

# Highlights *from the Heights*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NORTHMINSTER EPC | MAY 2025 – VOLUME 5

## PASTOR'S CORNER — ALL IT TAKES IS AN INVITATION

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?*

*As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" — Romans 10:14-15*

Last Wednesday we held an "Inquirer's Class." This is the class we offer to new visitors and regular attenders who would like to learn more about Northminster, our denomination (the Evangelical Presbyterian Church), and where we believe God is leading us in the future. While the class is open to anyone who would like to attend, we extended specific invitations to 11 folks who have been visiting and worshipping with us regularly since last fall. Of those 11, 6 were able to attend (those missing were family members who had conflicts). It was a fun evening with a lot of great conversation.

We began the evening by asking for folks to share what brought them to Northminster. Four of the six had variations of the same answer: someone invited them. Here's the thing: whittle every evangelism and church growth strategy down and ultimately they all are about the same thing: inviting someone to church. The best tool we have, and really the only one that matters, is relationships. Every story I've ever heard about how someone came to faith in Jesus Christ boils down to someone in their life caring enough to tell them about Jesus.

This is exactly how God intended it to be. The Gospel spreads primarily and almost exclusively through word-of-mouth. At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, the reason Nathanael ended up as a disciple was because Philip invited him to "*come and see*" for himself. (John 1:46) Jesus repeatedly told His disciples and those He healed to tell others about Him (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Mark 5:19; Matthew 10:7). After Jesus was resurrected and ascended into





heaven, the apostles were amazed and transformed by all they had seen and experienced but when told to stop talking about it, they responded, *"we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:20).

That's also exactly the way God intended it to be. As we grow as disciples and are transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, that change should be something of which we cannot but speak. That's what a "testimony" is — telling others about what you have seen and heard, about how Jesus has changed and blessed your life. What have you seen and heard from Jesus lately? How has He transformed you and changed you? Maybe you've experienced a miraculous physical healing, or He has healed your heart or soul. Maybe you've learned something new about the depths of His grace or the wonders of His creation. Whatever it is, tell someone about it, and invite them to experience the same transformation you've seen. You don't need to give a sermon or a thorough theological discourse, all you need to do is *"Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."* (Mark 5:19).

Maybe you don't know what to say to someone about Jesus, or the thought of it makes you too nervous. Then let your actions tell the story of how Jesus is changing you. Jesus says in Matthew 5:16, *"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"* and in John 13:34-35, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* When we live lives consistent with the Gospel and the Kingdom of God, people around us

won't be able to help but notice, and when they ask you why you're so weird, follow Philip's example and invite them to come to church and see for themselves. If we're doing things right, the Gospel is proclaimed at some point in every worship service. You might not be comfortable telling someone about Jesus, so let us do it for you.

The Holy Spirit will bring to salvation all those whom God has chosen, it might just be that the means by which he does that is the invitation you extend to someone. Take a few minutes to think of two or three people in your life who don't already know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Add them to your daily prayer list, that the Lord would begin softening their heart to hear the Gospel and that He would provide an opportunity for you to invite them to come with you to meet Jesus, whether that's through a conversation you have with them or by bringing them to church with you. All it takes is an invitation.

Blessings,  
Rev. David Garrison

### **Matthew 28:19-20**

*"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. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

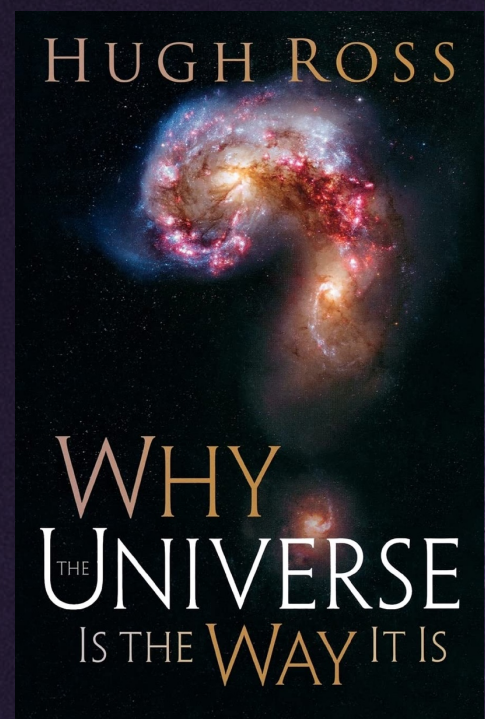
## **WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB** *MEETS THURSDAY, MAY 22,* *10 AM @ NORTHMINSTER*

The Women's Book Club will meet on Thursday, May 22nd at 10:00 a.m. This month's book is Why the Universe Is the Way It Is by Hugh Ross.

In this book, Hugh Ross draws from his depth of study in both science and Scripture to explain how the universe's design fulfills several distinct purposes. He also reveals God's surpassing love and ultimate purposes for each individual.

Join us at 10:00 a.m. at Northminster in the Tatman Room for a lively discussion about our book! Bring a small refreshment to share. As always, if you haven't read the book, come anyway and bring a friend!!

Looking forward to another lively discussion about our book and many other topics that randomly come up.



