Today, as I stand at my desk in my office, I find it hard to believe that eight full weeks have passed since I first walked through the doors of Northminster as Pastor/Head of Staff. So much has happened during that short amount of time. And at the beginning of my third month in ministry with you, I am filled with gratitude, hope, and excitement.

I am grateful.

I am grateful for you. Your welcome, generosity, and grace are a wonder to behold and beautifully overwhelming to experience. Every meeting, every space, and every worship service has been filled with your spirit of joy and hospitality. And it is contagious.

I am grateful for your faith. The ways in which this community of faith expresses the depth of your convictions and commitments are an inspiration. Your witness to our neighborhood and city is both challenging and transformative. You are a living testimony to the presence of the living God in our midst.

I am grateful for your ministry. The creativity and the myriad ways in which you embody your calling and mission in the world are a tangible witness to the height, depth, and breadth of God’s love. I hope you know that you are known for being a light in the world.

I am hopeful.

I am hopeful for our future together. This hope is not wishful thinking. This hope is founded on a past that is filled with stories of joy and sorrow, success and struggle, gains and losses, and a persistent faithfulness through it all. This hope is based on the ways in which you so generously give of your time, talent, and treasure. But most importantly, this hope is rooted in the promised presence of the One who has called us to engage with neighbors near and far in Christ’s love.

I am excited.

It is nearly impossible to put into words the energy and enthusiasm I feel welling up inside me when I experience ministry beside you and dream together about the possibilities that lie on our horizon. I can only tell you that the excitement is palpable. I see it in your eyes. I witness it in your spirit. I find it in the beauty of your ministry. I am convinced that all who enter Northminster sense it, too.

Indeed, I am filled with gratitude, hope, and excitement.

As we close out 2022 and prepare for a wonderful and wonder-filled 2023, I invite you to join me in prayerful consideration of how we each can invest in our future together. Your gift of time and talent are vitally important to the ministries, mission, and growth of Northminster Presbyterian Church. There are so many ways to participate, to serve, to learn, to worship, and to grow in faith together. I encourage you to find places and moments to engage that are meaningful and transformative for you, for your faith, and for our community.

If you have never made a financial pledge to the church, perhaps you could do so for 2023. Any amount helps the church deepen and broaden its ministries. If you have pledged in the past, maybe you could consider increasing your pledge by 6-8% or more for next year if you are able. An increased financial commitment is a powerful investment in our future. If you have questions about ways to engage more deeply in the life of Northminster Presbyterian Church, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

As we journey into our tomorrow together, may we do so filled with gratitude, hope, and excitement. And may we move into that tomorrow with faith in a faithful God who is “able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20 NRSV).

It is an honor to be at Northminster Presbyterian Church and to serve in faith with you.

Remember, you are loved. You are enough. You are not alone.
Time and Talents Shared

Fall in the Midwest is synonymous with harvest and abundance. It’s easy to imagine horn-shaped baskets overflowing with apples, corn, and gourds sitting on a table decorated with red and orange-hued leaves. Imagining that table awakens the smell of apple cider and campfire smoke. We can feel the chill that begins to set in and the wool blankets we pull from storage to rest on our laps while roasting marshmallows. And no matter the number of people around that fire, there is a feeling of abundance. That same feeling of abundance is alive and thriving throughout Northminster.

Northminster feels abundant because we offer our own community and the community at large our time, our talent, and our treasures. As your Stewardship Committee co-chairs, we wanted to capture some of that. In June, members of NPC were invited to pick up a Passport where they could enter the amount of time they gave to the church and the talents they shared. More than 20 individuals participated logging over 300 hours in three short months. Some of those individuals gave over 40 hours in one month while others spent an hour here and there on small tasks. Regardless of the effort, each donated their time in a variety of ways. Time and talents were shared via experiences like supporting our youth, recruiting officers, providing rides, planting flowers, setting up and/or putting away for the church picnic, holding babies, installing lighting, serving as Stephen Ministers, helping with the bulletins, leading book studies, managing our video streaming, contacting speakers, attending officer meetings, and editing this lovely publication.

