

PASTOR'S CORNER – THE UNEXPECTED

*Blessed is the man...
whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.*

— Psalm 1:1-4

This is Fred the Tree. Fred is growing in the most unexpected and unlikely of places — right in the middle of the historic Old Seven Mile Bridge in Key West. Against all odds (and all the odds are against it), Fred not only sprouted but has thrived in a most inhospitable location. Fred provides a beautiful example of how, when we trust in the Lord, our faith can grow and flourish in the most unexpected places and ways.

Trusting in the Lord, and growing ever deeper in that trust, is everything that is meant by “faith,” particularly faith in Jesus Christ. In Galatians 6:5, Paul summarizes everything he believes about the Gospel when he writes, “*For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior:*

faith [trust] expressed in love.” (Gal. 5:6 MESSAGE) But “trusting in God” is a somewhat strange and abstract concept. It’s very easy to say we “*Trust in the LORD with all our heart, and do not lean on our own understanding*” (Prov. 3:5 ESV), but how do we know if we actually are trusting in the Lord as much as we think we are?

As March drew to a close, I came down with an unexpected stomach illness. The next day, we made an unexpected visit to the ER, which resulted in an unexpected hospital stay that included unexpected surgery to address a congenital issue that I learned about, unexpectedly, four years ago. When I fell ill, even when I was admitted to the hospital and learned I was going to have surgery, I never imagined I would end up being out of the pulpit for 4



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



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weeks and facing a recovery process that will end up being a total of 6 weeks or more. Every step of the process, as my circumstances continued to become more concerning and severe than I first thought, could have been fraught with anxiety and worry. I'm not saying I didn't have my moments, but in general (and other than feeling terribly sick), I felt a deep sense of peace and calm through it all. I knew, without a doubt, that everything was going to be fine, no matter what happened.

I have had, and continue to have, seasons of wrestling with the Lord. There have been many times when I have argued with God and struggled to understand the whats and the whys of what He has allowed me to go through, and sometimes things He has purposefully brought my way. I don't like a lot of those things, and in many respects I still wish going through those seasons wasn't necessary. And yet, in each and every case, the Lord has proved himself trustworthy and true. Through it all, even though I still don't understand most of it, I have learned to trust Him a little bit more than I did

before. It is because of those times that when this very unexpected, and frankly quite severe, situation occurred, I found that I wasn't worried or afraid. The Lord had proven himself faithful in the big things and the small in the past, how could I expect anything other this time around?

It is in the unexpected moments and circumstances of life that we both learn to trust Him more and find out how much we already trust in Him. The "soil" that allows our faith to grow and mature is trusting in the Lord and His Word. When we trust in Him and learn to trust Him more each day, our faith is able to grow and even thrive in the midst of the most unexpected or even hostile circumstances. Place your trust in the Lord today, and continue to do so each and every day, so that when the times of trial and struggle, when the unexpected comes along, you will be able to hold fast and stand firm, to face whatever may come with peace and assurance, knowing in your heart of hearts that the Lord will once again be faithful and true.

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Matthew 7:24-25

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

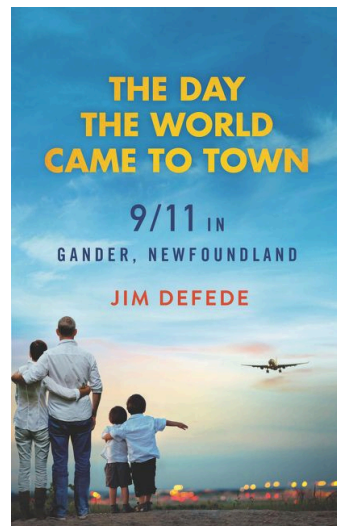
An Update on Construction at Daystar Junior School

Thanks to your donations last year, Daystar Junior School has begun construction on a new classroom building. Here's some pictures of the progress they are making.



Women's Book Club

We have such a great time reading books and getting together to discuss them and enjoying delicious refreshments, too. Please join us on Thursday morning, May 16th at 10:00 a.m. at Anne Wilkins' home as we discuss our May book selection entitled The Day the World Came to Town by Jim Defede.



This is an uplifting and incredible true story about the 38 plane loads of passengers (6,000 people) who had to be diverted to the very tiny town of Gander, Newfoundland after the events of 9/11. It is also very much about their hosts, the citizens of Gander who made every

person feel comfortable and welcome.

And remember, come even if you haven't read or finished the book!!

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible study will meet on Monday, May 6th at 7:00 p.m. at Northminster. Barbara Baker will be our facilitator and hostess this month. We are using the book The Love Stories of the Bible Speak by Shannon Bream. We are also using the workbook that goes with the book. You can get a copy of the book online, at Mardel or at Barnes and Noble.

