

Highlights

From the Heights

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NORTHMINSTER EPC | APRIL 2025 – VOLUME 4

PASTOR'S CORNER — THE FEAR OF THE LORD

"My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty. — Malachi 1:11

One evening several weeks ago, my daughter came to me with a question. She had just read the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3). When God speaks to Moses out of the burning bush we're told that *"Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."* (Exodus 3:6) My daughter didn't understand why Moses would've been afraid. Since our God is a loving God (Jeremiah 31:3, one who is merciful and gracious (Psalm 86:15), who treats us with tenderness (Luke 1:78) and gentleness (1 Kings 19:12), why would we be afraid of Him?

I think a lot of us approach God in a similar manner. We have heard so much about the love and grace of God that fear has fallen by the wayside. After all, *"God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."* (2 Tim. 1:7) But I think we are misunderstanding how the Bible is using the word "fear" when it comes to our relationship with God. There is "fear" in the sense of terror and fright (which is what most of us think of), but there is also "fear" in the sense of awe and reverence. As the Dictionary of Biblical Imagery explains, "The fear of God is distinct from the terror of him that is also a biblical motif. Encompassing and building on attitudes of awe and reverence, it is the proper and elemental response of a person to God... The very frequency of the references signals that the fear of



God is central to biblical faith, and the relative absence of this ancient way of thinking in our culture should give us pause.”

If we do not have a proper awe and reverence for God, then we lose just how radical and powerful His grace, mercy and love truly are. The God we serve is an all-powerful, all-mighty, glorious, holy, righteous God. He spoke, and stars and planets burst forth (Genesis 1:14). He moves His hand, and waters part (Exodus 14:21-25). He measures galaxies with the width of His hand (Isaiah 40:12). He binds the Pleiades and looses the cords of Orion (Job 38:31). He gives orders to the morning (Job 38:12), and maintains the storehouses of snow and lightning (Job 38:22-30). He is a God who rides thunderstorms to rescue His children (Psalm 18, specifically verses 6-15). When God says *“My name will be great among the nations,”* (Malachi 1:11) He does not do so as a braggart but as the only One who can rightly claim and demand such greatness. When we think of our God, a fearful awe and reverence is an essential component. *“It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (Heb. 10:31)

When we think of God’s goodness, fearing Him should be included: *“I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.”* (Jer. 32:40) The warning to fear God echoes in both the Old and New Testaments. *“Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.* (Jer. 2:19) And Jesus Himself, God incarnate, says, *“But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!”* (Luke 12:5) We focus so much on Jesus

as “gentle, meek and mild” that we forget the disciples quaked in terror of Him after He calmed the storm (Mark 4:35-41). Even at the end of history, when Jesus returns in power and glory and evil is destroyed forever, when everything sad comes untrue and every broken thing is made whole, we are told, *“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”* (Rev. 14:7)

It is because our God is very much a God to be feared (first in awe and reverence, but also with a dose of terror and fright) that the good news of His grace and mercy is so very good indeed. That, for those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, there is no longer need to fear God’s righteous judgment. All of the things the Bible says of God’s gentleness and tenderness, His kindness and His mercy, His steadfast lovingkindness, are all true, and made all the more awe-ful and awe-some because of His might, power and majesty. Grace is all the more amazing when we maintain a healthy and appropriate fear of the Lord. As we continue to draw ever closer to the darkness of Good Friday and the triumph of Easter Sunday, may the fear of the Lord deepen your gratitude and faith this Lenten season.

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Proverbs 1:7

*The fear of the LORD
is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools
despise wisdom and discipline.*

SPRING COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

Easter and final exams are coming up! Let’s share the joy of Jesus’ Resurrection, as well as the joy of tasty treats!

For the first two Sundays in April (4/6 and 4/13), we will be collecting items to fill care packages for our eight NEPC college students. Please drop off non-perishable items on the table in the narthex and we will pack them up and ship them. Ideas:

- Easter themed items
- Little Debbie’s or other wrapped snack cakes
- Candy
- individual bags of chips or microwave popcorn
- Ramen noodles
- granola bars

If you’d rather not bring items, we’d also welcome cash donations to cover the cost of shipping (roughly \$10 per box for the four out of state students). We’ll also have cards available for you to sign. Let’s remember to lift up our students in prayer and continue to encourage them as they advance their education.

Kayleigh Bennett – U. of Lynchburg
Hunter Brightwell – Virginia Tech
Dani Caplinger – Old Dominion U.
Cole Chapman – Randolph College
Peter Garrison – U. of AL in Huntsville
Brinna Midgley – CVCC
Jackson Moore – East Tennessee State
Colin Scruggs – Liberty University



LIFE TOGETHER

Keeping in touch with one another

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

3 Vera Campbell
5 Ed Campbell
6 Liz Boothe
13 Cathy Work
15 Arlene Horton
24 Peter Garrison
24 June Hedrick
24 Linda Lange
30 Anita White



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.