We know that there are so many more ways members share their time and talents to help NPC be the vibrant community we are. In addition, our members and others share their support of NPC through their treasure. Most recently, that was through pledging. If you turned in your commitment “card” on October 30th, we thank you. If you’ve not yet submitted your information, we invite you to determine your commitment by the end of November to help the Session confidently plan how we will continue thriving in 2023.

May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.
Jude 1:2

We also invite you to experience the feelings of abundance at NPC. Attending Sunday services is just one step. Come on a Wednesday night for a meal and fellowship. Fill your heart with music by joining the choir. Settle your soul and feel your quiet abundance during yoga or 3B exercise class. Be a Sunday school teacher (no experience required!). Expand your horizons by participating in a book study. You can find other opportunities on the Events page at our website: northminster-indy.org/events

Regardless of what you choose, we promise you that you will feel even more abundant.
If you’ve been listening carefully to his early sermons — as you no doubt have, religiously — you already know the basics of where Brian Shivers, Northminster’s new Pastor and Head of Staff, came from and how he got here. There’s a lot more to know, of course, so let’s fill in some of the details.

First, a brief recap. Brian was born in Marion, Indiana, into a close-knit extended family of stable marriages and deep spiritual roots. All four of his grandparents lived nearby and were mutual friends. His paternal grandfather, at age 30, had conquered alcohol and become pastor of an Assemblies of God church in Marion. Over time, Brian’s immediate family shifted to a local Wesleyan Church, where Brian met wife-to-be Jennifer.

Brian attended (and excelled at) Marion High School. He and Jennifer entered college at nearby Taylor University, getting married just before Christmas of their sophomore year. Although Brian didn’t start out on a ministry track, plans changed when he joined a group making a weekend visit to a gang ministry in Chicago. That experience — in which he saw adolescent problems that were fundamentally common, just made more dangerous by extreme surroundings — pointed him in the direction of youth ministry and, by happenstance (or providence), the Presbyterian denomination. Switching his major to Christian Education, he found an open position as youth director at Marion’s Westminster Presbyterian Church and stayed in that role through graduation.

Meanwhile, Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis was looking for a new Director of Youth and College Ministries. They found Brian, and there began his 32 years of service at Second, the birth of daughter Allison, a divinity degree from Christian Theological Seminary, and pastoral and administrative promotions to Associate Pastor for Youth and College Ministries and to Senior Associate Pastor for Formation (Christian education in our lexicon). And then Northminster came calling.

While Brian’s early church and college affiliations might suggest a relatively conservative take on Christianity, Brian’s family experiences and faith journey, including his parents’ support after his brother’s coming-out announcement, taught a gospel focused on love and inclusion and an openness to asking questions. And as his current message and acts demonstrate, those themes have continued to develop a theology that he often describes as faith with an open hand — which allows and encourages both the offering of help and the receptiveness to new inputs — as opposed to the closed faith of a clenched fist.

There’s more, of course, but let’s pause for a test. Check your knowledge of All Things Shivers with the questions on the right.
Check your knowledge of All Things Shivers with these questions
(Answers on page 10)

Question 1:
How old was Brian when his paternal grandmother first predicted he’d become a minister?
a) age 4   b) age 10   c) age 16

Question 2:
Which was Brian’s best school sport?
a) basketball   b) baseball   c) football

Question 3.
Which was Brian’s favorite?
a) basketball   b) baseball   c) football

Question 4:
At Marion High School, what honor did Brian achieve:
a) president of the student body   b) homecoming king   c) valedictorian

Question 5:
What was Brian’s major when he entered Taylor University?
a) math   b) English   c) psychology

Question 6:
In what grade did Brian’s height reach 6 feet?
a) sixth grade   b) eighth grade   c) senior year in high school

