Fall is a season with mixed reviews. The relief from the heat and humidity of summer and the arrival of apple cider donuts can make autumn a favorite for some folks. For others, the thought of winter breathing down their necks overshadows any positives that fall might offer. But on those days when the sky is bright blue and the trees display their splendor, almost everyone will agree that fall can be spectacular. The hues of the season signal a change that is hard to miss, different than the subtle ways in which other seasons slip into place.

The election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is a clear sign within the rhythms of a congregation that change is in the air. However, the work leading up to this election can appear rather subtle and slow. There is a typical truncated search for an interim who recommends an interim, and hearts so that the splendor of what is possible has no mixed reviews. Northminster’s preparatory work for this new season has included a reaffirmation of the church’s core values. The list begins with the congregation’s desire to be centered in Christ.

“If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.”

2 Corinthians 5:17

What an exciting time to be in anticipation of the untold wonders this new season of creation will bring; to be open to experiencing the rhythms of this community in ways that can be familiar, yet new, and fresh, and surprising. May we all be able to agree that something truly special is about to happen. 

As a church is on the precipice to enter a new season, God’s creative rhythms of life together need to be welcomed with expectant minds and hearts.

As Northminster embarks on its pastor nominating search, we thought it would be helpful to share the Pastor Nominating Process, as defined by the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Presbyterian’s Committee on Ministry (COM) assigns a liaison to help guide the church through the search process.

Initial steps in the search process:
1. A Presbytery mission study consultant begins work with the congregation to write its Mission Study. For Northminster, this consisted of the summary reports from our two consultants and our new core values.
2. Send the Mission Study to the COM moderator for approval.
3. The COM (through the moderator) grants permission to form a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).
4. Call a congregational meeting to elect the PNC.
5. The PNC elects its own chair, vice chair or co-chair and secretaries (recording and corresponding).
6. Establish a PNC budget with the Session.
7. The PNC works closely with the COM liaison:
   a. The PNC develops a position description, if not already completed by the Session.
   b. The Session determines the range of salary for the position.
   c. The Session approves the position description.
   d. The PNC completes the Ministry Information Form (MIF), using the Mission Study as a resource.
   e. The Session approves the MIF.
   f. The MIF is entered into the Church Leadership Connection’s electronic data base.
8. Develop criteria to evaluate dossiers/Personal Information Forms (PIFs).
10. Determine number of votes needed to extend a call.
11. Decide how we will handle disagreements.
12. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
13. Contact references.
14. Obtain clearance on candidates from the Executive Presbyter.
15. Conduct phone and online interviews.
16. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
17. Contact references.
18. Obtain clearance on candidates from the Executive Presbyter.
19. Conduct phone and online interviews.
20. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
21. Contact references.
22. Conduct phone and online interviews.
23. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
24. Contact references.
25. Conduct phone and online interviews. In the event of a tie, repeat the process.
26. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
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100. Conduct phone and online interviews. In the event of a tie, repeat the process.
101. Conduct in-person interviews with at least two top candidates.
Where We’re Going

As a congregation, we’re at the end of our first 75 years. And at the end of our longest-serving head pastor’s tenure. And about (we hope) at the end of the most devastating pandemic in our individual (and our church’s) lifetimes.

So much for endings; what about beginnings? Which way do we go from here?

According to the Cheshire Cat, if you don’t care “where you are going, you don’t know which way you go.” Or as Yogi Berra tried to say it, “If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.”

So following such literary guidance — as well as established Presbyterian procedure for launching pastor searches — we’re deep into the process of figuring out who we are and where we want to be. And we’re deep into the process of figuring out procedure for launching pastor searches — as well as established Presbyterian church’s lifetimes.

DEVASTATING PANDEMIC

A key part of that is deciding, collectively, about (we hope) at the end of the most surprising? At first glance, the six core values read like what Northminster would have always said about itself. They are sound statements of principle and are deeply rooted in millennia of Christian thought. But a look back reveals more change than might have been immediately obvious. In 1999, during the ReVision process that prepared us to call Teri Thomas, Northminster went through a similar discernment effort and adopted new values as a short, usually one-word, term, followed by a brief clarifying description (written on the chalkboard below):

Christ-Centered

Grounded in the Word

Relevant

Inclusive

Nurturing

Serving

The drafting process went “super-quick,” with several email exchanges and one in-person meeting that lasted about an hour — a testament to the insight and expressive skills of the V-Team. They proposed the values statement to the Session which, in turn, presented it to the congregation, and both bodies approved the statement without revision or opposition.