We will be studying David and Abigail - The Rebel and the Peacemaker. 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 6th!



Online Worship & Giving

Northminster has worked hard to take advantage of various online resources to help us stay connected. Our efforts have primarily 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 YouTube 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 usually start the live stream about 5 minutes before the service begins, but we might be a little bit late every once in a while.

If You Have a YouTube/Google Account

Make sure you subscribe to our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@npcmh) and set it to notify you whenever we go live, and YouTube will send you a notification when the service starts.

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

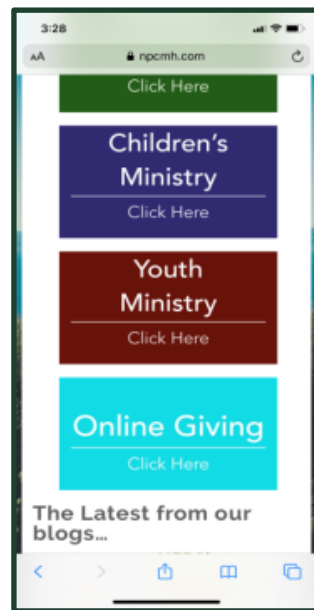
If you've purchased a TV in the past 5 years or so, most likely it is a "smart" TV that includes a variety of streaming services and apps. On those TVs, or if you have a Roku or Apple TV, you can open the YouTube app. You don't need a YouTube or Google account to use these apps, but it can make finding the service easier. If you need to search for it, go to the search tab and enter "npcmh."

Find the Bulletin Online Each Week

To assist your worship, the bulletin will be available on our website at www.npcmh.com/online-order-of-worship. This is formatted to work well on a computer, phone or tablet.

Donate 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).



NORTHMINSTER ON THE 'NET

Website
www.npcmh.com

Calendar, Directory & more
npcmh.churchcenter.com (This is also an app for your phone! Go to your app store and search for "Church Center")

Facebook
www.facebook.com/npcmh

YouTube
www.youtube.com/@npcmh

LIFE TOGETHER

Keeping in touch with one another

MAY BIRTHDAYS:

5 Michael Babcock
10 Jeremy Vandevander
13 Debbie Moore
16 John Lange
19 Jay Vandevander, Jr.
23 Julie Lerner
25 Rudy Burnett
25 Tim Mills



PRAYER REQUESTS

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

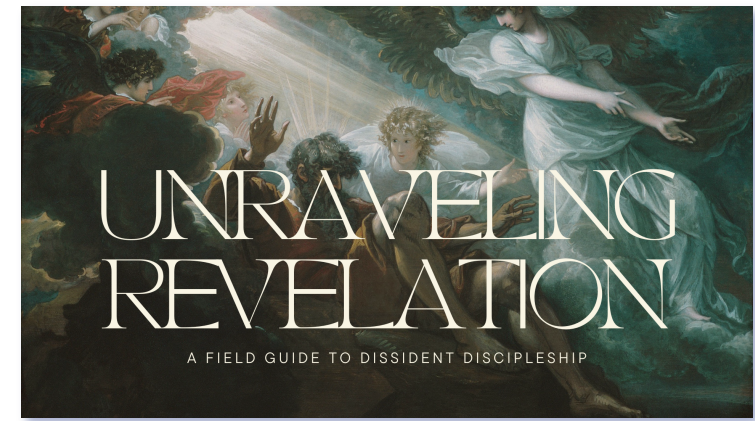
Several members have asked for prayers for needs that they'd prefer not to share publicly. Please lift up these prayers, knowing that God knows for whom you pray and what they need.

David Garrison asks for prayer as he continues healing and recovering from surgery last month.

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.**



*A new Sunday school opportunity,
beginning Sunday, May 12 at 9 AM.*

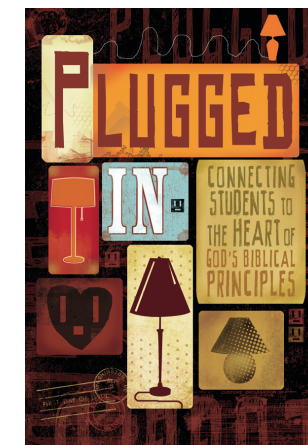
If there's one book of the Bible that people have questions about or don't understand, it's the very last book, the Book of Revelation. In many respects, it is one of the most unique books in the entire Bible, bringing together all sorts of unusual imagery and confusing language. It's become quite popular to read it in such a way as to try to unlock the secrets to the future, but doing so actually robs the book of its true power and import. Revelation isn't so much about the future as it is a field guide to dissident discipleship in the here and now. Join us for Sunday School beginning May 12th as we seek to Unravel Revelation.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2024 GENERAL FUND

	March	Year To Date
Income	\$11,433	\$32,642
Expenses	<u>\$18,116</u>	<u>\$38,729</u>
Balance	\$-6,682	\$-6,088

Youth Ministry Update

*Youth Group Resumes Sunday, May 12.
Graduation Sunday is June 9.*



As Christians, we're designed to be connected to God at all times — to be "plugged in" to the source. More often than not, though, we try and go it alone. In this series, we're going to talk about staying connected to God. We'll look at five biblical principles that, when we live them out, help us stay and even deepen our connection to God. Growing in our faith doesn't happen accidentally, we need to make sure we stay plugged in to the Lord.

