives, so we live. That changes everything.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS – March 2024

Money. Sex. Pride. Drugs. Glory. The lure of temptation is strong, and all it takes is one bite to get hooked - sometimes for life. Temptation is everywhere! Even if you’re not experiencing temptation at this moment, it will be knocking on your door in no time. Through this series, we’re going to get a big-picture perspective on how God wants to help us deal with temptation. We’ll explore some very practical steps we can take to prepare us to deal with tomorrow’s temptations and protect us for years to come. And if you’ve already fallen for temptation? What happens then? We’ll talk about that, too.

Temptation is never easy to deal with, and it’s always more insidious than we expect. This is a don’t-miss series. Be sure and be there.

Youth Group meets Sundays at 6:30pm at Northminster.

March 3 – Hooked: Swim in Schools

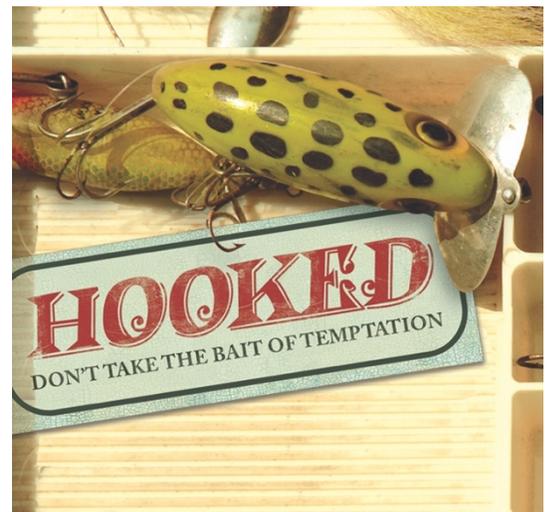
March 10 – Hooked: Get Rid of the Hook

March 17 – Hooked: Swim Free

March 24 – TBD

March 31 – **No Youth Group** (Easter Sunday & Spring Break)

April 7 – **No Youth Group** (Spring Break)



Life Together

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

- 7 Ron Reyburn
- 8 Beverly O'Brien
- 24 Ernie Baker
- 26 Maggie Brockman
- 28 David Garrison
- 31 Bryce Brine
- 31 Wyatt Sievwright



PRAYER REQUESTS

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

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 what they need.

Jimmy Wright asks for prayer as he has experienced a setback with his insulin treatments and fluid buildup in his eye.

Garrett Mann is home from college on medical leave. Please continue to pray for the doctors and nurses treating him as they seek to discern what is causing his ailments.

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

**All active servicemen and women.
Law enforcement personnel, first responders.**

**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT
2024 GENERAL FUND**

	January	Year To Date
Income	\$10,785	\$10,785
Expenses	\$9,856	\$9,856
Balance	\$929	\$929

Don & Joan Ricketts Body Life Fund

Following the lead of Pastor Ray Steadman in his book, *Body Life*, Northminster seeks to be the body of Christ. One way of doing this is by reaching out not only to people in our community, but also assisting members of our own congregation who find themselves in a financial crisis.

When a family in the church has special needs that they are unable to meet, perhaps due to losing a job, or some sort of crisis, money from the Body Life Fund can be requested to help. While money does not usually solve people's problems, it can be a source of great encouragement to a family that is struggling through a crisis. Although the church cannot fully support a family that is out of work, any financial help is usually appreciated greatly, and tells them that the church truly cares.

Northminster's "Body Life Fund" was established in 2002 and named in honor of Don & Joan Ricketts.

Funding for the Body Life Fund occurs through contributions made directly to Body Life, not from the general income. Over the past several years, we been blessed to be able to provide special assistance to many in our congregation. As a result, the balance in the fund right now is very low. We invite you to consider prayerfully making a special donation, above and beyond your regular giving, to help replenish this fund so that we might be able to bless others in our church family should the need arise.





Minute 4 Missions: Gleaning For The World

Gleaning for the World was begun in 1998 with a collection of donated supplies in a basement and the vision to help the poor throughout central Virginia. Quickly this small-town ministry became a globally recognized organization. Within the first year, their work expanded from local missions to serve nationally and internationally. The GFTW mission statement is "To share the love of God at home and around the world through the efficient delivery of high quality, life-saving supplies to victims of poverty and devastation by connecting corporate surplus to critical needs."

GFTW acquires critically needed humanitarian aid supplies through corporate and non-profit partners. These supplies are sorted, packed, and inventoried by volunteers (such as we at Northminster) so that financial donations can be used to help those in need. These supplies are then distributed worldwide through established networks of mission-minded partners.

