

PROCLAIM

A publication of Northminster Presbyterian Church

Stories of Hope

Winter 2021



Covered with Hope

I have become more attuned to the change of seasons during the last nine months. It may be due to the disruption of anticipated schedules and plans which provided more time for walks. While outside, the nuances of creation appeared amplified. And so it was when I experienced Indiana’s first snowflakes of the season.

Creation continues to unfold in all its beauty whether we are aware of it or not, a stark reminder that none of us, nor our plans, occupy the center of the universe. An awareness of movement within and between seasons offers a vivid reality of the centering action of the Creator in our daily lives, a witness to the reality of hope. Hope, alive in God’s creative and re-creative power. Hope, eternal in Christ’s love for us. Hope, present in the power of the Holy Spirit. Hope that is sourced to unfold uninterrupted.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;

it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

From Isaiah 53

Hope runs deep. It “waters” us. Like snow, it provides cover when life is dark and bare. It ushers in an awareness of how grace, God’s presence made visible, has fallen into our lives.



Pastor, Dave Smazik.

And it is in our sharing of grace, in big and small ways, that hope continues to “sprout” and accomplish its purpose.

The change in routines and schedules this past year, imposed on us without any planning on our part, has given us time to heighten our sensitivities to all that we have been rushing past. I pray, that in slowing down to read this issue of PROCLAIM, our collective experience will be an amplified awareness of ways hope can fall into and cover our lives. May it bring us joy and peace.

Isaiah continues:

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;

the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.



Living Through the Pandemic When Over 65

These days I start every conversation with “I’m healthy. Are you healthy?” Let me say I live in a retirement community; when Covid 19 arrived, residents’ meals were delivered to the door, residents were cautioned to stay put in their apartments and not to associate with other residents. Gathering up my advanced years and underlying condition, I continued my daily walks outside and picked up my mail after 7 p.m. when no one else was around.

And how does one fill all these extra homebound hours? I read a lot. Normally, I have a stack of magazines to dip into. The stack disappeared. Among my favorite pandemic book titles are: *The Nickel Boys: A Novel* by Colson Whitehead, *Hitting A Straight Lick With A Crooked Stick* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* by Jean Edward Smith, *Upheaval: Turning Points for Nations in Crisis* by Jared Diamond.

Since I may be the only person around who can write names on the backs of some old family pictures, I dug into that project. I found a picture of a great-great-grandmother that I didn’t know I had. Her name was Brita Louise Wahlstrom, and I have enough of her blue and white Johnson Bros. dishes to serve dessert and coffee to four people. And there’s a picture of my dad’s paternal grandmother. Her name was Eugenie Hendrichova, and she expected her three young grandsons to kiss her hand in greeting when they came to visit.

One day I tackled a rats’ nest of electrical cords under my computer. From the jumble I extracted two twelve-foot, non-descript cords and three extension cords. As a result, two lamps, a phone, a shredder, a computer and a printer are still in good working order. The sense of accomplishment was considerable.



Left to right: Lowell Lumley, Pam and Jon Constable and Pennie Lumley enjoying a social outing at the Jingle Rails exhibit inside the Eiteljorg Museum in 2016.

Like all the rest of us, David and Paulette, my son and daughter-in-law, have hunkered down for the duration. We’ve been able to meet outdoors occasionally, wearing masks and social distancing of course. Otherwise, we’ve been making do with daily phone calls and the exchange of care packages (magazines, toothpaste, obituaries, old photos, etc.) The three of us heaved a sigh of relief when the election was over, and we hope that Americans can summon up the abundance of patience needed to heal the wounds of the past four years and cope with all the problems that existed before that.

With so much time to think, I sense my prayer life has evolved during the pandemic. There have always been Sunday Worship, grace before meals and prayers when I’ve been concerned about a particular person or situation. Now “This is the day the Lord has made; rejoice and be glad in it” runs through my head most every day, usually early on.

The Northminster prayer list has become a weekly read-and-pray exercise. In my rummaging around I found a bookmark with the Prayer of St. Francis on it, the one that starts out “Lord make me an instrument of thy peace ...” It has become a daily touchstone. My prayers of concern had extended to praying for the wellbeing of Ruth Bader Ginsberg and, when it becomes time for me to move on, for my departure to be quick and not painful.