Join us Sundays, 6:30pm.

The Delight of Dandelions *by Anne Wilkins*

Looking over the newly greened lawns, up pop those pesky dandelions to ruin the lush monochromatic expanse. Where do they come from and why oh why are they so difficult to obliterate!

Dandelions are found in every state in the USA and can grow from one to 20 inches tall. The ones in my yard are small and grow close to the ground sending up tall seed heads for the wind to blow in every direction.

There is a song that says “Don’t worry, be happy!” and maybe this is advice we should heed when we see those bright beautiful yellow polka dots. Why? As children, many enjoy blowing those seeds and making a wish. As adults, we need better reasons.

Well, just go to “healthline.com/nutrition/dandelion-benefits” to see thirteen health benefits gained from ingesting—eating—this ancient plant. These benefits include nutrition, being an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, promoting healthy digestion and boosting immune health. Plus, unadulterated (not sprayed with weed killer) dandelion plants have a low natural toxicity and are safe for most people. This is especially true when consumed as food! Fill up those salad bowls, add to a smoothie or cook as a side dish. The recommended daily serving is 4 to 20 grams of fresh leaves! (I counted out 20 small leaves to weigh four grams)
These smart little plants grow close to the ground



where lawnmower blades pass over them and they are close to the earth, their source of nourishment. We should be reminded that we should stay close to our nourishment, the Bible—the word of God. Let us not be blown about by the winds of confusion and false teaching nor be cut down by doubt, discouragement, and complacency. Let’s not be led astray by what looks good but be grateful for our many blessings which include free Dandelion nutrients.

May 2024 Mission Focus – Helping Hands

Helping Hands Ministry of Amherst County is our Mission of the Month focus for May 2024. Every fifth Sunday of each month, our undesignated offering collection is donated to this worthy cause. Some of us may wonder what this is and where our money goes.

This ministry is funded by many of the churches in Amherst County and is administered through volunteers at Madison Heights Baptist Church. It is designed to help citizens of Amherst County who need an occasional helping hand with necessities such as food, electric bills, rent and water bills when children or medical needs are present. Donations are always accepted and appreciated.

Also included in the ministry is access to used furniture. Located in the basement, donated furniture is available for

anyone who needs help in setting up or replacing items that have been lost in a disaster.

Items that are accepted and usually available are sofas, chairs, table and chairs, beds, dressers, chest of drawers, rugs and lamps. Appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, washings machines and dryers are also included.

Anyone wishing to donate monetarily may do so through Northminster by putting “Helping Hands” in the memo field of your check. Anyone wishing to donate bulk items or in need of these items may contact Helping Hands Monday through Friday at the church’s office from 9am to noon. Madison Heights Baptist Church is located 329 Main Street and the phone number is (434) 846-5914.



Hunter Lee Brightwell
Amherst County High School & Central Virginia Governor’s School

Hunter will attend Virginia Tech majoring in Fish Conservation, Policy, and Management and minoring in Water Conservation, Policy, and Management.



Cole Joseph Chapman
Amherst County High School

Cole will attend Randolph College after graduation from high school.



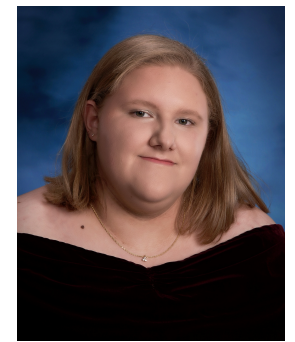
Jackson Markley Moore
E. C. Glass High School

Jackson will attend East Tennessee State University. He will be double majoring in Business and Appalachian Music.



Danielle Joyce Caplinger
Amherst County High School & Central Virginia Community College

Danielle will attend Old Dominion University majoring in Cyber Security.



Brinna Elizabeth Midgley
Amherst County High School

Brinna will attend Liberty University majoring in Fine Arts. Her career aspiration is to be a Video Game Character Creator.



Colin Reed Scruggs
Amherst County High School

Colin will attend Central Virginia Community College majoring in Sports Medicine.

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