

# Highlights *From the Heights*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NORTHMINSTER EPC | NOVEMBER 2025 VOLUME 11

## PASTOR'S CORNER — DOORDASHING OUR FAITH

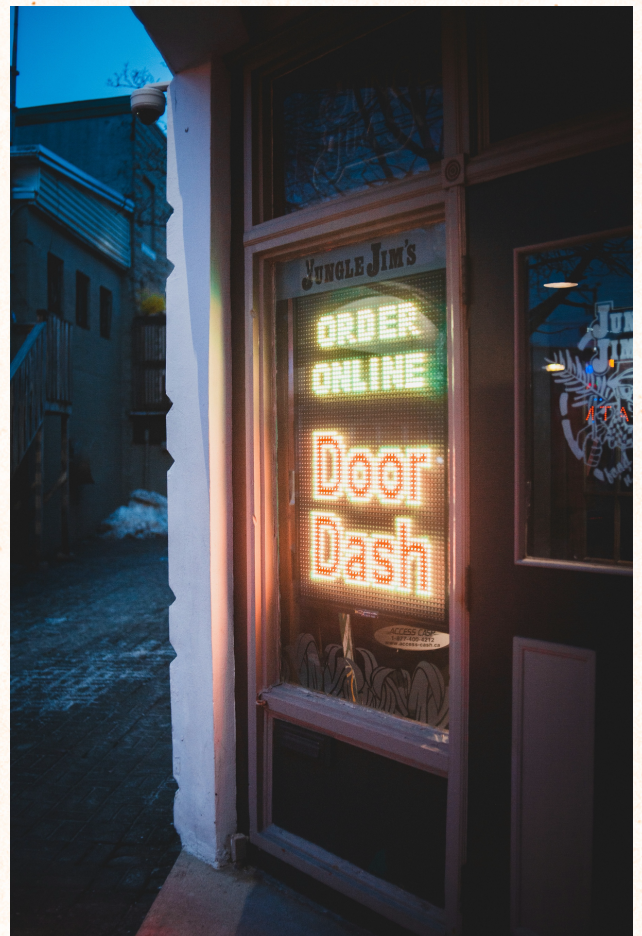
*"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'"*

— Amos 4:1

This morning I read an article in *The Atlantic*, "How Delivery Destroyed American Restaurants." From the article: "In 2024, nearly three out of every four restaurant orders were not eaten in a restaurant, according to data provided to me by the National Restaurant Association, a trade group. The share of customers using delivery specifically, as opposed to picking up takeout or going to a drive-through, more than doubled from 2019 to 2024. In a recently released poll by the association, 41 percent of respondents said that delivery was 'an essential part of their lifestyle.'"

It's difficult to understate the impact this is having on the restaurant industry. Restaurants are adapting their menus to be more cost effective and provide food that travels better. Kitchens are getting bigger, seating areas smaller. Some new restaurants aren't designed for in-person dining at all. Ellie Cushing writes, "In effect, delivery has reversed the flow of eaters to food, and remade a shared experience into a much more individual one. If communities used to clench like a fist around their restaurants, now they look more like an open palm, fingers stretched out as far as possible, or at least to the edge of the delivery radius."

It's too easy to blame this shift on the pandemic, although the pandemic certainly accelerated it, as it did many other things. Like so much else, these shifts started long before a virus shut us all up inside our homes. The seismic shift happened back in the early 2000s with the dual supernovas of the development of the internet and smartphones. Twenty or so years later, every facet of our lives has radically changed. Winston Churchill once said, "We shape our buildings and afterward our buildings shape us." We now have the ability to sit at home and have





the world brought to us on a whim, but at what cost? How is that convenience shaping us?