Did the V-Team look to other churches for examples? No, they consciously avoided external input, determined that Northminster’s core values come from Northminster’s own people. What happens next? The values statement is already directing the Pastor Nominating Committee as it searches for Northminster’s next head pastor. It’s also guided church leadership in formulating an updated vision statement: “Engaging with neighbors near and far in Christ’s love.” And it will soon lead to a series of strategies and action steps for programming to start next year.

Are any of these values new? Or surprising? At first glance, the six core values read like what Northminster would have always said about itself. They are sound statements of principle and are deeply rooted in millennia of Christian thought. But a look back reveals more change than might have been immediately obvious. In 1999, during the ReVision process that prepared us to call Teri Thomas, Northminster went through a similar discernment effort and adopted new mission and vision statements. Although the format today is somewhat different, four of the 2021 core values appear throughout the 1999 mission and vision statements. But two really don’t: “Inclusive” and “Relevant” didn’t make the 1999 list. That doesn’t mean that Northminster 1999 didn’t want to be inclusive or relevant or didn’t believe those traits to be important. But it does mean that those principles didn’t rise to the top as we consciously evaluated and described what we were all about two decades ago. Now they have.

Identifying core values, of course, doesn’t ensure that we know now, or will agree on in the future, the precise steps necessary to implement those values. But in Dave Smazik’s terminology, the list establishes the “guard rails” that will keep us on our chosen road. Or, in the Cheshire Cat’s, it tells us “where we want to get to.”

NPC Values

Christ-Centered

Focusing our hearts and minds on Christ

Grounded in the Word

Strengthening relationships with God through joyful, passionate and thoughtful preaching, music and Christian education

Relevant

Seeking to connect contemporary ideas to our Christian purpose in an evolving world

Inclusive

Supporting all seekers and believers, families of all combinations and children of every age

Nurturing

Bringing the love and grace of Christ to our congregation, our neighborhood and our world

Serving

Bringing the love and grace of Christ to our congregation, our neighborhood and our world
If you have ShelbyNext on your computer or iPhone, you might note that a non-member is in there, too. Northminster Administrative Assistant Susan Glant helped set up the Shelby system and naturally had to test it, asking herself how easy it would be for members to add a photo, and how to update contact information. Susan wouldn’t ask anyone to do something she hadn’t done herself. The fact that she listed John Calvin as her spouse (late theologian and buried now for over 500 years) was classic Susan.

Susan came to Northminster an astonishing 25 years ago this fall. She joined Bobbie Schofer and Sue Purtee in the early 80s. Susan with her parents, Dale and Janice Ball, and Katie Deer who, along with Eileen Aseo and others, would be her stay and comfort for many years. But the welcome was tested early when, three months into the job, the church suffered the sudden and violent loss of Rev. Fred and Cleta Mathias. Surrounding by so many in shock, the new employee began picking up pieces of the job when sudden bouts of grief or even visitors from the press overtook the others. It was during one of these moments when Bama Kennedy approached the young woman and, as if she were reading Susan’s thoughts, cupped her face in warm hands and said, “Well, Susan, if y’all ever wondered why God sent you here, now you know.”

This seems to have become a theme from that moment. Susan’s deep spirituality and natural empathy has permeated inside both the old and new walls of Northminster, especially among the elderly members. When she was diagnosed with cancer some years ago, she knew and bonded with other survivors in the congregation and found comfort and support in return. One is co-worker, Nancy Sala, who has described Susan as the “heart and soul” of the office.

Whether publishing membership directories, assembling annual reports, observing and tracking the membership database that marks the passages of our lives from birth to death, Susan knows us. Early on, Susan recruited and trained troops of office volunteers who moved from answering calls and greeting people from a small desk, to contributing to more specialized office work at roomy workstations. Volunteers count on her knowledge. “I can’t even guess how many capital campaigns, Sound & Spirit series, random logos, stewardship mailings, photo directories and web pages Susan has helped me with, and I know I’m just one of the many little fires she’s putting out throughout her work week,” remembers Jill de la Ahs. “Susan has always been a steady and reliable resource in the office.”

And volunteers have counted on Susan’s appreciation and calm. Mary Holland, a long-time office volunteer, noted gratefully, “Susan does indeed have the patience of a saint! I have made a couple of stellar mistakes in the office and she is totally smooth with a solution and nonjudgmental support.” Susan says there have been three phone systems, three postage meters, and several color printers over the last 25 years, and adds that not one of them died at the hands of a volunteer!

While Susan has been busier in the pandemic era of virtual meetings, she said the digital world had already become 95% of what she does to manage online communications including emails, weekly newsletters and membership.

