

Highlights *From the Heights*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NORTHMINSTER EPC | NOVEMBER 2024 – VOLUME 11

PASTOR'S CORNER — THE FATHER OF DELIGHTS

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. — James 1:17

I had a wonderful time while away on study leave last month. I attended a conference called “Hutchmoot” just outside Nashville. Hutchmoot was started 15 years ago by Andrew and Pete Peterson. Andrew describes it this way: “Hutchmoot is a three-day feast where we gather to celebrate the way the Lord makes himself known through his creation. This includes stories, music, and art of all kinds, but it’s also broader than that. He also makes himself known through Scripture, of course, and through nature, and food, and even each other—through the flawed and glorious humans you’ll be rubbing elbows with all weekend.”

Something I’ve noticed about myself is that when life gets hard and stressful, when anxiety and worry threaten to take over, it often seems as if God has stopped moving and working. Prayers seem to be answered with silence. The “joy of my salvation” seems like a distant memory. The world, and my life, seem to be running on autopilot rather than guided by the hands of a loving God. He no longer seems interested in making Himself known in any fashion, so much so that sometimes during these seasons I find myself wondering if He’s there at all.

One of the sessions I attended was led by Andrew Peterson and called “The Father of Delights.” Riffing off James 1:17 above (“...the Father of {de}lights...”), Andrew emphasized that God is always moving and working in, through, and around us, whether we are aware of it or not. He is constantly working to make Himself known to us and others, and seeking to delight us and fill us with wonder. To delight in God, in His works and His creation,



is to glorify God. C.S. Lewis writes, "The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him." The question isn't whether God is or isn't making himself known and giving us reason to delight in Him, it's whether we're paying attention and looking for the delights God is throwing our way.

Every once in a while, God does something stunning that makes us take notice. Consider the awe we've all experienced the last couple of months with the displays of the Aurora Borealis here in central Virginia. That just doesn't happen here. But it did, and it was wondrous and delightful. You couldn't look at the sky and not delight in the God that made the colors dance across the heavens. But there are countless ways God is making Himself known to us every day. The question is, are we taking the time to look for it? Delight is something that we cultivate. If you are looking to be delighted by God, then you will find delight in God. Cultivating delight requires slowing down, being patient, and paying attention to what is going on around us. Think about all that is happening every time you take a simple breath. Muscles flex, lungs expand and contract, air moves in and out, blood flows, oxygen and carbon dioxide trade places, and much more. Something we do tens of thousands of times a day is a delightful and wonderful act. An act we take for granted with every breath. Delighting in God takes intentionality and needs to be cultivated.

As we cultivate our delight in God, we learn to see all the different ways we are invited to delight in God. Delight teaches us to see delight. Have you ever noticed how many yellow cars there are? Probably not, but now you're going to start seeing yellow cars everywhere. We find that for

which we are looking. As we cultivate an awareness of the myriad delightful ways God is moving and working, we will start seeing even more ways to delight in Him. When you find or discover something delightful, take the time to savor and delight in it, and tell God about your delight. When we express our delights, it delights the Giver of delight. Think about the times you've done something special for your children or your spouse, and they delighted in it. Their delight delights us, and it's the same with our Father in Heaven.

In addition to giving thanks to the Father of Delights, share your delight with someone else. Delight shared is delight enhanced and magnified. So often, it's easy for me to miss all the delightful things God is doing in my life. When you delight in God and share that with me, it helps me to cultivate delight myself and encourages me to look around for all the delightful ways God is at work. In a world that is so filled with anger and rage, stress and worry, fear and anxiety, cultivating delight in God and sharing those delights with others shines as bright as a candle unexpectedly lit in the deep darkness of night.

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Matthew 6:28-30

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

THE ROOF FOR DAYSTAR IS FINISHED!



LIFE TOGETHER

Keeping in touch with one another

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

3 Janet Vandall
9 Christy Sechler
15 Anne Wilkins
15 Colin Scruggs
22 Sandy Stafford
30 Meg Garrison



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

20 Ed & Vera Campbell 1965

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.

