WELCOME.

That is the message in bold type on the sign just outside the door. The moment one walks in that door the welcome is obvious. The space exudes it in so many ways. The light that fills the Gathering Place greets everyone as they enter. The wide-open space furnished with comfortable chairs and functional tables lets you know that you are encouraged to stay for a while. The train set and toys under the stairs in a spot just the right size for the youngest among us communicates a commitment to friends of all ages. The visual art on the walls of the main stairwell landing and throughout the building as well as in the sanctuary speak to an understanding that the arts talk of faith and suggest welcome in ways that words alone sometimes cannot. The ramp that makes the sanctuary accessible to everyone imparts the message that all are valued in this community. The smell of coffee brewing, the donut holes on Sunday morning, the flowers, the easy-to-read bulletin, the bright colors all say “Welcome, we are glad you are here.”

Creating a space that is welcoming is an art. And Northminster Presbyterian Church is a place full of artists. For you understand that the visual and physical elements of our wonderful building can only go so far in communicating welcome. Without a commitment to the human element of welcome, the word itself is only a hollow sentiment. Northminster is a community of faith committed to embodying this welcome, as well as to learning ways in which we can be more fully welcoming and inclusive of all our neighbors and friends on this journey. This is clear in the ministry commitments of the church, the ways the congregation serves the community, the depth of learning and study happening throughout the week in various places, and the willingness to ask ourselves even the hardest questions. It is exciting to know that there is always more work to be done. It is even more exciting to be a part of a community of faith that wants to do that work.

Thank you for the ways you embody welcome, as well as the ways you are discovering that we can do it better. What a wonderful moment to be a part of Northminster Presbyterian Church. Welcome to the work of ministry.
Welcoming Our New Pastor: The Installation Service

In the Presbyterian Church USA, when a pastor joins a congregation, there is an Installation Service held to formally install them in their new role. (If it is a first "call" for a pastor, there is an Ordination Service.) The Installation Service for Pastor Brian Shivers at Northminster was held on Sunday, November 20, 2022 at 4pm, and it was an interfaith, colorful, joyful, meditative, spiritual, unique, powerful and truly welcoming event.

Trumpets and organ sounded!
Elders read!
Imams prayed!
Choir and congregation sang!
Soloist inspired!
Pastors invoked, confessed, prayed, preached, and moved!
PNC chair encouraged and entertained!
Interfaith friends blessed!
Pastor installed!

When a pastor is installed, they select a commission for the service. Pastor Brian Shivers’ Installation Commission:

- Imam Ahmed Alamine
  The Indianapolis Muslim Community Association
- Rev. Dr. Winterbourne Harrison-Jones
  Witherspoon Presbyterian Church
- Dr. Anita Joshi
  Hindu Temple of Central Indiana
- Mr. George Kelley
  Congregation Beth-El Zedeck
- Rev. Carol McDonald
  Northminster Presbyterian Church
- Elder Anne Ricchiuto
  Northminster Presbyterian Church
- Rev. Madison VanVeelen
  Second Presbyterian Church
- Elder Michael Whitfield
  First Presbyterian Church, Shelbyville
- Rev. Maureen Wilson
  Irvington Presbyterian Church

The service is available for viewing on the Northminster website.
Welcome to The Resilience Road

We’ve all heard it said that a church is much more than a building. And that a church is more than its pastor/s. Most of us, though, had never heard (or thought) much about a church without gathering. After all, says the Matthew gospel, “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

But then came January 2020. As the calendar year opened, Northminster welcomed a new class of church officers, for three-year terms through year-end 2022. They could expect challenges and opportunities for their upcoming terms — balancing budgets, integrating a new pipe organ, and celebrating our 75th anniversary. That’s what the road ahead looked like at the time, but three years later, the road traveled looks very different in our rear-view mirror.

The detours started immediately, when Teri Thomas told us that her 18-year tenure as head pastor would soon come to an end. Someone asked Emi Johnson, part of the new Session class, whether she would have said yes had she known what was coming, and she said, “Probably.” But the road was about to get windier and bumpier. Soon the global pandemic reached us, and the church closed its doors. Associate pastor Ruth Moore suffered through medical issues and the loss of her own mother to COVID and in a few months accepted a call to head another congregation. We found ourselves confronting the shocks of a once-in-a-century pandemic but also trying to “make church” without our building, our long-time pastors, or even our ability to gather.

At Emi’s final meeting of her 2020-2022 Session term, she reflected on Northminster’s recent journey, reminding her colleagues of how the congregation had risen to the challenge and become “stronger than ever.” It’s an important story to remember and to understand — too large to detail in a single article. You’ll see below some of the obstacles we encountered (represented as red “Stop Signs”) and some of our solutions (in green “Go Signs”).