Sue Irvine continues recovering from a stroke and surgery for a brain aneurysm last month.

Beverly O'Brien continues healing at home from open heart surgery last month.

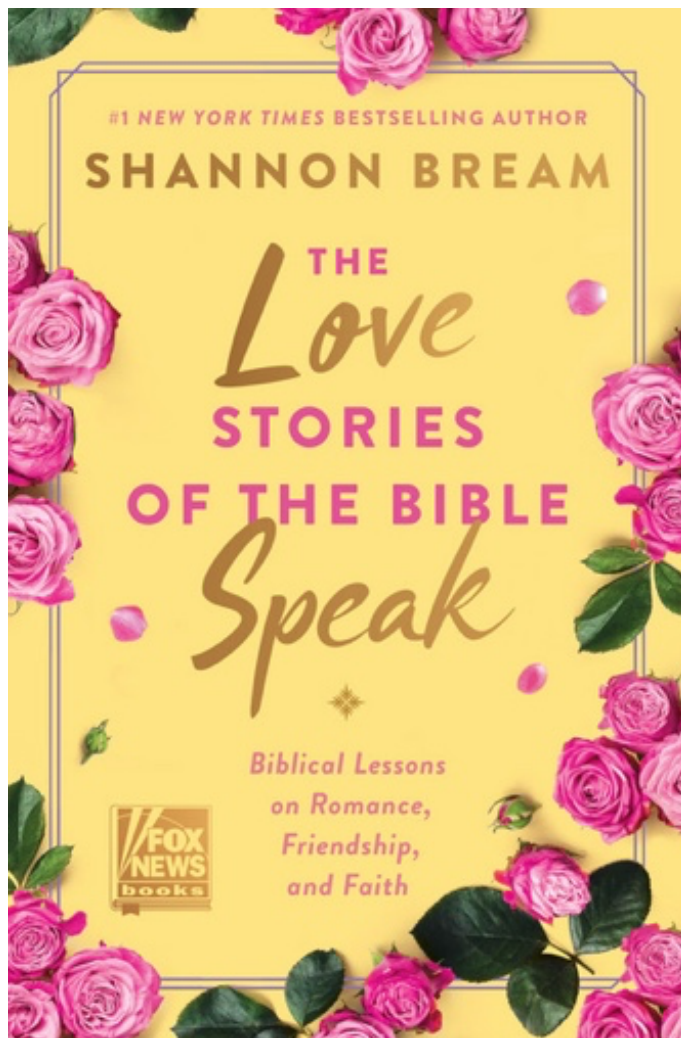
Remember others who cannot be with us in church: **Arlene Horton, Mary Murray, Mary Wilhelm** and **Dolores Wright**.

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

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT FEBRUARY 2025 GENERAL FUND

	February	Year To Date
Income	\$ 9,223	\$18,616
Expenses	\$10,279	\$20,622
Balance	\$ -1,056	\$-2,006

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY MEETS MONDAY, APRIL 7



The Women's Bible Study will meet on Monday, April 7 at the church at 7:00 p.m. We will be studying the chapter titled "Job and His Friends" in The Love Stories of the Bible Speak by Shannon Bream. Please read the chapter and complete the questions in your workbook. Come prepared to share what you got out of the reading and any questions you might have.

Once again we are going to ask you to bring something to share related to our refreshments.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday night. And, as always, bring a friend. Please enter through the library doors so that the Young Life Group can have our front parking lot.

MH UNION

2025 Lenten Services

Date	Host Church	Preacher	Topic/Scripture
Mar 5	Amelon UMC	George Harris (MHCC)	Grounded John 15:1-11
Mar 12	Randolph Memorial	Josh Beeler (MHBC)	Beloved Ephesians 3:14-21
Mar 19	MH Christian Church	Dave Edinger (AUMC)	Imagine Luke 17:20-21
Mar 26	Northminster	Rose Chapel BC	Humbled Matthew 5:1-12
April 2	Rose Chapel BC	David Garrison (NPC)	Wrestle Gen 32:24-28/Rom 7:15-24
April 9	MH Baptist Church	Derik Hamby (RMBC)	Dance! Matthew 21:1-17

Notes

- A meal will follow the **April 9 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.*