# LIFE TOGETHER

*Keeping in touch with one another*

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

13 Debbie Moore  
16 John Lange  
23 Julie Lerner  
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.

**Marge Mills** is recovering from dental work a few weeks ago.

**Bob Mills** asks prayers for ongoing health issues.

**Karen & Roy Prior** ask prayers for health concerns.

**Julie Lerner** asks prayers for mental health struggles and comfort as she grieves the passing of one of her beloved dogs.

**Beverly O'Brien** continues healing from a broken leg last fall and open heart surgery two months ago.

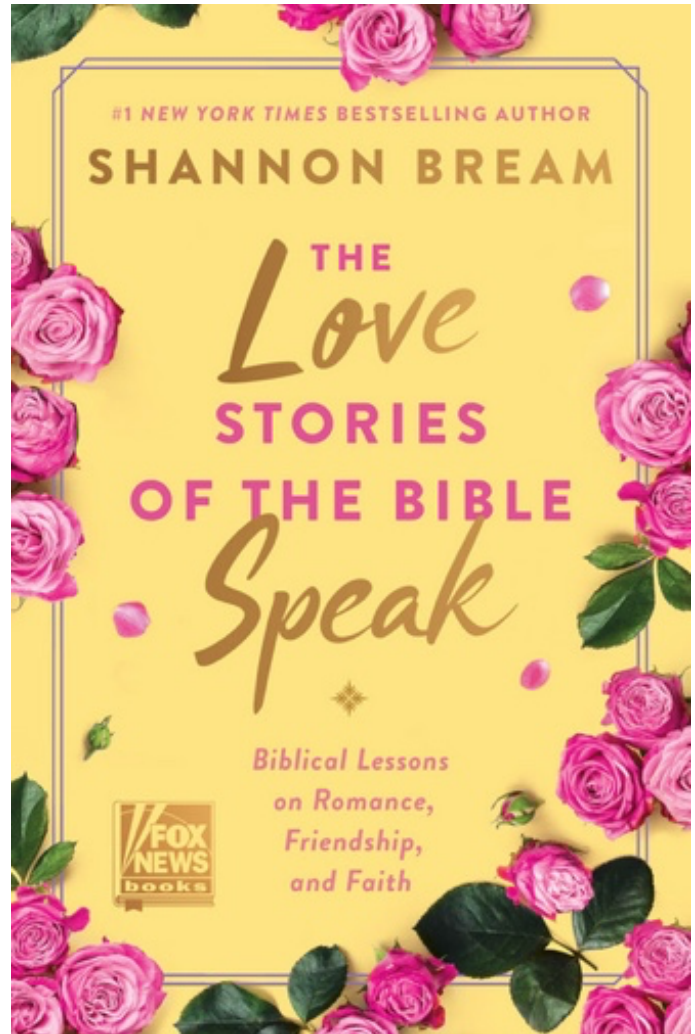
Remember others who cannot be with us in church:  
**Arlene Horton, Mary Murray, Mary Wilhelm and Dolores Wright.**

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

## **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT** MARCH 2025 GENERAL FUND

	March	Year To Date
Income	\$10,682	\$29,298
Expenses	\$10,396	\$31,018
Balance	\$ 296	\$ -1,720

# WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY MEETS MONDAY, MAY 5



The Women's Bible Study will meet on Monday, May 5 at the church at 7:00 p.m. We will be studying the chapter titled "Jesus and John – Friends for Eternity" 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.



# Amherst County Young Life



## God is Good! April 2025

These past four months, Amherst County High School Young Life has experienced the grace of God in countless ways. From being gifted by the Northminster community with a space to host events, to receiving \$5000 dollars in scholarship funds to take our high schoolers to summer camp, we have been greatly blessed during this spring season.

We want to formally thank all of the families, adults, and organizations, that have selflessly served our students and leaders this year. We could not live out the Great Commission and share the Gospel with teenagers in Amherst without your support, prayers, and love! Thank you for investing in our high school friends, for we have seen the Lord work in each of their lives abundantly.

**If you are interested in learning more about what we do or in supporting our mission to lead teenagers to Jesus, please contact us!**

**[cva.younglife@gmail.com](mailto:cva.younglife@gmail.com)  
704-771-4214**

THANK YOU!





## 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.



**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.



THANK YOU  
TO THOSE  
WHO  
PROVIDED  
EASTER  
LILIES.