The “cows of Bashan” were the ancient equivalent of Wagyu beef today. They were meticulously doted over and cared for so as to provide the absolute highest quality meat possible. When Amos calls the Israelites the cows of Bashan, he is saying they are lazy, fat, and indolent. As Michael McKelvey writes, Amos is painting a picture of a people who “defiantly and selfishly take advantage of others, using them for their own ends. Their concern is not for what is morally right or socially acceptable. Instead, they live unto themselves; their god is their belly.” Feeding their desires and appetites by any means necessary, they cared not at all about the consequences of their self indulgence. One might argue whether we are more or less self-indulgent than the ancient Israelites, but one thing is true: we have not counted the cost we are paying for our cultural smartphone addiction. It’s been 2,800 years since Amos wrote his prophecy, but it has come true in far more visceral ways than he ever imagined.

What makes dining at a restaurant special isn’t simply that someone else is cooking for you. It’s the entire experience. It’s the sensory experience of the aromas and the ambiance, but more than that it’s the relational experience — from the welcome extended by the host, to the courtesy of the waitress, to the attention given to your meal by the chef, to the shared fellowship of those with whom you dine. None of that can be put in a box and delivered to your door. What is lost without those experiences goes far beyond the scope of these words. This barely scratches the surface; we haven’t talked about the impact on families, jobs, the economy, and much more.

However, Amos wasn’t talking about having food delivered to your door, and neither are we. Have we taken the time to consider what we are losing by doordashing our worship, our discipleship, or our fellowship? We worship by turning on the

radio or Spotify. We get our discipleship from TikTok. We find fellowship through social media. All from the comfort of our couches. But true faith is inescapably relational and experiential. True worship happens when we are gathered together with the saints (Hebrews 10:25). Discipleship occurs when “iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17). Fellowship, which at its root means “connection,” requires being physically present with one another (Acts 2:42). Modern technology is reshaping everything, but it can’t change the fundamental paths of our faith.

There’s nothing necessarily wrong with doordashing your dinner when you need to, or using Spotify or TikTok. But be aware of what you are choosing when you do so, and what you are *not* choosing as well. Be intentional in being wise and discerning when it comes to your worship, discipleship and fellowship. Make the effort to pursue Jesus in the company of other brothers and sisters. In person. Much like dining out, our faith was never meant to be an individual experience, but a communal one.

Blessings,  
Rev. David Garrison

### *Philippians 4:8-9*

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

## COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES



The semester is coming to a close and our college students could use some encouragement. For the first two Sundays in November (11/2 and 11/9), we will be collecting items to fill care packages for our nine 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:

- microwave popcorn
- Little Debbie's or other wrapped snack cakes
- candy
- individual bags of chips
- Ramen noodles
- granola bars
- school supplies - pens, pencils, spiral notebooks, etc.

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 area 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  
Meg Garrison – James Madison U.  
Peter Garrison – U. of AL in Huntsville  
Brinna Midgley – CVCC  
Jackson Moore – East Tennessee State  
Mackenzie Seay – CVCC



# 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.

**Mickie Brine** has had several falls recently, thankfully without major injury. Pray the healing of her bruises and improved mobility.

**Julie Lerner** has been ill for several weeks and asks for prayers for healing.

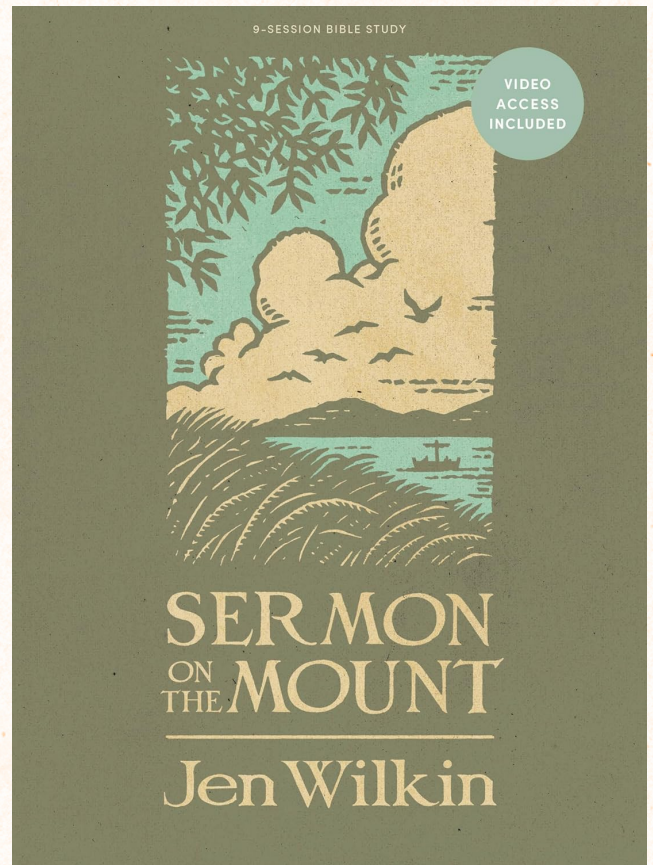
**David Mills**, Bob Mills' brother, is healing from surgery last month as he continues being treated for myxofibrosarcoma.