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, April 13

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Good Friday, April 18

7:30 p.m. Service

Easter Sunday, April 20

7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service

11:00 a.m. Worship Service



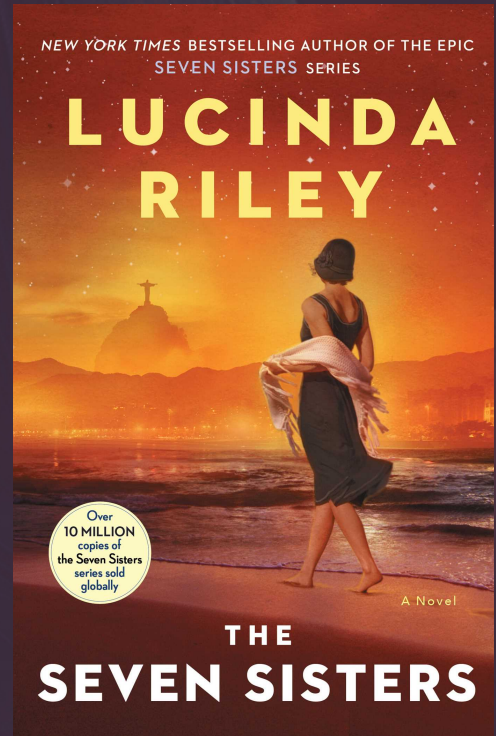
Mary Elizabeth Garrison
Amherst County High School & Central Virginia Governor's School

Meg will attend James Madison University majoring Kinesiology with plans to continue on with a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

**Graduation Sunday
May 18th**

We will be celebrating our graduating senior, Mary Elizabeth Garrison, in worship and afterward at a reception in the church lobby. Please make sure to attend worship that morning and wish Meg well as she continues her education at James Madison University. Meg's church family is also invited to her graduation party on Monday, May 26 from 11 AM - 2 PM at the Garrisons' home.

**WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB
MEETS THURSDAY, April 24,
10 AM @ NEPC**



The Women's Book Club will meet on Thursday, April 24th at 10:00 a.m. Last month's book, *The Seven Sisters*, will be this month's selection, as well. We spent most of the morning talking about our role as women in the church and more specifically our role at Northminster. We talked so much that we never had time to get started on our book. So if you really love the book or if you never finished reading the book, you have another chance!

When Pa Salt dies suddenly, the bereaved sisters (all six of them were adopted) gather together at their childhood home, a spectacular secluded castle on the shores of Lake Geneva. Each of the six sisters is handed a tantalising clue to their heritage and Maia finds herself on a journey across the world to a crumbling mansion in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Read the book to find out what Maia discovers about her past!

Please bring a refreshment to share and join us at the church on Thursday, April 24th! Looking forward to seeing everyone there! And as always, bring a friend!

Looking forward to another lively discussion about our book and many other topics that randomly come up. Feel free to bring a friend!!



Whitten
FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATION SERVICE

presents:

A One Day Educational Seminar Event

The importance of understanding a Last Will and Testament, a Living Will, having a Durable Power of Attorney, appointing an Executor, probating a Will, and having the conversation about end-of-life issues.

Date: Thursday, April 10, 2025

Time: 10:00AM - 12 Noon

Lunch to follow after seminar.

Place: Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church
106 Clearview Road, Madison Heights, VA
(Beside Whitten Monelison Chapel)

RSVP Polly Starnes at (434) 929-5712 no later than April 2, 2025.

A catered lunch by Merredith's Restaurant will be provided to all who RSVP and attend the full seminar.

Guest Speaker

Robert C. Goad III

Whitten
LIFE WELL CELEBRATED®
Dignity®
whittenfuneralhome.com



MILLS' MUSINGS — Waking Up on Mars

“The odds of that happening are 0. It’s just not possible. It would violate the laws of nature.”

That was the answer given by a person in a space travel video I watched recently. He had been asked to estimate the odds that he would wake up the next morning on Mars. Since, at least as I write this, no human being has yet set foot on Mars, let alone slept there, and since no known human technology can transport someone between planets overnight, his response seems perfectly reasonable.

But is it accurate? Most of us, I suspect, would say it is. But some would disagree.

Chief among the naysayers would be those who embrace and promote a field of study known as quantum mechanics. A fundamental dogma of quantum theory is that no one can ever say with absolute certainty that something can or can’t happen. That’s because, in their worldview, uncertainty is built into the subatomic fabric of the universe.

In practical terms, that means we can never say never. We can only speak in terms of likelihood and probabilities. Confined within the canon of quantum physics, the most emphatic statement we could make is that waking up on Mars tomorrow morning would be a low-probability event.

Of course, if that were true the same could and indeed must be said about Jesus’ resurrection.