### IN HONOR OF:

Bryant, Mimi and PaPa in honor of:

*Emerson's graduation from Amherst HS*

Wilkins, Vance and Anne in honor of:

*The Garrisons*

Wilkins, Vance and Anne in honor of:

*Bob and Marge Mills*

### IN MEMORY OF:

Baker, Ernie and Barbara in memory of:

*our siblings – Jerry, Sandra, Nora, Herbert  
and our parents – Sewyn and Mazie Jordan, Betty  
and Donald Baker*

Boothe, Liz in memory of:

*Richard Boothe*

Brightwell, Laura and Robbie in memory of:

*Jim, Rita, Gloria, and Gen*

Brine, George and Mickie in memory of:

*George Sr. and Emma Brine,  
Albert and Polly Herion*

Bryant, Sharon and Gerald in memory of:

*Sue Burnett, Chris Irvine*

Irvine, Debra Reed in memory of:

*Betty Reed*

Irvine, Sue and Larry in memory of:

*Chris Irvine*

Prior, Roy and Karen in memory of:

*Shirley Swallow*

Wilhelm, Mary in memory of:

*Rev. Norm Wilhelm*

Wilkins, Anne in memory of:

*My sister- Bea*





**EPC**

A Global Movement of  
Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

# REFOCUS

## Calling all elders, deacons, staff and church members!

Join us for REFOCUS, an important one-day workshop, designed to explore health principles at a high level. REFOCUS will give your key leaders an overview how to mobilize your entire congregation in mission together!

**LOCATION:**

**DATE/TIME:**

**REGISTER AT:**

Northminster EPC  
161 Clearview Road  
Madison Heights, VA 24572

**Saturday**  
**May 31, 2025**  
**10am-4pm**

Registration info  
coming soon!



# MILLS' MUSINGS — PROTESTANTS AND THE PAPACY

Some years ago, a Baptist friend was trying to help me understand Baptist theology and practice. “There are three things Baptists don’t recognize,” he summarized: “1) the authority of the pope; 2) the validity of infant baptism; and 3) each other in a liquor store.”

The third requires no additional elucidation, while the second could be (and indeed for the past 500 years has been) constructively debated. But I assume that what triggered my recall of that long-ago conversation was the recent death of Pope Francis I. That recollection in turn suggested this reflection on some basic disagreements between Protestants and Catholics in their understandings of the office and authority of the pope.

Roman Catholic Church teaching, defined at the First Vatican Council in 1870, declares that Jesus established the office of pope with the apostle Peter. Their support for this belief is Matthew 16:18-19, “<sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

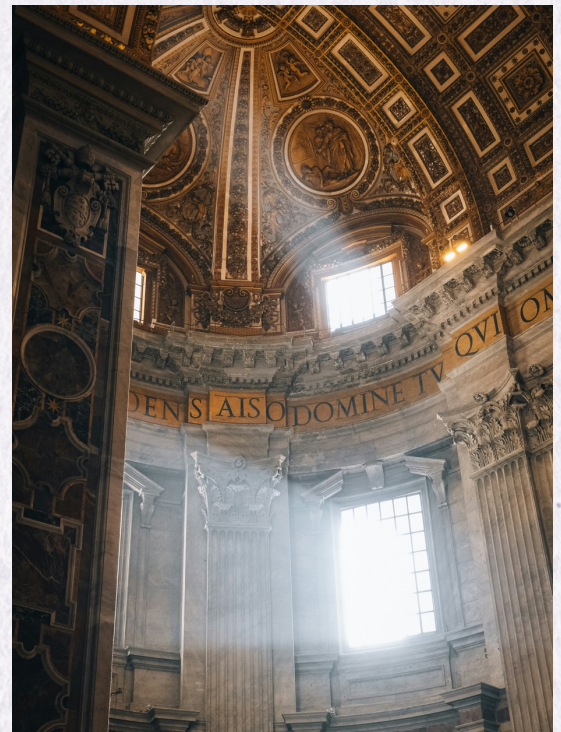
Volumes have been written about these verses. Most follow one of two main lines of interpretation. The first, endorsed by Catholicism, teaches that Jesus gave this authority to Peter personally. Peter then exercised this authority by serving as the first bishop of Rome. Since his death, the power given to Peter has been handed on through an unbroken line of successors – the popes. This practice, known as apostolic succession, is seen as guaranteeing the unity and doctrinal purity of the Catholic Church.

The other main interpretative approach, held with some sectarian variations by Protestants, disagrees with at least three key elements of the Catholic understanding. The first is the question of who, or what, is the rock Jesus mentions. For Catholics, it is Peter himself. Protestants generally understand that the rock to be Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The second disagreement concerns the extent of the authority Jesus gave. Catholic teaching says it was given to Peter alone and has been passed down to each successive pope. Protestants traditionally believe either that this authority was given only to Peter for his lifetime or that it is now shared among believers. Historically, Presbyterians have held that the presbytery functions as a “corporate bishop.”

That raises the third point of disagreement, which concerns the way in which the Church structures itself for its God-given mission. Catholics view these verses as supporting a hierarchical model, one headed by the pope and descending through cardinals, bishops, and priests. Not seeing that structure in this text, Protestants have generally favored either congregational (Baptist) or collegial (Presbyterian) models of church governance.

The differences between Protestants and Catholics about things like the role of the pope and the structure of the Church are not inconsequential, but neither are they insurmountable. Recognizing and accurately articulating our differences lays a foundation for open and honest conversation. And I continue to believe that as Western culture becomes increasingly post-Christian, Catholics and Protestants, clear-eyed about our disagreements, will increasingly rally around the beliefs that unite us.





# May 2025 Mission Focus – Helping Hands

Helping Hands Ministry of Amherst County is our Mission of the Month focus for May 2025. 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.

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Postage  
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Madison Heights, VA 24572