**Marjorie Mills** is scheduled for open heart surgery on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

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.**

# WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY MEETS TUESDAY, NOV 11



The Bible Study group is trying out a new time. We are going to meet on Tuesday, November 11 at 4:00 in the afternoon. We will plan to meet until 5:30. We are using the book, "Sermon on the Mount" by Jen Wilkin. You do not have any homework for this first meeting. Just grab your book, your Bible and a snack that you can share with the whole group. If you have not gotten your book yet, grab a copy out of the office. These are your books now, so feel free to write in them. A big thank you to Karey who is going to be our teacher for this book. Looking forward to seeing you at Bible study. And, as always, bring a friend!!

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

|          | September | Year To Date |
|----------|-----------|--------------|
| Income   | \$ 8,661  | \$79,329     |
| Expenses | \$11,916  | \$81,492     |
| Balance  | \$ -3,254 | \$ -2,163    |



# MILLS' MUSINGS – FOR ALL THE SAINTS

*By Rev. Bob Mills*

On Sunday, November 2, Northminster will add an extra element to our usual order of worship – a necrology. Names of church members who have died in the past 12 months will be read aloud and followed by a single chime. It's a simple but meaningful ritual, a practice that reminds us of two important truths about our faith. But first, a bit of history.

In the Roman Catholic Church, All Saints Day is annually celebrated on November 1<sup>st</sup>, while All Souls Day is November 2<sup>nd</sup>. In many Protestant denominations, the first Sunday in November unites these celebrations on what we call All Saints Sunday.

While there are understandable differences between Catholic and Protestant traditions, a central theme in each is celebrating the transition of believers from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant, that is, recognizing and rejoicing with all those Christians who have finished their work on earth and now abide with God in heaven.

The first truth this celebration brings to our attention is that **all Christians are saints**. Both the Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT) words translated “saint” come from a root that means “holy.” To be holy is to be set apart by God in order to serve God. Paul describes saints as “those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2).

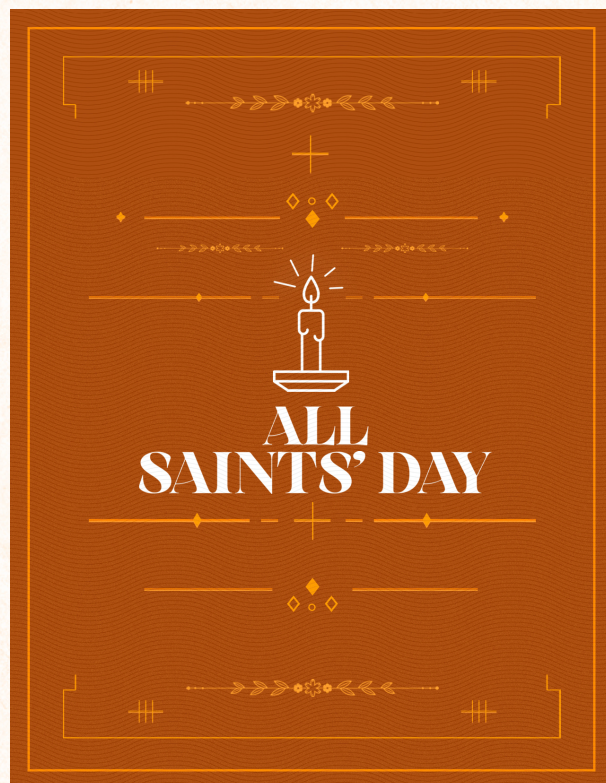
Here Paul shows us that sainthood, which is also called sanctification, (being made holy), is both a position and a process. As God's chosen people, we have been made holy through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are being made holy through our cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us. And one day we will be made holy as we reunite with the saints who reached heaven before us.