Besides the daily trek from Greenwood, Susan makes 80-mile round-trip visits to her parents in Rockville on weekends. Since 1996 she has had five cars with different engines under the hood, and adds that not one of them died at the hands of a volunteer. Scrolling through my social media feed, I often see advertisements for local restaurants and events. Often, I click on these items to learn more about a new place in our area. I recently saw a new place for Asian rice bowls that is opening nearby. It is a chain that I am not familiar with but seems like a good thing. Here’s the thing, I am not sure about the ingredients. Some of them almost seem familiar. But not quite. None of the ingredients seem bad. But they are just out of my comfort zone because of their lack of familiarity. Does that ever happen to you with new foods? New places? New people? Maybe just slightly different than your normal? That is how it has felt being new to Indy. New to Northminster. New to the Youth Group. It is somewhat familiar, but slightly different. Especially as we slowly re-engage as a church family and as a youth group. We are slowly trying to find our familiar ground. We are slowly trying to find our “comfort zone” together. This new season is not bad. It is just new. It is unfamiliar. However, as we take a risk and try it…there are so many new and amazing “flavors” to be found! God continues to do some of His greatest work through unlikely combinations!
Change Brings Opportunity: Reflections with Dr. Marko Petričić

Marko Petričić, to hear about his personal history and experience with change, as well as the interesting opportunities it has opened up for him.

Born and raised in Serbia, Marko enjoyed a happy childhood in the former Yugoslavia, situated in the west-central part of the Balkan Peninsula. The 1980s were a peaceful era before things changed. "It was clear to Marko, already an accomplished musician, that his future profession would be music. He started playing the keyboard accordion at age 8 at an excellent music school for young and talented children. I later switched to learning the bayan at 14, and very early on, I knew that music was for me."

Marko pursued his advanced music education stateside. He holds DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) and MM (Master of Music) degrees in organ performance and literature from Indiana University, where he studied with Christopher Young. He received his Bachelor of Music degree, summa cum laude, from Ohio University, where his teacher was H. Joseph Butler. Marko has had many mentors in life, namely "my accordion teacher, my organ professor at IU, and Frederick Burgomaster at Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, with regard to various aspects of church music." I asked him about living here versus in Europe. "Life in the U.S. is generally fast-paced and there are many options on how to set up your life. Indiana is very peaceful, and you can go at your own pace. The people are very friendly as well."

Marko has gained significant recognition over time, including first prizes in organ competitions and performances around the country and throughout Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, and Yugoslavia on some of the most renowned organs in the world. He even performed for the Yugoslav National Radio and Television. These days, when he’s not hard at work at NPC or busy performing recitals, Dr. Marko is on the faculty at University of Indianapolis, where he teaches music theory (he especially enjoys training in aural skills) and mentors UIndy’s organ students. He has four currently. "I really enjoy the freedom and creativity of teaching. And as Northminster’s organist, I love accompanying a great choir anthem and offering an inspiring prelude. With its new Fisk organ, Northminster ranks at the top of the list of my favorite jobs!"

At a solo organ recital on November 12, Marko plans to showcase our organ with two exciting works: a Bach Partita, “Sei gegrußet” (“Hail to you”), that features every imaginable organ stop combination in each variation, and “Fantasie and Fugue” by Max Reger, an exuberant tour de force that features the incredible potential of the swell box on this organ. “Other pieces that are some of my favorites include works by Buxtehude, Mozart, Guilmant, and Widor.” With Advent — Marko’s favorite season — just around the corner, he’ll also be busy figuring out which pieces will best complement the choir repertoire. He especially looks forward to pieces with fantastic organ settings by J.S. Bach.

Asked about how to involve the new organ in community outreach efforts, Marko shared that while hosting a recent event for the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), several organists came to practice and see our new organ (the only Fisk organ in Indianapolis). He’s interested in connecting with local area schools and getting youth interested in organ lessons. "There’ll be many future organ recitals here, which should attract more people to the church. Two of our newest choir members came to us largely because of this organ, so that represents a great start!”

Outside of work, Marko enjoys fishing and soccer or biking with Stephanie and his two boys. What’s up next? Well, he has a black belt in judo (a student since age 7), but he’s decided to ease away from that. Marko will remain as busy as ever, recording a new CD of Bach’s Clavier-Übung (“keyboard exercise”) III on NPC’s organ and the bayan in May 2022. Sometimes, change marches on in a good way. —
Unheralded Angels: Craft-ing A Legacy

For the past four decades, the spirit of the duo that is Don and Dolly Craft has been an ever-moving fixture in and around Northminster Presbyterian Church. Their presence has been like that of a comic-book hero/heroine team, moving about in the background, coordinating from an anonymous headquarters. Landing in Indianapolis from The Big Apple area in 1980, the newly arrived couple, with their young family in tow, decided the time was right to search out a church “family.” Congregational leader Damon Auble’s home visit planted that seed and encouraged the Crafts’ participation in all things Northminster. They were forever changed by that visit. And have we ever benefited from their choice!