The four primary areas of GFTW focus are disaster relief, local aid, national aid, and international aid. At home in central VA, Gleaning partners with nearly 50 local charities to distribute perishable and nonperishable foods, bottled water, blankets, and personal care items to those in need. Gleaning has provided humanitarian aid to areas facing devastation and destruction due to natural and other disasters in over 36 states. Distribution is also made to people overseas who are facing unimaginable circumstances. One of the fastest growing projects, the WINGS program, is the sewing and assembling of sustainable feminine hygiene kits.

We are asked to volunteer, to donate, and to pray. This is a project well worth our investment.

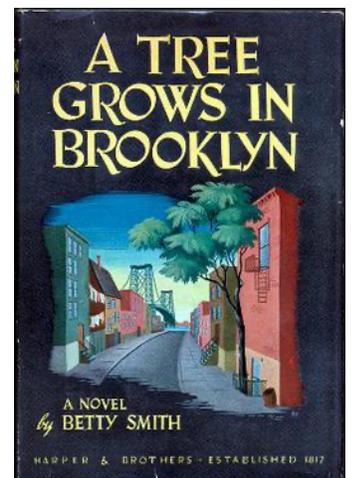
If you would like to make monetary gifts you may make checks payable to Northminster and designate for this mission.

If you would like to volunteer, we usually meet at church at 8:30 am on the third Wednesday of each month.

The Women's Book Club March 21 at 10:00 AM

The Book Club will meet on Thursday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m. at Mary Wilhelm's home. The book we are reading for March is [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#) by Betty Smith.

A moving coming-of-age story set in the 1900s, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn follows the lives of 11-year-old Francie Nolan, her younger brother Neely, and their parents, Irish immigrants who have settled in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Johnny Nolan is as loving and fanciful as they come, but he is also often drunk and out of work, unable to find his place in the land of opportunity. His wife Katie scrubs floors to put food on the table and clothes on her children's backs, instilling in them the values of being practical and planning ahead. When Johnny dies, leaving Katie pregnant, Francie, smart, pensive and hoping for something better, cannot believe that life can carry on as before. But with her own determination, and that of her mother behind her, Francie is able to move toward the future of her dreams, completing her education and heading off to college, always carrying the beloved Brooklyn of her childhood in her heart.





2024 Schedule

Date	Host Church	Preacher	Topic/Scripture
Feb 14	Amelon UMC	Derik Hamby (RMBC)	Mary Gives Her Perfume Matthew 26:6-13
Feb 21	Randolph Memorial	Dave Edinger (AUMC)	Simon Gives His Strength Mark 15:21
Feb 28	Northminster Pres.	Josh Beeler (MHBC)	A Family Gives Their Home Luke 22:7-13
Mar 6	Rose Chapel BC	George Harris (MHCC)	Joseph Gives His Tomb John 19:38-42
Mar 13	MH Christian Church	Rose Chapel BC	A Widow Gives Her Mites Luke 21:1-4
Mar 20	MH Baptist Church	David Garrison (NPC)	The Thief Gives Nothing Luke 23:32-43

Notes

- A meal will follow the **March 20 service** at Madison Heights Baptist Church--all churches will be contacted as to what they can provide for the meal.
- On all other weeks, participants are encouraged to go out to lunch with one another!
- All services will begin at 12pm each Wednesday and will last approximately 30 minutes.
- An offering will be collected weekly for the **Helping Hands community ministry**.
- *In the case of snow, the host church for the week will decide if the service will continue.*

From New Year's Resolutions to Lenten Activities: 40 Items in 40 Days

As I write this newsletter article, it is late January. Often at this time, many of us who made New Year's resolutions a month ago now begin to assess how well (or poorly) the new changes we've made are going. One of my favorite resolutions (I make it every year!) is to declutter my home.

It was almost 30 years ago when my husband and I first married and combined two households of possessions into one home. All this stuff, along with new furniture, electronics, clothing, cat toys, and other belongings acquired over the years have really piled up. (The garage has **never** had room for a car!)

I've made progress with my New Year's decluttering resolution this January and like the results! When I mentioned this to my sister, she told me about a Lenten activity she recently read about. Here's how it works:

40 Items in 40 Days

Each day from Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14) until Easter (March 31), gather one item from your home to donate. This can be clothing, books, furniture, household items, or anything in good condition which you no longer need and that others can benefit from. Collect the items in a bag (or bags), and when Easter comes, donate them to a worthwhile charity or to someone in need.

This idea intrigued me, so I did internet research for more information and found tons of articles. There are many variations on this decluttering activity. For example, one involved filling up one trash bag each day during Lent with items to toss (**40 Bags in 40 Days**). That's just too ambitious for me!