As in our worship on All Saints Sunday we remember the saints of this congregation who now worship God in heaven, we are also reminded of a second truth – that **our Christian faith is built on a firm historical foundation**.

I affirm the observation made by church historian Bruce Shelley, who writes: “Many Christians today suffer from historical amnesia. The time between the apostles and their own day is one giant blank. That is hardly what God had in mind.”<sup>1</sup>

I suspect not many of us could cite chapter and verse of the history of Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church. I'm quite sure vast numbers of Presbyterians have little knowledge about the ecclesiastical developments that followed Martin Luther's *95 Theses*. Even more know less about the first 1,500 years of Christian history and theology. Such knowledge gaps impede our growth as individual Christians and as a congregation. For if we don't know how we got to where we are, where we go next is anybody's guess.

This All Saints Sunday, let's rejoice with the souls we have known who now rest from their labors. And in the year between this celebration and the next, let's spend some time looking back so that we might more clearly see the way ahead.



<sup>1</sup>Bruce L. Shelly's *Church History in Plain Language* (Waco: Word, 1982), p. 9.





## NOVEMBER 2024 MISSION FOCUS: Christmas Food Baskets

The Mission/Outreach/Evangelism (MOE) Committee invites everyone to 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 17-24. We will be collecting our boxes on Sunday, November 23. What a joy to celebrate Christmas by giving gifts that can change the lives of children throughout the world.





# 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](http://www.npcmh.com/live) to find our worship service. 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](http://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.

### **On A "Smart" TV, Roku device or Apple TV**

Most modern TVs are "smart" TVs 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. 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](http://www.npcmh.com/online-order-of-worship). This is formatted to work well on a computer, phone or tablet.

## NORTHMINSTER ON THE 'NET

### **Website**

[www.npcmh.com](http://www.npcmh.com)

### **Calendar, Directory & more**

[npcmh.churchcenter.com](http://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](http://www.facebook.com/npcmh)

### **YouTube**

[www.youtube.com/@npcmh](http://www.youtube.com/@npcmh)

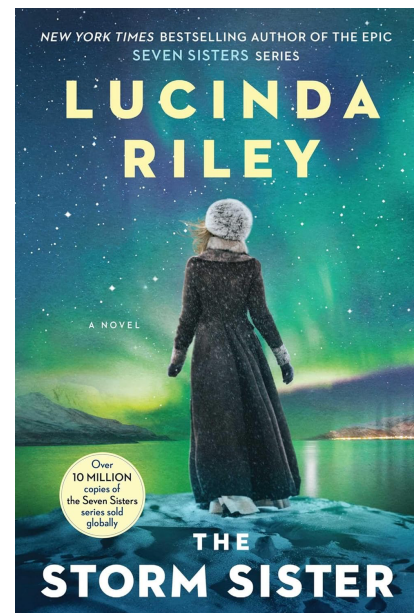
## Donate Online Through tithe.ly

You can now make donations online! You can do this on a computer, phone or tablet. Simply go to our homepage, [www.npcmh.com](http://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).

## WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB MEETS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 10 AM

The Book Club will meet on Thursday, November 20 at 10:00 a.m. The book we are reading for this month is The Storm Sister by Lucinda Riley. This is the second book in *The Seven Sisters Series*. The story follows Aly's journey of self-discovery after the sudden death of her adoptive father, Pa Salt.

Please join us on Thursday, the 20th to discuss this book and bring a snack to share with the group. Come even if you have not read the book. And, as always, bring a friend!!







## DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

**Saturday, December 6 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 John Lange 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. 7**. Please contact Linda Lange if you have questions.



## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

**Wednesday, 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 21, 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!







Northminster Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
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First-  
Class  
Postage  
Here