There are some things I miss because of Covid 19: smiles, handshakes and hugs, going to live performances, volunteering, playing bridge. Other things are still the same: the birds flying and squirrels scampering outside my living room windows, the nubby feel of a favorite afghan, Frank Sinatra singing “A Foggy Day,” the taste of a not-quite-ripe banana. And we’re all still the children of God as I see it. That somehow connects with “we’re all in this together.” ♦

Major Miracle



Denise Harrington with her grandson, Major

... A Grandmother's Story

"The test kept coming back normal. Lord, we are happy everything is coming back normal but there is something wrong." This is the first thing that comes to mind when I think about those first days of Major's life. Major is the first child for my daughter and her husband. Her pregnancy was uneventful but in hindsight we now wonder if the times she didn't feel Major move for hours were an indication of his sleepiness.

We were all so excited about his birth. Major wasn't breathing on his own when he was delivered and the NICU staff were present to assist. They took him to the NICU for observation. My son-in-law and I were excited to go up and spend time with him and allow my daughter to rest. Major was asleep but we did not think anything of it. His vitals were all good.

Since we had been up all night, I was tired and ready to head home for some sleep. A couple hours later my daughter called and was upset. She said Major wasn't latching on to nurse, his eyes were rolling back in his head, and she knew based on her experience working in a postpartum unit something was wrong. I wasn't sure what to say. I was in shock.

The next day an MRI and more blood work was done, and it all came back normal. Major would still not latch on and they continued feeding him through an NG feeding tube. Before we knew it, a week had passed and we still didn't have any answers. I could see it was wearing on my daughter and son-in-law. My daughter kept saying "it wasn't supposed to be this way." Our family and church family were praying for answers. It was hard for me to watch the sadness my daughter was experiencing. As a mother I wanted to take her pain away, I wanted to make it right. I searched for the words and songs to encourage her.

The doctor in the NICU became someone my daughter dreaded seeing because he didn't have any answers. During Major's second week in the NICU, the doctor mentioned Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) after he consulted with a genetic doctor at the leading pediatric hospital in our area. He wanted to run genetic testing, but the results would take days to come back so they were discharged from the hospital without answers.

My sister (who is a nurse) read about a child in our area who was diagnosed with PWS. She sent me the story from the local news, which was enlightening. Then my sister remembered a story of a young man in our state who died from PWS and I was not ready for that news. We still didn't have a diagnosis, but I remember the mother in the story said, "don't go to Google because the information is outdated and difficult to read."

Here I was with information on two children with vastly different stories. Should I share this information with my daughter? I thought she had enough going on, but I suggested she not go searching on Google. Well, I was too late. Within a week my daughter received the lab results while in my kitchen. I could tell by her reaction the test determined Major had PWS and our last glimpse of hope seemed to diminish. I was holding Major and immediately began to cry and pray over him. My tears were dropping on his precious little face. Lord, what does the future hold for this precious baby? *Ephesians 3:20* became the verse I prayed over Major. "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." I was confident Major would do exceedingly and abundantly above all we could imagine. Now it was time to get to work!

I pushed my daughter to call and get all of the therapy services started. I took them to all their doctor appointments and therapy sessions. Major started therapy at 6 weeks and that has been life changing for him. My daughter finally mustered up the strength to change his feeding tube on her own.

Meanwhile, I decided to contact PWSA | USA and requested information. My daughter was refusing to contact PWSA | USA at first because she was angry. One of the amazing things that happened was when I received my call from the Family Support counselors: my daughter was at my house and because she is nosey, she listened. I joined the grandparent Facebook page. I could relate to the stories shared. As a grandparent, this was truly a challenging journey.

When my packet came in the mail from PWSA | USA, my daughter and her husband were at my house. She asked to open the packet and started reading the material. What she read gave her encouragement. She started reading information to me and her husband. This made my heart smile. She then requested the parent packet from PWSA | USA. She received a call from a parent mentor, and this made all the difference in the world – she no longer felt alone. Amazingly their stories were similar.

I told my daughter she was not only Major's mother, but she was now his greatest advocate. It would not be easy because parenting is not, but I was confident Major would bring her and us great joy. We would not focus on the future but on every milestone and I am happy to say there have been many beautiful milestones. #MajorMiracle

Embracing at a Distance

Someday soon we all will be together, if the fates allow. Until then we'll have to muddle through somehow...
—lyrics by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine

Although Judy Garland was singing about one Christmas, that message fits our whole COVID year, including how Northminster scrambled to keep mission efforts flowing against the pandemic current. We had to find a way to muddle through.