Question 7:
What is Brian’s favorite style of music?
a) folk   b) rock   c) classical

Question 8:
What is Brian’s favorite animal?
a) lion   b) eagle   c) otter

Question 9:
What is Brian’s favorite foreign country to visit?
a) Israel   b) India   c) Greece

Question 10:
What is Brian’s primary sermon-writing day?
a) Tuesday   b) Wednesday   c) Thursday

Have you ever wondered what Northminster will be like in 2042? Will all the cars in the parking lot be electric? Will there be solar panels on the roof of the education wing? How many members will Northminster have? Will church members still be seeking, serving and embracing?

Just as we are concerned about the future of our families, we need to be concerned about the future of Northminster. A good way to do this is to support the Northminster Presbyterian Church Foundation.

Since its founding in 1987, the Foundation has received contributions from Northminster members and friends plus interest and dividends from investing those contributions wisely. As of June 30, 2022, the Foundation is valued at $2,950,000.

There are several ways to donate to the Foundation. Some members make outright gifts. Others make memorial gifts or gifts to honor people important in their lives or in the life of the church.

Another way to contribute to the Foundation is to make a bequest in one’s will. A bequest postpones the contribution until the donor’s death.

Northminster members who make bequests to the Foundation become members of the Legacy Society. Currently there are 78 members in the Legacy Society, all of whom have chosen to help sustain the future of Northminster.
On Sunday, September 18, 2022, the congregation gathered for a brief time of worship then we dispersed into the community to engage with our neighbors near and far (though mostly pretty near) in Christ’s love.

A group went to Dayspring Center, near 16th & Central, to work in their garden and beautify the property. Another group went to Joy’s House, just up the street on Broad Ripple Ave. to organize their supplies in the basement and the kitchen, organize art and craft supplies in their activities room, and finish a rock garden project in their beautiful backyard.

Large groups of people helped neighbors in need by creating blessing bags for people experiencing homelessness, writing letters to elected officials to maintain funding for Bread for the World, prepping meals to keep in our church freezers for individuals and families in need during times of crisis, and making visits to homebound Northminster members.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Day of Caring and big thanks to Nancy Flamme for coordinating the many activities. We all appreciate opportunities to live our mission.
Time, Talent and Treasure
Profiles in Giving

**Nancy Flamme**
By Maureen Purcell, member since 1986

Nancy Flamme is one of those members who is too busy to talk about her good work because she’s too busy doing her good work. The retired social worker grew up in this church and has devoted a great deal of time nurturing our youth as she has accompanied them on many mission trips including Mexico and Santa Fe, as well as youth conferences to Massanetta and Montreat. Nancy invests lots of energy in her interests, which has often expanded to serving on boards and assisting in fundraisers such as Family Promise and the Umoja Project. (She’s been to Africa three times. Covid dashed her hopes for a fourth.)

Nancy has been a member of the Mission team for many years and, since 2016, has chaired the Day of Caring project with Debbie Grush. “Although we were designated as a Matthew 25 church only recently, I believe we always looked at those verses in deciding which organizations to serve, with our focus on eradicating systemic poverty. We also felt it was important to serve our immediate Broad Ripple community, thus choosing Joy’s House and Broad Ripple Village Association.”

We have all benefitted from Nancy’s long and varied experience in missions, but her reasons are rather simple: “I feel giving is part of my DNA, given my career as a social worker. But I also feel that Northminster is family to me, growing up and developing my faith here. It only makes sense for me to give back.”

**Betty and Bob Bowers**
By Pennie Lumley, member since 1965

A dictionary definition of “mission” reads: “A task or function assigned or undertaken.” Perhaps few people at Northminster have undertaken more tasks than Bob and Betty Bowers. The Bowers, who have belonged to Northminster for nearly 35 years, have given generously of their time and talents.