Their association with NPC pastors Jerry Johnson, Fred Mathias, Teri Thomas and current interim pastor Dave Smarick, has traveled along the “long and winding road” from Sunday School teaching (Dolly and Don) and choir member (Don) to just about every church committee organization. Not to mention a couple of terms of service each as members of Session and Session Trustees.

The Crafts are indeed a testament to the “living” church of Christ at Northminster, with the exception of one brief year away from Indianapolis in the mid-90’s. As Dolly defines their relationship, “That’s our church family, and we can’t desert our family.”

Their commitment has included Dolly’s once serving as the only woman on an usher team; as an original member of the E-Team created by Associate Pastor Ruth Moore circa 1995; Don as church Treasurer for 12 years, on the Finance Committee, and on the Building Committee, both now and during the renovation for the Gathering Place; stints on fundraising and Stewardship committees; plus — insert breath here — Dolly and Don’s tireless efforts on behalf of Northminster’s involvement with the Interfaith Hospitality Network for the past two-plus decades.

Dolly points out that, along with IHN’s “Saint”, original coordinator, Lynne Tobin, and her successor, Nancy Flamme, the Crafts served vital positions as overnight hosts for “many years.” And once again promoting her favorite cause, Dolly reminds this interviewer of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis’ recent Home Sweet Home 2021 event and Silent Auction — of which Dolly was co-chair.

Don, ever deflecting, interjects: “And don’t forget our daughter, Sarah, who served as one of the first Youth members of the Session. Both Craft children were confirmed at NPC.”

So it goes. Don and Dolly serving as Host Team members, both as members of Lori Schlabach’s Counting Team, Don as part of the Men’s Prayer Breakfast, Dolly on the NPC Striders Christ Care Group, Dolly previously on the Congregational Life Team.

In between, this intrepid duo managed to hold down professional careers, raise a family, and create their unique and enviable “Camp Craft” summers for their three grandchildren over the course of the past decade.

They also chose, rather than downsize from their empty nest in Carmel to a maintenance-free next chapter in a retirement community, to relocate to new lodgings in the hustle and bustle of downtown Indy. They are near to the plays, concerts, restaurants, fairs and festivals (when free of COVID restrictions), of which they are enthusiastic patrons.

And then, there are the biking trails that Don and Dolly frequent to keep them “on track” and in shape for their next cycling adventures. The couple has participated in rides across the state, region, the U.S., and throughout Europe. Dolly has captured much of their travels with her superb photographic eye, which can be appreciated on her Facebook page.

Despite their separate and joint whirlwind schedules, they have an unswerving devotion to each other, family, church family, and community.

Oh, what lessons these two of His most faithful have “Craft-ed” for others to follow. What a legacy Northminster has been gifted.
Family Retreat at Pokagon Brings Warmth to the Coldest Season

Each year (minus a pandemic), in late January or early February, Northminster families of all ages, types and sizes convene for a weekend at Pokagon State Park in Angola, IN. If your idea of a good time includes hiking through snowy woods, carrying a toboggan up dozens of stairs then barreling down a track, sitting by a fire, playing board games, swimming in a kid-filled indoor pool, singing pop songs to guitar accompaniment, practicing yoga, and/or participating in a casual-but-deeply-meaningful worship service, then please make plans to join us!

The next Pokagon retreat will be Jan. 21-23, 2022. Please email johnwright@northminster-indy.org to be added to the list to receive information.

Answer to Seasonal Puzzle on page 15:
1) Leaves
2) Umbrella
3) Frost
4) Fun
5) Pumpkin
6) All Saints Day
Children’s Literature Reviews

Parables of the Opposum Paul
Follow the Church of the Hollow Stump and all who reside in the village of Feather Hill during the Advent season (Planning for Christmas), Christmas (The Guy in the Barn), and the Epiphany (Christmas in Puerto Rico). This is a book for all ages, created and written by Northminster congregant Jean Dodd with special thanks to some of our very own members! Characters like Erica Eagle, Skip Squirrel, Manny the praying mantis and Granrie Annie Owl take readers through the Advent season — and beyond — with an entertaining and, at the same time devotional, interpretation. Lovely illustrations by Deb Hoeffner.