Mike Chapuran, executive director of Family Promise, summed up the problem for its Interfaith Hospitality Network, in words that applied equally to many of our other mission projects: “our volunteer-based model is the polar opposite of ‘social distancing.’” And suddenly it was presenting too much risk for too many.

For some of our programs—including Habitat for Humanity and food pantry staffing—we had to suspend most in-person efforts and rely on providing financial assistance, at or above customary levels. We also administered relief funds and gave \$16,000 for a new Umoja school in western Kenya. Meanwhile, a few of our familiar efforts continued, but in unfamiliar ways.

Interfaith Hospitality Network

With congregations closing their doors, Family Promise shut down its church-rotation system. Starting in mid-March, it moved guest families into residence hotels, paid the rent at bulk rates, closed the Day Center to visitors, provided families with bus passes and grocery gift cards, collected and distributed kitchen equipment and supplies, and carried on counseling by Zoom. It even expanded the hotel program by five families.

After two months, Family Promise transitioned to ten apartments, some donated by the Glick Company and New Bridge Apartments. That brought more living space, but also a need for furniture and housewares. Mustard Seed provided the basic furniture, volunteers helped set up the apartments, and Family Promise ran an on-line registry for houseware items. To raise funds, it tried a socially distanced “Night Without a Bed,” with volunteers spending a night in relative discomfort (on floors, in cars, in backyard tents) and inviting sponsors to contribute financially. Northminster members made donations, gave up their beds for a night (Katie Bulloff, Dolly Craft, Nancy Flamme, Becky Peterson), and set up apartments; the Striders adopted an IHN family for Christmas; and the church donated the dollars it had budgeted for IHN food supplies.

We’ve missed the IHN families. But Family Promise plans to resume church rotations in July 2021, so we may have some families back before the end of 2021.



Don Craft (top), Nancy Flamme (middle) and Becky Peterson (bottom) help prepare an apartment for a family.



This year's B2SE took a new approach, and Northminster youth helped deliver much-needed school supplies for families in need

Back-to-School Extravaganza

Extravaganza’s typical crowds didn’t make good COVID sense, so Northminster and the other sponsoring churches abandoned the usual shoe, clothing, and service functions, which weren’t feasible without physical presence, and focused entirely on school supplies. They also changed purchasing methods, donating their budgeted amounts to the Washington Township Schools Advancement Center, which used the system’s purchasing power to obtain guaranteed delivery of school supplies at favorable prices. And rather than bringing the kids to the supplies, we took the supplies to the kids. Sellers shipped the supplies, in individual packets, to two churches, where members boxed them by school and class. And on two July days, Jerry Gray’s masked band of volunteers (including Helene Lutumika, from our sponsored refugee family) picked up the boxes by truck and SUV fleet and delivered them to all Washington Township schools.

We missed seeing the kids, but managed to help about 4,500 disadvantaged students, more than three times pre-pandemic levels.



Clothe-a-Child

We missed the children, as well as many Northminster regulars who, for health reasons, couldn’t participate this year. But as Carol said, “everybody stepped up” under abnormal circumstances and managed to “make a big difference in the children’s lives.”

And next time around, we’ll be back. In person and unmuddled.

(continued on page 8)



Embracing at a Distance (continued)

(continued from page 7)

Day of Caring

COVID's distancing demands created both mission limitations and mission needs, so our Day of Caring adjusted accordingly. The Mission Team dispatched a masked group to one of our traditional mission partners, the Dayspring Center, to plant mums and do other outdoor grooming. And it organized other roving bands, with masks and signs and gift bags, to visit the homes of several church members who've had to hunker down completely during the pandemic.

We missed the close contact we've usually had with member and nonmember families, but we persisted in putting our caring into action. ✦



Northminster members beautify the area around Dayspring Center.



Members of all ages spread love to others with Day of Caring visits.



*Once again as in olden days, happy golden days of yore,
Faithful friends who are dear to us will be near to us once more.*



Stephen Ministers: The “After” People

In the Book of Acts, Stephen was charged with providing a caring ministry to those in need. Indeed, the Caring ministry is considered a hallmark of the Christian faith community. As such, Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care for those experiencing a life stressor, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or other sudden shift.