**Betty**
Betty has been both deacon and elder. She was in the first class of Stephen Ministers at Northminster where she was leader and instructor. Betty was also a funeral coordinator, assisting pastors in calling on bereaved families and helping with tasks such as reserving pews, setting up flowers, arranging photographs and making coffee.

Betty’s favorite endeavor was organizing Wednesday evening suppers. The big idea was that the meals be kid-friendly and a convenience to working parents before they went on to attend choirs and classes. Memorable menus: pigs-in-a-blanket; sloppy joes; eggs, sausage and waffles (breakfast!) and the ever-present peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

**Bob**
As elder, Bob was a stalwart on the Building and Grounds Team. He was a part of neighborhood clean-ups, the renovation of the kitchen and Calvin Hall, and the new parking lot. Bob particularly enjoyed planting daffodil bulbs on the grounds and tending to the creeping phlox around the church sign on the southwest corner of the property. (Along the way he gathered uncollected Easter eggs.)

Bob was involved in the Northminster Foundation board, has regularly attended Men’s Prayer Breakfast and counted the Sunday offering.

**Bowers**
As Betty and Bob reflected on their Northminster “mission,” they spoke of their joy in being part of the church family and of the cherished friendships made here at Northminster.
talent for tickling the ivories to the popular multi-generational holiday program.

The Oldham/Lancaster story began long before Roz and Wes crossed Northminster’s threshold. Although details are a bit hazy, the story goes that Roz was “baptized” by Wes on their very first date — with a “spirited” foamy beverage! Roz was quick to forgive even then and six months later, Roz and Wes became a unified force, marrying in her hometown of South Bend. Both extended their education beyond bachelor degrees, earning Master degrees from Purdue University before emigrating to Indianapolis to begin careers, Wes as a comptroller for Cummins, and Roz as a labor relations rep for Allison Transmission.

As with any family, there were high and low points. One memorable low point occurred on Wes’ birthday, when Roz had to come home and announce she had been laid off from her 20-year career at Allison. As Roz reflected, “It was, as one of my former bosses used to say, ‘A time to lift and shift.’”

Roz moved on to her next chapter as Global Transportation Manager for medical logistics giant Covance/Labcorp, ultimately overseeing $4 billion in procurement and supply chain sales and contracts. One last project prior to her retirement involved negotiating a pharma contract for a clinical trial in Ukraine.

Wes served as CFO for Indiana Minority Health Coalition until his recent attempt at retirement — as he was asked to return to audit and consult.

The Lancaster family, which includes daughter Lauren, son Jonathan, and Roz’s mother, Sarah Oldham, have left their indelible mark on Northminster. Lauren received a Northminster scholarship to Purdue University. Mother Sarah, besides being a staple in the church pew just about every Sunday (pre-Pandemic), joined the Christmas Lite troupe, bringing her superb He proved more than capable of living up to role, and it’s difficult to say who had the better time — the children or Saint Wes!

Roz currently serves on the Committee on Preparation for Ministry with Whitewater Valley Presbytery, assisting seminary students.

This resilience, dedication and perseverance apparently has a genetic component. Roz let slip that her great-grandfather, Charlie Graham, had been featured on the front page of the South Bend Tribune in the 1960’s for his centennial birthday. Mr. Graham was recognized for 100 years on Planet Earth — a feat for the time made more notable by the fact that Mr. Graham was born into slavery (1853), as a child he served water to other slave workers. Around 1943, Charlie rode with a load of swine from the Mississippi farm where he worked, en route to the Chicago stockyards, and eventually moved to South Bend, Indiana. Mr. Graham lived an amazing life and died at the age of 111 years old.

Charlie Graham’s action to “lift and shift” set a path upon which Roz and Wes Lancaster followed, carving their own way forward, to become servants of the Lord, participants in their church, and contributors to the good fortune and blessings of their family, friends, neighbors, and community. And we are the better for their time with us.
ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Time, Talent and Treasure
Profiles in Giving

Donna and Jeff Schmahl
By Maureen Purcell, member since 1986

Doors open and close, doors surprise and challenge, doors even frighten, and doors are sometimes left ajar. Each opportunity to share our time, talent and treasure begins by standing at a threshold and deciding whether or not to go in.

