

FIRST WORDS ... 2 Corinthians 4:5

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

SESSION SUSPENDS ON CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Northminster's commitments to representing the love of Christ and to following the teachings of Scripture have guided the Session in its discernment of our pandemic protocols throughout 2020. With the Governor's announcement yesterday of [Tier 3 Mitigations](#) statewide, Session has temporarily suspended on-campus activities, including Sunday morning worship services. Here's what this means for us ...

- As we did earlier this year, we will record our sermons and provide worship playlists early on Sunday mornings. Look for an email in your inbox this coming Sunday with a link to our YouTube channel.
- Our Deacons will continue their ministry of care and connection, sending texts, emails and cards and making phone calls—all to extend the love of Christ. I encourage you to reach back out to your Deacon too, whether to simply say "hi" or to share a prayer concern or a need for support. If you do not know who your Deacon is, please contact [Pam Garner](#).
- Ministry continues throughout our congregation. This includes ministries like Life Groups, Kid Groups, and Middle School and High School groups. We'll make use of Zoom and other online platforms to be church with and for each other as well as to the world beyond our church.
- Our Mission efforts to share the love of Christ also continue. This includes our Blessings Bags, our Thanksgiving Food Drive, our Cookie Ingredients for the Dream Center, and our Giving Tree gift drive. More information will soon follow on times and dates for dropping off contributions for these wonderful offerings of love.
- While our Sunday morning protocols have provided for a fairly safe gathering of our congregation, especially in light of the wonderful commitment everyone has shown to caring for one another, the government is asking that meetings and gatherings

not occur. The phrase being used is "If you don't need to do it, don't." We absolutely need to worship, we just don't necessarily need to do it gathered together in larger numbers. Please consider joining a Life Group. Our group leaders are now wizards at using Zoom and can help anyone who wishes to learn how to connect. Even if you prefer not to meet via Zoom, I encourage you to join a Life Group at least for this season. Your willingness to connect will give others the joy of fellowship with you. For more information or to sign up with a Life Group [send me and email](#).

- What do these changes mean for Christmas Eve services? If the State rescinds their Tier 3 Mitigations in the next month or so, Session will revisit the question of onsite gatherings. If the Mitigations remain, then we'll work to provide meaningful ways of celebrating Christ's birth together without the need to gather onsite.
- Staying connected is vitally important for God's children (John 13:24-35; Col 3:12-17; Heb 10:24-25). In this regard, the first question we ask isn't whether we need to connect, but whom would God have me call, email, text or Zoom? God has always intended his children to represent the way of Christ to the world (Gen 12:1-3; Isa 42:6-7; Mat 5:14-16). Your willingness to care for others around you, to step into even awkward situations and navigate toward meaningful fellowship, will proclaim the love and grace and way of Christ to a watching world.
- Of course if you need anything—prayer, errands run, additional support—please do not hesitate to contact [Pam Garner](#), your Deacon, the church office (309.691.6322; messages are checked and calls are forwarded), or [me](#).
- Our Learning Center ministry will continue to remain open, following the strict IDPH and DCFS guidelines.
- We're reworking our approach to the Live Nativity so that all Tier 3 Mitigations are followed (see below).

To: The Members and Friends of Northminster
From: Bob Jordan, Lead Pastor

 **northminster**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
November 18, 2020

YOUR HELP NEEDED FOR LIVE NATIVITY

Our theme this Advent is *Share the Story*. One of the key ways we'll share the story is through hosting a drive-by Live Nativity for the whole community. We're committed to following all Tier 3 Mitigations, making participation safe for the crew and the guests. Your help is needed! We'll be working in household teams. If your household (household = 1 or more people) would be willing, we're in need of people to construct, "act" out the various parts (if you can stand or sit while wearing a mask you're good to go!), and break things down after the event concludes. Operating in household units and wearing masks and watching distances will allow us to respect the State's Mitigations. Please contact [Tina and Karl Vandermyde](#) today.

SHOWING CHRIST'S LOVE THIS SEASON

To see Northminster's list of four great ways to join with others in our congregation this season in representing the love of Christ, click [HERE](#). This year we're working on Thanksgiving Baskets, Blessing Bags, Giving Tree gifts, and Dream Center Cookie Ingredient Bags. Choose one or participate in all four!

PICK UP AN ADVENT WREATH TODAY



One of the traditions that our congregation has used in our celebration of Christ's birth is the lighting of the Advent wreath. This year as we are worshipping remotely, I encourage you to pick up an Advent wreath for your home. They are available through a number of online retailers. We also have a limited number of advent wreath holders and candles available at the church. Simply contact the church office to arrange a time to pick one up.

MEXICO MISSION CAMPAIGN A HUGE SUCCESS

Our recent campaign to raise \$4000 to accompany the \$4000 from our Mission budget was a tremendous success. A total of \$13,445 was raised, which means that along with our \$4000 Mission money, we're able to cover more than two months of supplies for 400 Maya families who have been severely impacted by three hurricanes, the pandemic and the severe downturn in the Yucatan tourist industry. The monies

are now being sent to our mission partners YPM. Praise God for his many provisions!

THE WORLD'S BASIC NEED FOR EDUCATION

One of the better things we can do in our efforts to represent the love of Christ in our hurting world is to become informed on real world situations. Opening ourselves to new information can help us overcome any incorrect assumptions and ill-informed behaviors we've harbored.

I'd like to share with you a 2013 report on poverty and education written by Richard J. Coley with Educational Testing Service and Bruce Baker from Rutgers University. Although the report is seven years old, its framework and descriptions help the reader understand connections between poverty, the way we think about poverty, and the unhealthy and symbiotic relationship between poverty, education and opportunity.

You can access their report [HERE](#).

The report's introduction states ...

"More than one in five of all U.S. children live in poverty, and that percentage is substantially higher for some subgroups of the population.

Internationally, the United States ranks second highest in child poverty among the world's "richest" 35 countries, surpassed only by Romania (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2012). The Great Recession of 2007 and its lingering effects have increased the challenges many poor children face at a time when literacy and numeracy skills and educational attainment have never been more important, both for the individual and for the country."

Our Basic Needs mission team exists to help connect the rest of us to real human need in the world. This

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month's topic is "Education." How might God use you to empower education in the world (prayer, generosity, leadership, volunteering, etc.)?