



Highlights *From the Heights*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NORTHMINSTER EPC | AUGUST 2025 – VOLUME 8

PASTOR'S CORNER — ECHOES OF EDEN

*I'm not lost
I'm just looking for what I haven't found
there's an ache inside of me that's reaching out
for something deeper than anything I'm seeing
like a traveler I'm following
the echo of Eden.*

— Green River Ordinance, "Echo of Eden"

Many years ago my grandfather and I boarded a plane to a place I'd never before been. When I stepped off the walkway into Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, Alaska, the very first thought that crossed my mind was, "I'm home," which was strange because airports aren't the homeliest of places and, again, I'd never been there before. It would be another decade before I was actually able to call Anchorage "home," and that only lasted for two years.

For most of my life, "home" for me meant Rockville, Maryland. It's where I grew up and where my parents lived for 40 years. I left Rockville in 1997 and my parents moved to North Carolina a few years ago. But even before my parents moved away, Rockville stopped being home. I would go back to visit, but it wasn't a place I referred to as "home" any longer. Even though I call places in Orlando, Anchorage, St. Louis, Hendersonville and now Madison Heights "home," the longing for home points to something deeper.

A few months ago I was with a group of friends and family, and we had the most heartwarming and delightful time together. It was an evening of silliness and joy, one of those moments in time that you wish would last forever, but of course never do. Those moments touch a longing in our soul to be in the company of others, a longing that is at times met in our relationship with our spouse, our children, life-long close friends, maybe extended family. But as good as those



relationships are, they aren't perfect and often bring as much pain as they do joy. We weren't meant to be alone, God says in Genesis 2, but relationships are hard. Sometimes too hard. We long for deep, meaningful relationships with others, but because it's often so hard and painful, we settle for something much less, like the shallow façade of social media.

It seems as if our lives are becoming ever more frenetic and chaotic; we feel stretched in a dozen different directions at once. We frantically try to keep all of the plates spinning, while they begin to slow and wobble precariously. The more we stretch, the harder we press, the more the cracks begin to show. 2 Corinthians 4:7 describes us as cracked "jars of clay," through which the grace of God shines... but if there are more cracks than clay, can it still be called a jar? As Chuck DeGroat writes, "We all *think* we know the solution — more downtime, more relaxation, more rest. And we're all wrong." What we truly long for is wholeheartedness.

All of this points to a persistent gnawing discontent in our souls, a longing that we try to satisfy in a thousand different ways but is always unsatisfied. We know there's something missing, but we often aren't sure what. Augustine once said, "our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You." The most foundational longing of the human heart is for God. If earth has no sorrows heaven can't heal, then neither does earth have any means of satisfying a longing that yearns for something beyond this world.

CS Lewis once wrote, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." Our longing for home, for relationship, for wholeheartedness, for God can never be satisfied by anything in this world, because they are longings that have existed long before this world. They are longings for "the way things used to be" in the truest, oldest sense of that phrase. They are echoes of Eden, longing

for the way things were before The Fall. Eugene Peterson says, "This place, this garden, is not utopia, is not an ideal no-place. It is simply place, locale, geography, geology. But it is also a good place, Eden, because it provides the form by which we can live to the glory of God"

These longings have echoed for millennia, and they are only satisfied in Jesus Christ. Through our salvation in Christ, we are able to experience a partial satisfaction of those longings, but their ultimate satisfaction comes in the consummation of the Kingdom of God when Christ returns. Our August sermon series looks at the "echoes of Eden," these deep longings of the human heart. We'll see how they are born out of the goodness of God's creation, how Christ has redeemed them, and how they will ultimately be satisfied in the New Heavens and New Earth when Jesus consummates His kingdom at the end of time. Be sure to join us for worship in person or online during August.

Blessings,
Rev. David Garrison

Romans 8:23-25

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

REV. BEN SPIVY – FROM LYNCHBURG TO LONDON

For the past 7 years, Rev. Ben Spivy has served as the campus pastor to Liberty University for Reformed University Fellowship. Ben has visited Northminster several times over the years to share with us about his work with college students, but those visits are about to become few and far between.