For the better part of the last 2,000 years, standard arguments used to deny the reality of Jesus’ resurrection have included claims that no one has seen someone come back to life after he has died and been buried; that the resurrection of the body would violate that laws of nature; and that, therefore, Jesus’ resurrection *never* could have happened.

Wrong, wrong, and wrong – at least according to the best thinking cutting edge of today’s science has on offer. While I would find it fun to watch atheistic physicists become enmeshed in the web they have spun, that possibility raises a red flag for Christians: We should never succumb to the temptation of using any science – past, present, or future – to validate any article of our Christian faith. Galileo helps us remember why.

Galileo’s story actually began around 150 A.D., when Ptolemy taught that the earth was an immovable mass located at the center of the universe and that all celestial bodies, including the planets of our solar system, revolved around it. In the following millennium, Ptolemy’s scientific theory became Roman Catholic Church doctrine.

In 1530, Copernicus published *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, which proposed replacing Ptolemy’s geocentric model with one in which the planets orbited a central sun. A century later, Galileo wrote *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World – Ptolemaic and Copernican*, in which he sided with Copernicus and, for his troubles, was convicted of heresy. Three hundred years after that, Pope John Paul II announced that the Inquisition’s decision concerning Galileo was mistaken.

Science is a wonderful gift from God to his human creation. I’m grateful for things like electricity and antibiotics. I’m intrigued by the possibility of traveling to Mars. But God’s people need to keep in mind that truth isn’t true because science says it’s so. Scientific “truth” is constantly changing. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings” (Heb. 13:8-9).

I doubt I’ll get to see the first human footprint on Mars. But I do not doubt the day will come when I will be seated at a banquet table in heaven. My certainty about heaven doesn’t rest on what science says. Rather my assurance is rooted in the reality that the Lord is risen. He is risen indeed.



Easter Lilies for the Sanctuary



Easter Lilies

Northminster is continuing our tradition of placing Easter Lilies in the sanctuary on Easter morning. Northminster members and friends may provide an Easter lily in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. These lilies will be in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 20.

You are encouraged to take the lily home after the Easter service.

The lilies will be **\$11.00** each this year.

If you are interested in purchasing an Easter Lily this year a sign-up sheet with information form and envelope are available on the hall bulletin board for you to complete.

Please place envelope with form and money in the offering plate or forward to the church office no later than **Sunday April 13.**

HE IS
RISEN

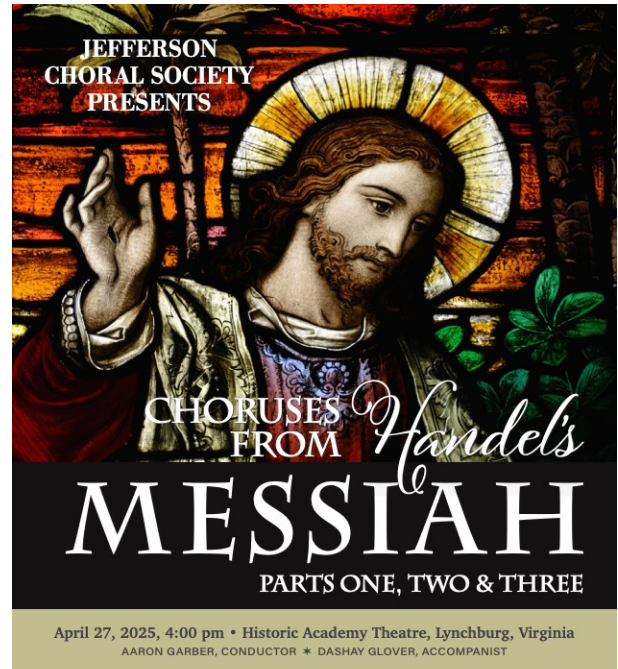
JEFFERSON CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Sunday, April 27, 4PM at the Academy

George Friedrich Handel's famous oratorio *Messiah* needs little introduction. For its spring 2025 concert, the Jefferson Choral Society, Central Virginia's largest and most enduring adult choir, will perform the choruses from all three parts of this monumental work accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Our own Karey Garrison is a member of the JCS.

Messiah follows the story of Christ from the prophecies of his birth, through his passion, death, resurrection and ascension, to the promise of his glorification in heaven. Among the featured choruses in this concert are "And the Glory of the Lord," "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," "Behold the Lamb of God," "Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates," "All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray," the famous "Hallelujah," and the majestic finale, "Worthy Is the Lamb."

Tickets range from \$25-50 and are available at www.academycenter.org.



Tickets: \$25, \$35, \$50 plus taxes and fees.
Purchase online at AcademyCenter.org or at the Academy Box Office.



First-
Class
Postage
Here

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