While Stephen Ministers come from every walk of life, they all share a passion for bringing Christ’s love and care to people during a time of need. Since 1975, more than 600,000 people from more than 13,000 congregations and other organizations have been trained as “Stephens”—representing over 180 denominations, all 50 states, all 10 Canadian provinces, and 30 other countries.

The “after” people

Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, “What exactly is a Stephen Minister?” One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the **After People**.

Stephen Ministers are there:

- ... **after** the phone call you hoped you’d never get.
- ... **after** the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ... **after** the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ... **after** the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do.”
- ... **after** the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home.”
- ... **after** the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ... **after** the gavel comes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ... **after** the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ... **after** you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- ... **after** your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the After People. They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support for as long **after** as needed.

www.stephenministries.org

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Northminster’s Stephen Ministry

In 2001, Interim Associate Pastor John Stephens presented the idea of a Stephen Ministry program to the Congregational Life Team. His former church, Orchard Park Presbyterian in Carmel, had the program and he hoped Northminster would start its own ministry. Congregational Life team members Bob and Marilyn Rogers and Aileen Alsop met with Orchard Park’s Stephen Ministers. The Rogers and Aileen reported back enthusiastically about the program, so the decision was made to send two members from Northminster to the week-long SM training program.

Nancy Jarrell and Betty Bowers were our first SM Leaders, accepting the invitation to train. It took some convincing, as the work would require a heavy commitment. Betty had recently retired, with a background in education and working in the career center at Goodwill Industries training adults. Nancy was working professionally as a social worker. Today, Betty is reluctant to say she was sent by God to deliver His message. Here is her view: Betty was looking for some meaningful action, and leading Stephen Ministers sure felt like her calling.

For the nearly fifteen years she served as a leader, Betty’s focus was to assign



The Northminster Stephen Ministry team: John Reed, Carol Campbell and Tony Dzwonar.

Stephens to care receivers. Often, pastors reach out to a member of the congregation and suggest a member might benefit from a Stephen Minister. At the time the suggestion is made, the member is assured the assigned Stephen will never reveal their relationship. If the member agrees, their name is passed to a SM Leader. From the beginning, Betty paired personalities as she knew them (and she’s known many of us at Northminster a long time), matching an SM’s experiences with a care-receiver’s need. She contacted each one and then stepped back.

There is no documentation of how many people have been assisted by Northminster’s Stephen Ministry. In all her years of training, Betty never wrote down the names of either person. The SM program is that adamant about confidentiality, as success of the program depends completely upon the trust built between the two individuals. Even during their monthly meetings, the Stephens discuss approaches to their “relationship” while never revealing the name or identifying details of their care receiver. More often, not even the issue is brought up unless it’s very general, i.e., grief, divorce or loneliness.

This is the second in a series about Stephen Ministries as we explore the valuable work of both caregivers and recipients. Next Issue: *Stephen Ministers Part III – Every Which Way It Works*. In the meantime, you may contact SM Coordinators John Reed, Tony Dzwonar or Carol Campbell.

As long-time SM John Reed describes his experience, one of the most important benefits of their training comes from having access to the main Stephen Ministry offices and staff. “Their monthly supervision is not so much about the care receivers as it is about us caregivers. They provide great support for how to take on and deal with balancing our lives, families, and our personal health and wellbeing with the issues and lives of our care receivers.”

Unlike visiting nurses, housekeepers, or therapists who might offer a variety of services, Stephen Ministers are fellow Christian companions who walk through a crisis or any difficult time to assist as one navigates their issues. The companions meet as often, and for as long, as both determine the necessity, which is generally once a week for several months or even years. The official relationship does end eventually, when both agree the crisis has passed.

Teachers, social workers and nurses are often drawn to this ministry. Sometimes, however, these professionals may have the most difficulty in training, as they are, by profession, fixers and problem solvers. Stephen Ministers, on the other hand, train to listen, walk with people working through difficult times in their lives, and be present, as the care receiver manages the crisis and solves the problem on their own. ✦

Music Continues to Inspire Hope



John Wright and section leaders sing during online worship.

I had an opportunity recently to catch up with John Wright, our Director of Music Ministries. Recognizing the ongoing stress and uncertainty as COVID-19 restrictions continue, I was curious about how music can still be enjoyed as an integral, hopeful part of our worship experience as we move from the Christmas season into a new year.