Ben and his family have accepted a call to do college ministry in London, UK. With nine years of campus ministry experience and a heart to see Christ known among the nations, the Spiveys are excited to start an RUF Global in London, the first RUF ministry in the UK. Partnering with London City Presbyterian Church, they will focus on reaching and equipping the students of London to see them converted and foster future growth in the church in the UK and globally.

Pray that the Spirit of the Lord would go before the Spiveys, preparing the hearts of students to find their true hope in Christ.



Ben will join us for the Sunday School hour on Sunday, August 3 to share more about their call to London. Plan to join us!

You can support the Spivys by going to this website: <https://mtw.org/missionaries/details/spivey-ben-and-kirstin>



WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB MEETS THURSDAY, August 21, 10 AM @ NEPC

This month we are reading The Nature of Fragile Things by Susan Meissner.



One evening, a stranger arrives at Sophie's door, revealing unexpected connections to Martin and another woman living in the American Southwest. This discovery, coinciding with the eve of the San Francisco earthquake, plunges the lives of these three women into a perilous and transformative journey. The earthquake's aftermath and the secrets unveiled test their resilience, resolve and ultimately, their belief in love's ability to overcome fear.

This historical fiction novel is set in the early 20th century, specifically around the time of the devastating 1906 earthquake. The story begins with Sophie Whalen, a young Irish immigrant eager to escape a difficult life in New York, who responds to a mail order bride advertisement. She travels to San Francisco and marries widower Martin Hocking, a handsome but distant man. Sophie quickly grows attached to Martin's young daughter, Kat. However, Martin's secretive behavior and frequent absences leave Sophie feeling uneasy.

Join us for a lively discussion about the book. Please bring a snack to share and as always, bring a friend. Even if you didn't read the book, please join us!

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2025 GENERAL FUND

	June	Year To Date
Income	\$11,098	\$60,222
Expenses	\$ 9,507	\$59,590
Balance	\$ 1,590	\$ 632

LIFE TOGETHER

Keeping in touch with one another

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:

21 Jackie Hodges
21 Bob Mills
25 Emmaylnn Kidd
27 Kristin Kidd



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES:

John & Linda Lange – August 4, 1973

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.

Ernie Baker is at home being treated for two blood clots in his legs.

Vera Campbell is healing from a broken arm.

Pat Ford (Karey Garrison's mother) is healing from a broken foot.

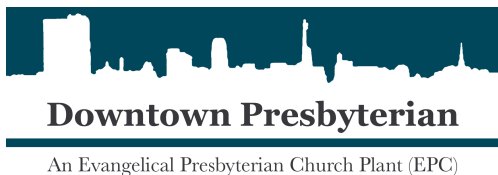
Bob Mills asks prayers for his brother David, who has been diagnosed with stage 2 myxofibrosarcoma.

Jude Nyanzi is healing from the flu and typhoid.

Dolores Wright is at Liberty Ridge Rehab.

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.



Downtown Presbyterian is a church plant reaching the dechurched in Downtown Lynchburg with the gospel. And we need your help!

OUR MISSION

To make disciples of Jesus in Downtown Lynchburg by:

- **Reaching** the dechurched
- **Growing** them in the light of the gospel and fellowship
- **Equipping** them to walk humbly, do justice, and love mercy
- **Sending** them back to invest in our community

WHY DOWNTOWN LYNCHBURG?