Julie Lerner's hand and wrist surgery has been postponed until next year.

Jackie Hodges is home healing from a broken arm.

Beverly & George O'Brien are home healing from a car accident in which Beverly broke her femur.

Jimmy Wright asks for prayers for an upcoming heart catheterization and stint procedure.

Anne Wilkins sister Beatrice Oyler passed away a few weeks ago after battling cancer.

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

All active servicemen and women, law enforcement personnel, first responders.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY MEETS MONDAY, NOV 4



The Women's Bible Study will meet Monday evening, November 4th at Northminster. We will get together at 7:00 p.m. Our hostess and facilitator is Liz Booth. We will be studying "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego". That is always an interesting and powerful study. As always, read your lesson and answer the questions. However, if you don't get it done, come anyway and always feel free to bring a friend. Looking forward to seeing you on Monday, the 4th!

Looking ahead, our December Bible study will be at the home of Debbie Irvine. We will meet on Monday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m. Debbie's address is 104 Fernwood Drive, Madison Heights. I will get back with you on the lesson. We should be reading about Paul, but I would like for us to do something related to the Advent season.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2024 GENERAL FUND

	September	Year To Date
Income	\$10,411	\$93,359
Expenses	<u>\$10,825</u>	<u>\$98,468</u>
Balance	\$-414	\$-5,109

THANKS FOR THE CARE PACKAGE DONATIONS



We had a great time delivering care packages and checking in with our local college students. We wish we could have seen our out of town students in person, but it was wonderful to catch up by text. The students really appreciated the goodies and our church's continued support. Thank you for helping us extend the love and care of our community and Christ to these young adults as they continue growing in grace and truth!



NOVEMBER 2024 MISSION FOCUS: Christmas Food Baskets

MOE Committee requests that everyone contribute to the annual Christmas Food Boxes for area needy families.

If you have names of people/families that should receive one of these boxes, submit names and number in family, address and telephone numbers to Pastor David or the MOE Committee. These must be submitted the first Sunday in November so that they can be reviewed.

Eight or nine churches in the area participate in the collecting, packing, and distribution of food. These foods include soup, canned fruit or vegetables, breakfast items such as pancake mix and bottles of syrup, peanut butter, jelly, (best if these two items are not combined), canned meats, etc. Non-perishable packaged foods that include most of the ingredients are also welcome.

Monetary donations are always needed. It is usual to spend more than \$3,000 buying bulk hams at a discount. Hundreds of pounds of apples are gotten from Fitzgerald Orchard at good price.

There will be a food collection location in the narthex.

Volunteers will also be needed to pack boxes at Amelon U.M. church in mid-December.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES

Operation Christmas Child (OCC) is a global program facilitated through hundreds of thousands of trained volunteers. Local believers in more than 100 countries deliver Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts, present the Gospel, and facilitate the follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

Shoebox gifts are given to children regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or faith. OCC seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way through each shoebox gift. Children do not have to do or say anything to receive the gifts. They work in and through local Christians in each country who understand the context in their area. Simple gifts—packed with love in Jesus' Name—deliver hope and joy to children all around the world, regardless of their faith or religious background. They aim to give each child one shoebox gift in the course of his or her lifetime.

This year our church will again be collecting shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. There are three ways you can help.

1. Sign out a box from the table and fill it with gifts.
2. Bring gifts to church, and we will pack a shoebox for you.
3. Give a monetary donation to help with the cost of sending the boxes or to buy more gifts. It costs \$10 per box this year.

Boxes are due the week of November 18-25. We will be collecting our boxes on Sunday, November 24. What a joy to celebrate Christmas by giving gifts that can change the lives of children throughout the world.



**Send
Good News,
Great Joy**



Scan the QR code or visit samaritanspurse.org/occ to learn more.

Samaritan's Purse
Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse.
Pastor Graham, President | samaritanspurse.org
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NEW COLLECTION DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FOR SAMARITAN'S PURSE ONLINE AT Samaritan'sPurse.org/disclosure

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOMEBUYERS CLUB



In addition to monthly Board meetings, Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church also hosts our Amherst County Habitat for Humanity Homebuyer's Club financial classes. There are 6 2-hour classes over a 12-week period.