Donna Schmahl has served as a Deacon four or five times (she can’t remember how many) volunteering in many capacities from fund raising to visiting the homebound, and shopping for children during Clothe-a-Child. But this time, in her third year in the class of 2022, Donna was asked to be Moderator of the Deacons. It would be challenging. She would maintain constant communication with all the Deacons and their projects. She would represent this entity on other teams, including the new Care Team that was developed to oversee and manage the list of homebound Northminster members so they may receive regular home visits.

As to why she accepted this challenge, Donna said, “My level of commitment to Northminster is a mirror image of the gratitude I have for our church family.”

To many, Jeff Schmahl first revealed his audio/visual skills while recording the Sound & Spirit choir concerts and then continued to advise on the technicalities when we went on-air Sunday mornings and later with Zoom. But in 2021, when things were looking dark in the church office, Jeff, who was in the midst of a job transition, was asked to serve as Interim Director of Operations. This was not a door he expected to walk through. It was a difficult, sensitive time, and Jeff said yes. As he said, “This position was important, especially given some of the other changes in staff structure and responsibilities, and I was confident that I could be a positive addition to the already great team we had.”

Jeff was familiar with a lot of the systems, equipment and processes, but was especially gratified to have the support of Lori Schlabach and Tim McElroy. It was a door that also opened to many surprises. “The most unexpected joy, however, was getting to know so many more of our amazing members! I am beyond grateful to have had the opportunity to serve and be a part of our wonderful team of staff and clergy. It was very rewarding experience, and I had a lot of fun!”

Jeff and Donna were married in Northminster in 1991 by Rev. Mathias and they raised their three children, Michael, Andrew and Lauren, in the church. “It began as a desire for our CHILDREN,” Donna said, who wanted them to have a strong connection to a church family. “Very quickly I learned that I also wanted that for myself.

Having been raised (on/near Lake Wawasee) in families that were involved and active in their churches and communities, the Schmahls understood, Jeff explained, “the effort and personal commitment to support and sustain those things they consider important and worthy.”

“We are grateful for the opportunity to share our time, talent, and treasure so that Northminster can continue to demonstrate the message of Christ’s love for our families and communities for generations to come.”

In the last year alone, Jeff and Donna opened doors to surprise and challenge and asked: What is the need? How can I help? When can I start? And our church is better for it.

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In the last year alone, Jeff and Donna opened doors to surprise and challenge and asked: What is the need? How can I help? When can I start? And our church is better for it.
I chose to accept my nomination as a Deacon because I want to give back and serve the Northminster community, a community that shaped me throughout my youth. I had the pleasure of being a youth Deacon in high school, and loved seeing the behind the scenes work that is done in order to serve members and the community. Also seeing how passionate my parents are about mission and service.

At Northminster
You’ll see Carol in choir, joining the deacons and 2023 session, and at Day of Caring (DoC). She brings her grandkids to worship each week, and for DoC — this year at Joy’s House. One granddaughter particularly enjoyed the experience and now volunteers there weekly! Carol also joined NPC’s “Legacy Society” because “we all should think about helping the work go on when we’re gone.” For her, this is where the rubber hits the road in life.

At home
Carol strives to instill the value of volunteerism in her family, recognizing that “service blesses the one who serves more than the one who receives.” She explained that showing Christ’s love is what we are called to do and shared examples, including a friend who was diagnosed with ALS and asked Carol to be her spiritual guide, keeping her focused on God, not on her own circumstances. The friend once became upset, noting that “so many people will die from this!” Carol calmly counseled: “We will all die. We just don’t know where, when, and how, so use your time well.” It’s this same mindset that Carol demonstrates in her faith.