Most of our Downtown community is dechurched. We are passionate about reaching them, because God is! We believe that the gospel of Jesus powerfully restores:

- The **Deconstructed** with a **Reconstructed Faith**
- The **Downcast** with a **Resurrected Hope**
- The **Doubting** with a **Renewed Love** for our Savior

OUR KEY MINISTRIES

- **A faithful presence in our community** on a daily basis to establish trust, so that everyone with whom we build meaningful relationships will hear the gospel
- **An ongoing group on faith and doubt**, so that unbelievers and doubters alike will have had at least one honest conversation about Christianity
- **Shared meals that facilitate Christian hospitality**, so that our community will see and know the sacrificial love of God

OUR NEEDS

- **People:** Those who share our heart for reaching the dechurched and can commit to join us short-term on Sunday evenings for worship
- **Financial Support:** \$7000/mo. in funding

OUR LEADERSHIP

Pastor Rich Brown (Doctor of Ministry, ABD) is experienced in pastoral ministry and church planting. His passion is reaching the doubting and deconstructed with the gospel of grace.

JOIN US

Your support helps plant a missional church that brings lasting hope to Downtown Lynchburg!

- **Give:** Donate at DowntownPres.com/Give, or contact Pastor Rich for other options.
- **Connect:** Learn more at DowntownPres.com, or join us for worship on Sundays at 4:30pm at Cafe Monte Bello (828 Main Street, Unit 302 Lynchburg, VA 24504).
- **Pray:** Commit to praying for Downtown Presbyterian and God's mission here.

CONTACT US

Pastor Rich Brown, richsbrown3@icloud.com, 434.444.5186
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Website: DowntownPres.com
Instagram: @DowntownEPC
Twitter/X: @DowntownPres

Rich Brown will be sharing more about Downtown Presbyterian Church on Sunday, August 17 during Sunday School. Be sure to come and learn about how God is moving in downtown Lynchburg!

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

— Matthew 9:37–38

A Celebration of Work Second Stage 194 Second St. Amherst Saturday August 9 6:30-8pm

Book signing and reading by local author
Karen Swallow Prior from her new book,
You Have a Calling: Finding Your Vocation in the True, Good & Beautiful

Featuring interviews with local workers and volunteers.

Refreshments! Networking! Fun!



Dear Friends!

School Days Are Fast Approaching !!!

Please consider a food or monetary donation to NHN 4 KIDS.

This will help us continue the 15 year tradition started by Amherst Cares, providing all students requesting weekend meals, a packed bookbag. Listed below are some food items, we plan to collect throughout the year.

- Instant Potatoes in a Pouch 4 Oz
- Mac n Cheese in a Microwavable cup 2 Oz
- Mac n Cheese in a Box 7 oz
- Variety Cereal Boxes 3.6 oz
- Beans & Franks 8 oz
- Nutri grain Bars 1.5 oz
- Instant Oatmeal Packages
- Ramen Noodles Chicken
- Spaghetti Noodles 16 Oz
- Spaghetti Sauce 15 Oz
- Capri Sun or Kool-Aid (Boxes or Pouch) 6 oz
- Peanut Butter 18 Oz
- Grape or Strawberry Jelly
- Fruit Cups 2 oz
- Shelf Milk 8 oz
- Instant Pudding 4 oz

THANK you
With Love,
NHN4KIDS

MILLS' MUSINGS – YOU'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER CAKE

By Rev. Bob Mills

This year the Nicene Creed celebrates its 1,700th birthday. Accommodating that many candles would require a birthday cake far larger than any I've ever seen. And if you're wondering about this article's title, you may want to rewatch *Jaws*, which turns 50 this year. (Anybody else feeling old?)

The Nicene Creed seems less well known to Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians than either the Apostles' Creed or the Westminster Confession of Faith. For reasons I won't explore here, I don't find that surprising. But I do believe that as the Church enters its third millennium, all Christians would be well served by learning more about the background and importance of this creed as it reaches the ripe old age of 1,700.

In the year 325, the Church was still adjusting to its new status in the Roman Empire. Barely a decade earlier, the new Roman Emperor, Constantine, had converted to Christianity and issued his Edict of Toleration, which legalized the faith in the empire. The Edict would prove a mixed blessing. Official persecution of Christians ended and Church membership grew rapidly. Unfortunately, with growth came controversy.