Our Basic Qualifications:

Habitat serves those in the 30% to 60% range of median income for Amherst County. Median income is \$73,700 for 2024. Income requirements are based on the number of people living in the household. These figures are updated annually by HUD. Income

includes **all residents** of the household. **All adults must take our financial training.**

Applicants must reside in Amherst County for a minimum of 1 year prior to application and be a first-time homebuyer.

Applicants must have a credit score minimum of 620 and show the ability & responsibility of making mortgage payments. If their credit score is lower, we suggest Credit Karma to monitor and improve scores. Homebuyer's Club is designed to improve credit scores if the applicant is diligent with classwork and homework, generally by over 100 points.

Applicants must have a true need for affordable housing. Our Family Selection Committee members will make a home visit to otherwise qualified applicants. The Homeowner and all able-bodied residents over the age of 18 are responsible for 100 hours of "sweat equity" each for a total of 300 hours.

Applicants must take our financial counseling classes. Applications are distributed only to graduates of our Homebuyer's Club. Classes for 2025 homebuyers ended on October 8th with 19 families completing the class.

Background checks as well as credit reports will be run when the application is otherwise approved. The non-refundable cost of these will be charged to the applicant. If chosen, these fees will be credited towards their \$500 downpayment.

We build 2 to 3 homes per year, as funding and volunteer time allows, so you can see with 19 families prepared for home ownership, the need is great! Thank you, Northminster family for all you do for Amherst County Habitat.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB MEETS MONDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 11 AM

The Northminster Book Club will not meet in November but we will meet together for our Christmas party on Thursday, December 5th at 11:00 a.m. at Depot Grille. Please bring a used book in good condition and wrapped in Christmas paper. We are going to follow an Icelandic Christmas tradition by having a book exchange. Also, please bring a Christmas poem, story or memory that you can share with the group. We will be eating lunch together, as well. Looking forward to a festive time together.





DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

Saturday, December 7 9 a.m. – 12 noon

Christmas is such a special time of year – a time of celebration, family, and the birth of Jesus. We also delight in decorating the house of our Lord. With this in mind, you are invited to join us as we prepare our church to celebrate His birth.

Once again, we will gather together to decorate beautiful trees with Chrismons, set up Advent candles, wreaths, and banners as we enjoy light brunch refreshments, Christmas music playing in the background, and above all, each other's company.

Members and friends of all ages and all decorating skill levels are welcome. If you plan to attend, please sign the sheet in the bulletin board so we can plan for delicious brunch items. See you there!

Please note: some preliminary work will also be done during the week ahead of Saturday, such as bringing down decorations from the attic and assembling trees. Please indicate if you can assist with these tasks. We will arrange times at your convenience for this preliminary work.

See Anne Wilkins for questions about decorating the church.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Remembering or honoring a family member or friend with a poinsettia displayed in the church has been a long-standing tradition in our Northminster congregation. Once again, we are ordering poinsettias to help decorate our sanctuary for the Advent-Christmas season. Northminster members and friends are welcome to donate in memory and in honor of loved ones.

To participate, please sign your name on the church bulletin board and fill out the form provided for payment. Poinsettias are **\$10.00 each** and the deadline is **Sunday, Dec. 8**. Please contact Anne Wilkins if you have questions.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Tuesday, December 24, 7 p.m.

On Christmas Eve, we invite you to join us for a family-friendly candlelight service celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This service of song, carol and Scripture provides a wonderful opportunity to get a sense of how eager the Hebrews were for the coming of the Messiah so long ago and reminds us how eager we are for his return. We look forward to seeing you there!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Sunday, December 22, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual tradition of caroling to our homebound members. We'll meet at the church and carpool together as we enjoy fellowship and make a joyful noise singing our favorite Christmas tunes. This is a great opportunity for folks of all ages to come together as we spread some Christmas cheer!





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First-
Class
Postage
Here