What’s next on the volunteer front? “I don’t plan. I let God lead me. I try to follow, not lead, because HE’s in charge.” Whatever the future holds, this quiet servant blesses us all.

Carol Euliss
By Elizabeth Brandes, member since 2018
A model servant heart? For me it’s Northminster member (and recently retired doula) Carol Euliss, whom I’ve known my entire life. Thinking about this dedicated Christian’s path for years, we discussed some of her experiences.

At her previous church
Carol’s service journey began in her 30s when she served as a Sunday School superintendent and on her church’s board, and her activities have evolved over time. Focused on youth early on, she later felt called to work with adults after seeing others’ Christian behavior, leading a now 20+ years weekly adult Bible study and prayer group. I’ve witnessed Carol in action — in the church nursery, helping with church gardening and cleaning, raising kids and grandchildren, volunteering at a Lawrence food pantry, and the list continues. She enjoys each service opportunity.

Emma Longo
By Maureen Purcell, member since 1986
Parents and teachers know how to teach a lot of lessons but the wisest of those understand that there are no guarantees that our children or students will actually learn. In the last 21 years, parents Andy and Lisa Longo (no slouches in the time, talent and treasures department), a special Youth Director and cadre of Sunday School teachers have “taught” Emma Longo.

When Emma was told that accepting the nomination to join the Deacons for a three-year term is not something we see often from a college student, she said, “I chose to accept my nomination as a Deacon because I want to give back and serve the Northminster community, a community that shaped me throughout my youth. I had the pleasure of being a youth Deacon in high school, and loved seeing the behind the scenes work that is done in order to serve members and the community. Also seeing how passionate my parents are about mission and service.”

The IUPUI senior, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Legal Studies and Sustainable Management, has taken her life lessons to heart. “...in addition to being very involved with the youth program throughout my youth, (being a Youth Deacon) impacted me in so many positive ways, and gave me so many opportunities to travel, do mission work, and be part of a community. The support, love, and empowerment I felt, and continue to feel, has encouraged me to take on this position and be more involved, give back, and grow through service.

Lesson learned.
Youth Giving Time, Talent & Treasure

In the time since I have arrived at Northminster, I have been able to observe how the youth and adults use their time, talents, and treasures. Over this past year, as we have slowly come out of the pandemic, it has been interesting to see our youth’s desire to participate in our church and community life.

I see many of them stepping-up in leadership at events, activities, service projects, and worship. Their participation has included our Summer Fun programming for younger children of our church and neighborhood. Sometimes their involvement has been painting or cleaning or sorting for the various projects that are happening at NPC. Over the past year, we have had one or more youth participate in the worship service in some way every month. It is amazing to see how they give of their time and their energy to participate in the leadership of worship in a meaningful way. Many of them have a natural talent in this area. I am grateful that they continue to use these gifts for the benefit of all.

As we continue to evolve as a youth program, we will continue to seek opportunities for involvement. Many of the youth already have ideas and ways to have an impact on the world around them.

I look forward to seeing the many ways they can and will demonstrate how we can “reach our neighbors near and far with Christ’s love.” They get it. And they want to do it. Let’s make sure we provide a way for them!
**Book Recommendations**

**The Road to Character**  
by David Brooks  
In *The Road to Character* David Brooks focuses on the deeper values that should inform our lives. He challenges us to balance the scales between our “résumé values” — wealth, fame, status — and our “eulogy values” — kindness, bravery, honesty, faithfulness. By examining the lives of famous leaders and thinkers, Brooks explores how they built strong character through internal struggle and a sense of their own limitations.

David Brooks is a columnist for *The New York Times* and appears regularly on PBS News Hour.

**A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II**  
by Sonia Purnell  
In the early 1940s, Baltimore socialite Virginia Hill joined British Special Operations Executive and became the first allied woman deployed behind German lines to assist the French Resistance. A superb networker, Hill gathered intelligence, coordinated couriers, and set up safe houses for British agents parachuting in. She moved to more treacherous tasks like masterminding a bridge collapse, and the escape of twelve British prisoners of war.