As early as 318, a pastor named Arius began teaching that Jesus was not fully God; that Jesus was not eternal, but instead was the first creature made by God. This new doctrine contradicted Scripture and three centuries of Church teaching. To resolve the conflict in the Church, and not coincidentally to help keep peace in his empire, Constantine called for a council of church leaders to meet in city of Nicaea in 325.

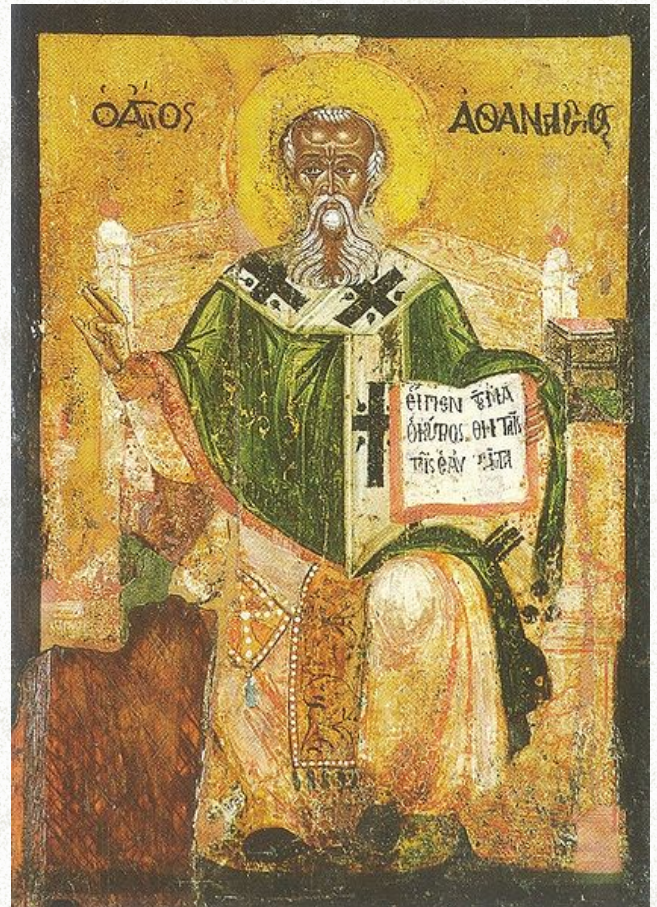
There, Arius was given the opportunity to explain his beliefs to the bishops. He and his supporters were sure his views would prevail. However, his novel teaching, summarized by the slogan "There was when the Son was not," was opposed by one of the most able and influential theologians of the Early Church, Athanasius. Athanasius insisted that if Jesus wasn't fully God, he couldn't fully accomplish human salvation. "That which has not been assumed has not been healed," was his succinct response.

Rejecting as heretical Arius' insistence that Jesus was not God, the Council of Nicaea produced the Nicene Creed, which declared that Jesus is "of one substance" (*homoousia*) with the Father. *Homoousia* combines *homo*, meaning same, with *ousia*, meaning substance, or essence. The Greek word isn't found in the Bible, which troubled some members of the council. But as the Church worked to articulate the Bible's unchanging revelation in the language of its day, *homoousia* seemed the best word to express the eternal relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

The importance of the Nicene Creed in Christian history is summarized by the late Presbyterian theologian John Leith who writes, "The first Christian doctrine that the church settled in an ecumenical council and that has subsequently received approval in the life of the church through the centuries had to do with the deity of Jesus Christ. The church made clear at Nicaea what it was convinced had always been the faith of Christian people. In Jesus Christ human beings are confronted by God."

For nearly two millennia, the Nicene Creed has remained the most widely quoted creed in Christendom. It's accepted by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, and most Protestant denominations. Each time we recite this historic affirmation of our faith, we remind ourselves of a fundamental Christian truth: God's nature is Triune. We also remind ourselves of our unbreakable connection to Christians around the world and throughout time.