We miss the “normal” way we usually gather and approach music at Northminster, but John and team have been able to continue to make music a focal point of regular worship. During these unprecedented times, choir section leaders have provided weekly musical prayers, responses, and praise on behalf of our congregation. Combined with our wonderful Fisk pipe organ and occasional instrumentalists, we can offer a full Sunday service virtually. Throughout the fall, section leaders were able to rehearse and record for worship services. And John programmed Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols* (with Heaven Fann, harpist) as the extended prelude for Christmas Eve.

Choir members miss singing, too! Each Sunday in October, the Chancel Choir had a chance to sing — while masked and distanced — in the parking lot. About 70% participated, regardless

of the weather! These rehearsals were a reminder of the bond we share and the love we have for singing. Over time, and as hope for an effective coronavirus vaccine grows, we’ll be looking — and hoping — for opportunities to engage our choir(s) when possible.

Many have been eager to hear our new pipe organ in person. Since this may not be possible for an extended timeframe, Marko plans to present occasional short organ recitals via live stream in 2021. An official organ dedication service, with other organists, instrumentalists and the choir, will be planned for a future date.

While joining the lament of musicians and music lovers around the world who grieve the loss of the art of choral singing, John looks forward with hope to the day when we all can safely gather, participate in, and experience this important and spiritually nourishing endeavor. ✦



Sanctuary Choir rehearsed outside in October while the church building was closed.

Can We Cope AND Hope During a Pandemic?

We live in a new reality these days, and regardless of circumstances, we’re all balancing stress, anxiety and other feelings that have surfaced in the era of COVID-19. While we’ve adjusted to a new normal, where usual pursuits may no longer be possible, many of us have extra time on our hands. We reached out to a number of Northminster members to hear how they are handling life during a pandemic, asking how they’re doing things differently now, and whether they’ve seen any positive outcomes. Here’s some of what we heard:

“During this strange time, I’ve walked in parks with friends, made wonderful soups, done puzzles, made face masks, improved my Spanish. Missing family visits has been tough. If we don’t bend, we break, so I’ve strived to be flexible.”

– Carol Frohlich

“COVID increased my workload in childbirth education and doula services. It’s also given me a clear direction that I need to rebalance my life. We bought a smaller home next door to my daughter and her family so that we can easily support each other, and I plan to retire in the spring rather than work another 1.5 years. I’ll continue to work part-time and serve families, which is a core value for me. Less office time will let me do other volunteer activities at church and continue service at the Lawrence food pantry. The pandemic has greatly increased food insecurity and I need time in my life to help those in need. I also have very much seen through COVID how much I want to spend more time with my family.”

– Carol Euliss

“I have been able to join and rejoin book clubs and classes through Zoom. It has been great to see and greet these friends. We’re asking, ‘Why didn’t we do this before?’”

– Carol Freeman

[And now, some others not named Carol]

“I’m working 3 days at home/2 days in the office. The change has been fairly easy, but the stress/anxiety created by a work-at-home mindset, a lack of travel and personal engagement with others, is having an impact. I’m shocked at how folks have become distant and generally disengaged. On the positive side, I’m now more casual about some things. Being busy is not that important. I’ve learned to take time for myself...the “work” will get done. You have to “feed” the soul somehow and work may not suffice. I have a positive outlook for the future, but I fear many will still rely on virtual replacements and avoid contact with others. I’m ready to get back to ‘normal.’”

– Andy Longo

“I’ve noticed people are less judgmental about how others are quarantining and giving people grace. If masking and staying separate is more comfortable for a person, I have seen others respect that, understanding that everyone’s threshold of comfort is different. The flip side is that the rules are always shifting, which is difficult, but people are more open. After quarantining, I’ve been able to be fully, 100% present with my children and grandchildren. This has allowed for togetherness with fewer distractions. We’ve made more quality time for each other.”

– Becky Peterson

“We’ve spent more time in our backyard this year than ever before, hosting socially distanced dinners outdoors, and it’s been a blessing to enjoy our company safely. Working from home, I’ve had to learn to separate work and home life -- it’s been a challenge. (Adjusting to leggings and flip flops hasn’t!) Now I grab coffee between Zoom meetings and spend a few minutes with the dogs or getting some fresh air. Once it’s safe to do so post-COVID, I plan to shake hands with people and hug my loved ones. I hope the resulting community care and concern continue, too. We don’t need a pandemic to underscore how much people need us to check on them. I’m grateful for small encouragements during these anxious days. Constant reminders of God’s presence and promise through COVID-19 give us hope.”