One of the most useful articles I found, published by Guideposts, is entitled *Decluttering as Part of Your Lenten Spiritual Practice*. It can be found at: <https://guideposts.org/prayer/decluttering-as-part-of-your-lenten-spiritual-practice>.

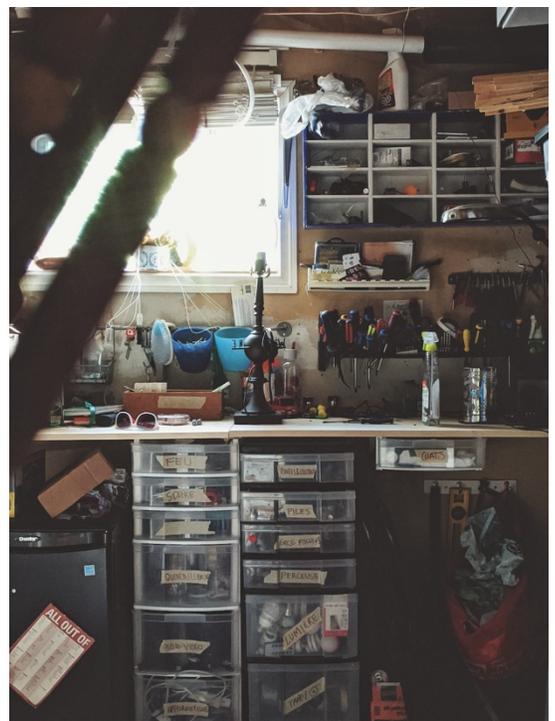
Here is an excerpt from the article:

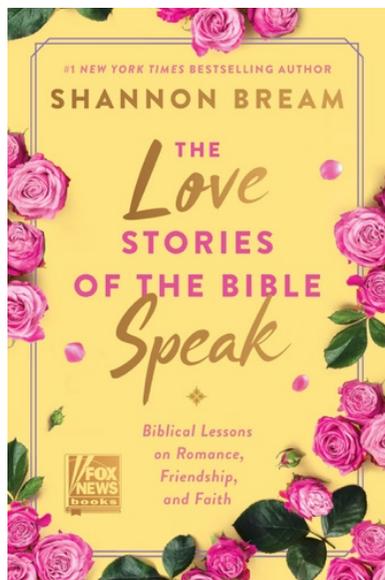
(Lent)... can also be a time to do a spiritual reset by decluttering and re-focusing on what really matters.

The purpose of Lent is to give up the things keeping you back from God. Decluttering can be a way to release physical and spiritual clutter and focus on developing your relationship with God.

I've started collecting articles on Lent and decluttering and would be happy to share them with anyone who is interested. Happy Decluttering!

Liz Boothe





Women’s Bible Study Monday, March 4 at 7 PM!

The Women's Bible Study will meet on Monday, March 4th at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Judy Reyburn will be our facilitator and hostess this month. We are using the book, The Love Stories of the Bible Speak by Shannon Bream. We will also be using the workbook that goes with the book. You can get a copy of the book online, Mardel, Barnes and Noble or wherever books are sold.

We will be studying Esther and Xerxes – Marriage to a Monarch. Ladies, read your book and complete your workbook! Bring a friend. As always, if you don't get your homework done, come anyway!! Looking forward to seeing everyone on the 4th!

As always, feel free to bring friends or neighbors with you to this Bible study group.

Our meetings for the year are as follows:

March 4 - Esther and Xerxes - Marriage to a Monarch - Judy Reyburn

April 8 - Ruth and Boaz - Second Chances - Barbara Baker

May 6 - David and Abigail - The Rebel and the Peacemaker - June Hedrick

Please join us as we study the Bible and learn to apply its teachings to our life!

HOLY WEEK

Let’s gather together during this special week as we remember Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for our salvation and then celebrate His victory over death on Easter morning.

Palm Sunday, March 25 – 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Good Friday, March 29 – 7:30 p.m. Service

Easter Sunday, March 31 – 7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service
10:30 a.m. Worship Service



Searching for Smart Cookies!

Are you a smart cookie who likes to bake delicious treats? Or a smart cookie who prefers to do a grocery run?

We are in need of folks to sign up to provide refreshments for our after-worship fellowship times. These generally happen the third Sunday of each month, unless the church calendar or holidays necessitate moving to a different date.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Thanks, Smart Cookies!



Easter Lilies for the Sanctuary



The Lenten Season, Holy Week, Palm Sunday, and Easter are just a few short weeks away. Northminster members and friends, we will again provide Easter lilies in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. These lilies will decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31, and then be available to take home.

To participate, please sign your name on the church bulletin board list and follow the instructions for payment. Lilies are \$10 each, and the deadline is Sunday, March 24. Please contact Liz Boothe if you have any questions.