So, on the 1,700th birthday of the Nicene Creed, a cake may be in order. Especially if we fudge the candles.



AMHERST COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY UPDATE

OPEN HOUSE, AUGUST 11, 2-6PM

Hello Northminster Friends,

We are excited to invite you to the "Open House" for our homes on South Coolwell Road. Some of you will remember serving lunch to our crews and watching the concrete pour for our first Nudura Insulated Concrete Form homes. Yes, it's taken a year for a product which is known for speeding up construction, but what a year we've had for weather related setbacks! Our Construction Manager counted ten workdays between Thanksgiving and the end of February! Snow, ice and high winds prevailed, which then led to storms, lots of mud, and then temperatures too high to ask volunteers to work in.

Why Nudura? Amherst County Habitat served as the Construction Manager for the 2018 Elon EF-3 tornado. For two years, we diligently worked with the Amherst Disaster Recovery Group handling the needs of those who were uninsured or underinsured. When Nudura became available to us, we literally could not turn our backs on this technology.

A Nudura ICF home looks like standard housing from the outside, but these homes withstand 250mph



winds, are fire resistant, basically soundproof and carry an energy factor of R-50 as compared to R-16 for standard construction.

We topped these fortresses with a Fortified Roof which uses Zip board (coated standard OSB), ring-shanked nails every four inches vs the building code of roofing nails every 8 inches, and a rubberized tape covering every seam. These roofs are waterproof even if shingles are lost in storms. The Fortified Roof was one of the major kinks in our timeline. The closest Certified Fortified Roofers were in Virginia Beach and Maryland. We actually cold-called a handful of area roofing companies before finding one willing to take the training to become certified. (Perimeter Roofing)

With the storm proof qualities of Nudura combined with Fortified Roofing, a major benefit is up to 40% discount on homeowners' insurance. But, that caused another major kink. The closest inspector to provide certification for the insurance discount was in Alabama. Since we were one of the first Habitats to build Nudura and to go Fortified, getting the Habitat International grant, the program finally got the Alabama firm to teach us what photographs they needed the Certified Roofer to take for their files. Whew!

But all was worth it...we are building homes that are basically maintenance free, expected to last over 300 years, and save our homebuyers on electric, insurance and house payments! Then, add in our handicapped accessibility features of 42" hallways, zero clearance exterior doorway, 5' radius in kitchen and baths...talk about generational housing!

We invite you to stop by on August 11th between 2pm & 6pm to tour the homes at 1360 and 1362 South Coolwell Road in Madison Heights.



**The Madison Heights
Union Choirs & Friends present**

*Hymns that
Call Us Home*

Sunday, August 24 at 7:00pm

**Madison Heights Baptist Church
329 Main Street
Madison Heights**

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

Here's what's coming in August:

- Sunday, August 3** – Rev. Ben Spivy from RUF & MTW joins us during Sunday School to share about his new call to serve college students in London, England. Learn more on pg 2.
- Saturday, August 9** – Local author & speaker Karen Swallow Prior is having a launch event for her new book at Second Stage from 6:30-8pm. Several local missions and ministries that we support will be participating. Be sure to attend. More information on pg. 4.
- Monday, August 11** – Amherst County Habitat for Humanity is hosting an open house of their two newest and most technologically innovative homes from 2-6pm. Find out more about these homes and the open house on pg 6.
- Sunday, August 17** – Rev. Rich Brown will be here during Sunday School to share more about how the Holy Spirit is moving in downtown Lynchburg and one of the EPC's newest church plants, Downtown Presbyterian Church. Downtown Presbyterian is our mission focus for August, so be sure to put this on your calendar. More info on pg 4.
- Thursday, August 21** – Women's Book Club is back! Get the details on pg 2.
- Sunday, August 24** – Gather together with our partner churches in Madison Heights for the "Hymns That Call Us Home" hymn sing! This will be at 7pm at Madison Heights Baptist Church. Learn more on pg 7.