Hill’s story reads like a James Bond thriller, demonstrating her persistence and courage.

The German Gestapo was desperate to find Virginia Hill, sending out this dispatch: “She is the most dangerous of all allied spies. We must find and destroy her.”

In the end, Hill escaped by hiking over the Pyrenees into Spain, prosthetic leg and all.

**The Whistling Season**  
by Ivan Doig  
In a land of bluffs, bison bones and arrowheads, a motherless family awaits the arrival of a housekeeper who can’t cook. But she brings along a brother who can, sort of. The nearby one-room schoolhouse is evidence of the American virtue of a public education for all. The teacher is known to be adept at breaking up fisticuffs; she elopes with a fire-and-brimstone preacher before the school year is over.

Ivan Doig creates memorable characters, surrounds them with a caring community, and sets them in the midst of early 20th century Montana. *The Whistling Season* refers to the sound of the wind as it blows across the Montana landscape on its way to winter.

**Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going where Captain Cook Has Gone Before**  
by Tony Horowitz  
Part travelog and part history, *Blue Latitudes* traces Captain James Cook’s three 18th century voyages over the vast Pacific Ocean where no European had ever traveled before. Author Horowitz says Cook out-discovered Columbus.

Cook was born in Yorkshire of humble origins and not particularly well-educated. But he was a prodigy with a flair for mathematics which led to chart making, surveying, and navigation. His crew knew him to be a risk taker, impatient, and prone to tantrums.

Horowitz does all the things a good historian does: pores over Cook’s journals as well as those of his crew and reads Cook biographies and anthropological studies of the Pacific. Most importantly, Horowitz interviews indigenous people in places like Australia, Tonga and Hawaii to hear stories of Cook’s exploits. Horowitz writes with wit and wisdom and wonders, “What would Cook have paid for a GPS?”
Music at Northminster: An Overture to Our Future

Music enhances the worship experience, and NPC excels at weaving together themes and texts as well as offering a diverse range of musical styles. How can this strength attract more visitors?

**JW:** Music and liturgy should express the richness of worship, engaging the heart, mind, and spirit of every worshiper in communion with God. Northminster uses broad musical styles because the body of Christ is diverse. We should be as open to all cultures and proclivities as we can — in verse and in worship context — while providing an equally open and accepting space for all. Brian is a great fit in our worship model — a natural fit as he helps set that stage.

**BS:** John and I have similar ideologies around worship and spirituality. For me, no one piece of the church’s worship life is more important than music, though some may feel the sermon is. Music facilitates the beautiful coming together of the intellectual and creative sides of your brain. [As St. Augustine said] “When you sing, you pray twice.” I recently reread NPC’s neighborhood report and a key item was a desire for an eclectic music style among our neighbors.

The Sound & Spirit music series is established in our community, regularly drawing from beyond our church members. How can we improve promotion to inform more people about this way in which we open doors and welcome them?

**JW:** I would like to have more involvement, of course, but also more hands-on support: hosts, help with receptions/offerings, etc. Communications are integral in getting the word out, and I believe there’s fertile ground here in the neighborhood and through preschool parents — a new generation we’d like to see here more.

**BS:** S&S’s reputation has been around for a while, and it’s something that matches our neighborhood goals. Northminster could be a place for live music every weekend — like other neighborhood venues — and I’d like to plug in with that community. How do we ensure that people frequenting those venues also know about and attend NPC events? More marketing! I also look at engagement beyond attendee numbers. How does the community participate in S&S? It’s about energy, people coming through our doors, and how we engage with each other.

Northminster recently refined its mission and vision. Thinking about music as outreach in support of sharing Christ’s love with neighbors near and far, what ideas come to mind? New channels, programs, initiatives?