– Andrea Newsom



“I’ve found myself using technology to engage with a diverse range of friends, family and others more than in the past. My family is spread over several states and we had our first Zoom call on Thanksgiving. We’re actually engaging with each other more, making sure one another is well.”

– Mary Beth Riner

“Although initially the negatives of the pandemic come to mind more readily, as time has gone on, we have discovered many positives and blessings. As a family, we have had time together that we would not have had otherwise. Canceled trips turned into family game and puzzle nights, time working on our garden and home improvement projects, and taking walks as a family. We have found some new favorite recipes and put together a COVID cookbook. Though it hasn’t always been easy, this slower time together has reminded us of what really matters, what is really important: savoring time together.”

—The Plunkett Family

“My family has enjoyed the ‘slowed down’ time we’ve had together instead of rushing around to soccer practices and evening events. Time slowed. We enjoyed walks, home workouts, watching TV and movies together, and cooking. I have a renewed appreciation for the little, ordinary things in life. The summer before the pandemic was my accident, and the experience showed what’s important: We have this one life, this amazing gift, to be present and not take it for granted. I thrive on contact with my community, so I grieve that loss. However, the pandemic highlights the importance of family, friends, and community. It has illuminated, through racial unrest, the injustices that exist but which we were all too busy to see fully. It’s been challenging this year to make adjustments, but together, we all pitched in and established a new routine, learning new skills, like refinishing floors, cooking, and budgeting. COVID-19 forced us to be more creative and think about life, education, work, and community in new ways and to increase our appreciation of each other.”

– Julie Shannon

[And one more Carol to close the story]

“I’ve reimagined myself into an advocate for justice and equity. I may never be a “marcher,” but I am committed to conversation and to speaking up and speaking out. I’ve realized again and again how blessed I am with health, a home, and financial security. I’m committed to sharing my blessings and offering hospitality however I can. While a little thing, I now eat every meal at my dining room table (a change from watching TV while eating). This is for

my health but also because I realized how many people never get to eat at a dining room table! Living alone, a big adjustment has been that I couldn’t travel freely. And because I returned from a pre-COVID trip very ill, I had a few weeks to prepare for the resulting time of isolation. One of the side effects of COVID-19 is that I really try to take nothing for granted any more. I am more conscious than ever of my white privilege and want to do everything I can to repent of that privilege. And I plan to be more thankful for opportunities I have to be with friends, to offer hospitality, to travel, etc. My hope is that all of us will articulate what we’ve learned during these months and move forward using those learnings. My hope is that we won’t try to return to “life before COVID”; I don’t think that is possible.”

– Carol McDonald

PS: Struggling to juggle all the changes inspired by the coronavirus? The CDC recommends these tips:

- 1) Pause. Breathe. Notice how you feel.
- 2) Take breaks from upsetting content.
- 3) Take care of your body.
- 4) Reach out and stay connected.
- 5) Seek help if overwhelmed or unsafe.

Some quick, 5-minute “stress resets” can be found at: www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/well/mind/five-minute-coronavirus-stress-resets.html ➦

- 1. Matthew 6:9
- 2. John 11:35
- 3. Matthew 5:5
- 4. Exodus 20:16 or Deuteronomy 5:20
- 5. Matthew 28:5
- 6. John 3:16
- 7. Psalm 23:1
- 8. Luke 2:14
- 9. Philippians 4:7
- 10. Psalm 118:24

Alex Rearick — Duly Noted

One of the people missed most by the Sunday morning residents in the church balcony is Alex Rearick. Before he retired from his position as greeter at the 11 o'clock Sunday service, anticipating the time it took to climb the southwest stair to the balcony, Alex would slip quietly just inside the door, pull out a small note book and pencil and, lean over the balcony slightly, point his pencil at each parishioner downstairs, and air tap each, one by one. During a short respite from Covid in the fall, the church invited people back in the pews for the 9:00 service. And when they came, Alex was there to greet them and count them. The most he checked off was about a dozen. Duly noted.

Alex is an upbeat man who routinely sent Pastor Ruth Moore, Jeff Schmahl and others into 11 o'clock services chuckling at one of his jokes, while waiting for the choir procession in the Narthex. Even his youngest host colleague, Keane Ricchuito, has enjoyed his stories. Some are funny and some are serious, but this is a favorite.