Benjamin’s Gift
by Barbara E. Bull / Illustrations by Deb Hoeffner (ISBN 978-1-45756-503-6)
This is the story of one boy, on one day, and the very special gift he is given, and eventually gives away. The boy, the day, and the gift turn out to be very special indeed. The story highlights the saying, “good things come to those who wait,” meaning there is hope in patience and the best is yet to come. Benjamin’s day points out that Patience is a virtue and something everyone should practice. The tale is also a tribute to Midwestern agriculture, written by Michigan writer — and fruit grower (guess which fruit!) — Barbara E. Bull.

Everybody’s Tree
by Barbara Joosse / Illustrations by Rena Graef (ISBN-13; 978-1-5344-1848-6)*
Trees, just like children, grow and mature where they are planted. Some have a job right in the same spot where they started. Others, however, have an important calling away from their home. This is the story of one such tree, its journey, and how one family’s care and nurturing lead to the evergreen becoming everyone’s Christmas delight for everybody. Even Christmas trees have a job to do, it seems — lighting up dark corners, dark skies, and dark spirits.

Christina’s Carol
by Christina Rossetti / Illustrations by Tomie De Paola* (ISBN 978-0-55334-1848-6)*
Based on a popular Victorian carol, “In the Bleak Midwinter,” one of England’s most popular poets, Ms. Rossetti, has woven the timeless tale of the Nativity birth. Her rhyming verse credits all the gifts presented to the Christ Child that first Christmas Day by angels, shepherds, and Wise Men. She saves the best for last, however, as the poem ends with the greatest gift coming from the humblest of attendees to the manger in the barn. Illustrated by the Newberry and Caldecott award-winning Tomie De Paola.

One copy of each title is available in the Northminster Church library.
*Also available to order at Kids Ink bookstore, https://www.kidsinkbooks.com, 5619 N. Illinois Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208
Email: kidsink@indy.net, Phone: 317-255-2598

Proclaim Magazine Survey
We invite you to answer a brief survey about Proclaim magazine and tell us how we’re doing. We’d love to hear your thoughts! Thank you. Please fill out the form on page 15 and return it to the church office. Or, you can fill out the survey online by scanning the QR code or visiting our website at www.northminster-indy.org; click on “Events” and open the “Proclaim Magazine Survey” event.

A Seasonal Puzzle

This change of season makes us think of sitting by a fire; or celebrating the return of hearing the Chancel Choir. Don your sweater, put on socks, and pour some cider to guzzle; cozy up with a pen in hand to complete our Autumn puzzle.

1) Colorful foliage
2) Used in rainy weather
3) Found on the ground at 32°F and lower
4) What trick-or-treaters have
5) Needed to make a jack-o’lantern
6) Church observance in memory of those who have died in the past year

Find the solution of this puzzle on the bottom of page 13.

PUZZLE

1) Do you read your copy of Proclaim magazine when it arrives each quarter?
   ○ Yes ○ No If no — why not?

2) Choosing a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, please rank Proclaim magazine in terms of overall quality and communication effectiveness. (choose one):
   ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

3) What do you like about Proclaim magazine? (Select all that apply)
   ○ Interesting features/article topics
   ○ Wide range of topics coverage
   ○ Updates from the Pastor
   ○ Reading/book recommendations
   ○ Word puzzles
   ○ Learning more about Northminster’s staff, members, music, worship, committees, and behind-the-scenes activities
   ○ Access to information I can’t get from regular Northminster emails and newsletters
   ○ Focus on the people, history, and stories of Northminster
   ○ Other

4) Is there anything you don’t like about Proclaim magazine?

5) What else would you like to see in Proclaim magazine? What suggestions for new topics/articles do you have?

6) Do you share your copy of Proclaim magazine with others outside of your household?
   ○ Yes ○ No

7) Would you be willing to write an article or contribute another form of content to Proclaim magazine in the future? (A member of the team will reach out to you.)
   ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, please provide your contact information below.

First and last name
Email
Phone number
Proclaim is a quarterly publication of Northminster Presbyterian Church celebrating the stories, people and work of our church. It features more human interest than timely information. Let us all Proclaim the good news! Please send interesting story ideas and photos to sglant@northminster-indy.org. We cannot guarantee publication of all submissions, but we appreciate recommendations. Thank you for reading and for all you do to support Northminster.

Coordinator: Susan Glant, sglant@northminster-indy.org
Editor: Jennifer Dzwonar, jennifer.dzwonar@borshoff.biz

Trunk or Treat
Most years, Northminster hosts a Trunk or Treat event for kids from the church and the community, and it’s always a trunkful of fun! This year’s event will be on Sunday, Oct. 24, 5-6:30pm.