**JW:** Our current music studio could become a community music school to teach high school and younger students. Interesting questions emerge: Could we fund lessons for a month, or a semester? I would love to see preschool involvement. And there’s a place for increased opportunities for our Chamber Ensemble to sing in additional venues beyond NPC. We can hold more outdoor concerts, too.

**BS:** [Interim pastor] Dave Smazik and church leadership did an amazing job — he immediately got to work on enhancing a positive movement. They made decisions that resulted in 1) Northminster’s becoming a Matthew 25 congregation, and 2) Northminster’s joining the Covenant Network. Big steps forward. And this congregation readily agreed: “Yes, that’s who we are.” Consider our vision and mission statement. Let’s not just use it as a filter, but also as a call or a charge: What are we not currently doing to engage with neighbors near and far? We know that music can be a safe space for people, so how do we make Northminster’s space and music programs a safe place to gather “no matter what?” How do we live out Matthew 25 and our mission?

How can we measure music’s impact toward Northminster’s continued growth?

**JW:** Testimonies to the experience that a diverse music ministry provides can reveal a lot. You know, a choir member recently said, “Coming to worship is like a mini-Montreat Conference on Worship and Music.”

**BS:** Sometimes it’s the difference between width and depth. Maybe it’s not about more programs, but depth is harder to measure — you simply know...
it when you see it. Perhaps it’s wishful thinking, but I notice that the energy level in worship has grown palpably each week. People that are here are excited about being here. That has to do with the whole of the experience — of which music is a big part. Let’s look to measure that energy.

What goals do you have for Northminster’s musical future over the next few years?

JW: A lot of ideas come to mind! A community music school, an expanded music studio, a new Bach series for Sound & Spirit, a new harpsichord, community singing with children. I’m sure we could do more with preschool kids, too. My door’s open for sharing new ideas. We have a newly formed Musical Arts Committee that met just last month, and they’re open to taking on new ideas and concepts.

BS: People know we have concerts — indoors and outside (outdoor jazz during Covid, etc.), and I would love to be a venue for people both to visit and perform. And let’s break down as many silos and walls as possible. We do this well internally, but for those not already familiar/engaged with us, a church can be overwhelming. Let’s stand out with our music, yes, but such that the average person says Sound & Spirit and Northminster in the same phrase — so that it’s not a separate concert being put on at Northminster, but something that we do regularly. This is so important, especially for youth. So when someone asks, “What do you guys offer for children,” I want a typical Northminster member to have to stop and think: “What isn’t for children here?”

Note: Northminster’s Worship, Arts and Music Ministry is diverse and strong because of members’ and friends’ involvement. If you are interested in any aspect of worship — reading, acting, dancing, artwork, hosting, ushering, singing, or playing an instrument, please contact John Wright, Brian Shivers, or the Worship Team.

Is That in the Bible?

Below you will find a list of statements and quotations. Some are in the Bible (New Revised Standard Version) and others are not. Can you tell the difference?

1. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ...  
   YES NO

2. Cleanliness is next to godliness.  
   YES NO

3. ... for you will always have the poor among you.  
   YES NO

4. This too shall pass.  
   YES NO

5. Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.  
   YES NO

6. God helps those who help themselves.  
   YES NO

7. ... and under his wings you will find refuge; and his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.  
   YES NO

8. The seven deadly sins are pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth.  
   YES NO

9. God heals and the doctor takes the fees.  
   YES NO

10. ... from everyone to whom much is given, much is required.  
   YES NO

Find answers to the puzzle at the bottom of page 12.
Trunk or Treat is a beloved Northminster annual activity, but this year’s weather made for a move to Calvin Hall, so it was more like Tables or Treat! (We put the HALL in HALLOWEEN.) Fortunately, Northminster friends (fiends) rose to the occasion and had fun “treating” a slew of neighborhood and Northminster goblins who visited us.

*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 jennifer.dzwonar@borshoff.biz. 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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