It was in November 1943 when Alex suddenly lost his father. An older cousin, home on furlough, attended the funeral and advised Alex, who was already 18, that he should enlist rather than be drafted so he could choose what branch he wanted to serve. His interest in flying led him to the Army Air Corps. After completing basic training, he became a radar operator aboard a newly delivered B-29 Superfortress. As part of the 505th Bombardment Group, Alex and his crewmates were deployed to the Pacific island of Tinian in January 1945, where he participated in twenty-six missions over Japan. Alex says his bomber was riddled by enemy gunfire from time to time, killing two of his officers and wounding a tail gunner.

“God was my copilot,” Alex says. “I never was scratched.”

While on Tinian in the summer of 1945, Alex and his comrades watched as specially outfitted B29's were loaded with what seemed to be conventional bombs but were huge. These were the atomic bombs that would end the war in the Pacific.

His final flight aboard the “Lassy Too” came during the V-J Day flyover, when over 500 US planes flew in formation above the USS Missouri at the conclusion of the surrender ceremonies, on September 2, 1945. At war's end, Alex was a three-stripe sergeant and wore such medals as the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, and Asia/ Pacific Medal with three battle stars. He admits that his popularity “greatly increased” upon his return to Winamac High to graduate with the Class of 1946.

At war's end, Alex was a three-stripe sergeant and wore such medals as the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, and Asia/Pacific Medal with three battle stars.

He married Nancy Crow in 1950 and they moved to Indianapolis, “where the jobs were,” and worked as a Safety Engineer for various insurance companies for 36 years. Alex and Nancy joined Northminster in 1960 and raised three children, Pam and Doug, who still live in Indianapolis; and John, who lives in Texas. Nancy passed away in 1999.

Retirement wasn't a pleasure for Alex who put in another 15 years for a company in Carmel, one that actually earned him a watch when he retired permanently at age 85.



Alex Rearick (right) with Hitch Learned.

Alex thoroughly enjoyed attending many reunions of his air wing and catching up with old friends. Those days have passed, as he is now the last remaining survivor of the 505. When North Central High School called for veterans to speak to their history students, Alex put on his VFW uniform and stepped back into the classroom. While he wrote that it was “a vast relief” when he was discharged, he always leaves the students laughing.

In the early 2000's, The Library of Congress, noting that WWII veterans were passing away at an astonishing 1500 per day, began the Veterans History Project that set about interviewing American veterans. Alex, who turned 95 on December 1, 2020, has been interviewed five times. For more about him, in his own words, check out the Library of Congress/Veterans History Project/Alexander Rearick. ♦

A Bible Quotation Quiz

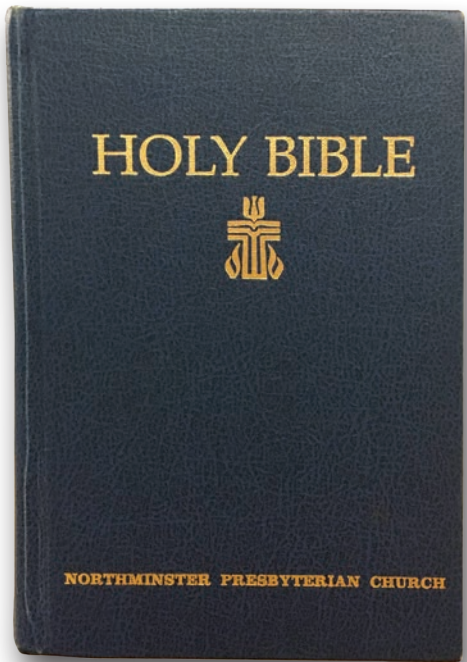
Looking for a Needle in a Haystack

Below you will find ten familiar Bible quotations. Do you know the book, chapter and verse they came from? You may rely on your memory, consult with fellow church members or use a concordance. Or why not just Google the quotations?

Example:

Genesis 1:1
In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ...

1. _____
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
2. _____
Jesus began to weep.
3. _____
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. _____
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
5. _____
But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.”
6. _____
For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.
7. _____
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
8. _____
Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.
9. _____
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
10. _____
This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.





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Learning and working together

Mary Beth Riner led an inspiring and thought-provoking 10-week class on *Becoming Anti-Racist*. Our multi-generational group learned, shared, read, sang, prayed and worked — knowing there is so much more work to do, as individuals, as a community and as a society. We look forward to more opportunities to deepen our understanding and our faith.



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.

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