Ask around, and you’re likely to hear some recurring themes:

- **Lay leadership.** The Northminster family, by the hundreds, came forward to fill holes with hard work and bold leadership, new ways to do old things, as well as some brand-new initiatives. Lisa Longo describes it as “the congregation taking ownership.” For Brian Shivers (who came along later), Northminster’s response shows that “This is a congregation that knows who they are.”

- **Great pastor replacements.** Even impressive lay leaders can only hold out for so long without great pastors. Carol McDonald, of course, was The First Responder. “Our dear pastor Carol — how blessed we are to have her.” (Emi Johnson); “It’s just a miracle that she’s here — a fantastic fit, a great spirit.” (John Wright). September 2020 brought us Interim Pastor Dave Smazik and a collective sigh of relief. “God smiled on us; Dave was perfect for the times.” (Carol McDonald); “Dave was amazing, doing all the hard interim things, almost like a John the Baptist preparing us for...”
Brian.” (Lori Schlabach). And by the fall of 2022, Brian Shivers accepted our permanent call, a longer blessing story to be told another day.

**Keeping the faith.** Did people worry whether we could keep going? “Nope; it was most incredible.” (Lori Schlabach); “I felt good about it; it was inspiring.” (Mick Keppler, then moderator of the Deacons); “I never felt they couldn’t pull it off.” (John Wright).

**Going outdoors.** It became clear that good ventilation reduced virus risks, so we took to the outdoors. We worshiped at Broad Ripple Park and used our parking lot as an extension of the Gathering Place, hosting meetings, concerts, Bible presentations, the arrival reception for the Smaziks, and the delayed 75th celebration (renamed the Spirit of 76). For many, a lasting memory will be Cathy Lord’s funeral visitation, with the family arrayed outside the Gathering Place windows, and her legions of friends streaming by on the pavement.

**Enhancing live-streaming and other technologies.** Although, pre-pandemic, Northminster had experience with online coverage of in-person worship, fully virtual services demanded a lot more. Northminster added new cameras, a new Tricaster system, and a new streaming provider. The “Stream Team” devoted countless hours at the recording booth and in the editing room.

**Staying connected.** We made special efforts to reach our dispersed membership, organizing telephoning and card-writing campaigns, as well as remote visits when possible. We even tapped our “cases and cases” of commercial toilet paper to supplement residential shortages. As Lori Schlabach recalled, “There was a huge concern on the staff’s part about how to stay connected with the membership.”

As former pastor Ron Smith liked to say, “It’s not what happens to you, it’s what you do with what happens to you.” A lot has happened to Northminster in the past three years, and we did a lot of good with it.

Conducting our Pastor-Head of Staff search during the pandemic, a telling moment came when one of our candidates from across the country said to our Pastor Nominating Committee, “Northminster has recently lost its long-time senior pastor, plus you lost your 30-year associate pastor, and yet you seem fine, good, even upbeat.” Yes, yes, we are.

Carol McDonald summed it up well: “We never gave up. We figured out how to do things, and it was a good time in many ways. We have a whole new outlook now.”

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By John Purcell, member since 1986
It’s an exciting time to begin my first term as an Elder. Reflecting on what the future may bring, I asked current and incoming members about the upcoming challenges we will face together. Over half of the group (includes those serving on the Foundation board) responded to a brief survey on this topic. The combined responses offer a picture of dedicated, eager, and optimistic leaders who are full of energy, curiosity, and a willingness to serve. Growth is on the radar of most, as is the need to connect internally and with our nearby community, and many look forward to working with our new head pastor as we build a future for NPC that supports our mission.

Why did individuals choose to serve for the upcoming term?
- NPC is a wonderful Christian family and I want to do my part in helping it move forward and meet goals
- To help others and participate in the church
- As a member of the PNC, I wanted to serve as continuity for Brian’s first class of new elders
- I want to be an active part of this exciting time of transition in our church
- With a new minister coming in, I wanted to be part of the next chapter of Northminster’s story
- To get more involved as well as give back to my church community
- Someone felt I have a skillset that could benefit NPC

What do they most look forward to?
- Continued progress and learning how the church works; learning about and helping the community
- Northminster is in a renaissance period and I look forward to seeing where and in what ways we can grow to live our mission
- I have always enjoyed visiting and serving Communion to home-bound members
- Working together to tackle the greatest challenges we face as a congregation
- To create more connections with others who are serving, and feeling like I’m giving/serving a community that has impacted my life so much
- I’m looking to learn and to contribute as the church plots a new path to advancing its mission and vision
- Working with our new pastor to chart a future based on our combined experiences

What are key challenges the Session and Deacons may face over time?
- Drawing young people and families into fellowship and remaining relevant to today’s society/families, and showing others how they can truly make a difference by showing Christ’s love to others
- Financing our dreams and focusing on doing a few new/big things well, rather than going in too many directions
- Staying vibrant, relevant, and present in our community
- Membership growth/recruitment, member engagement, retention, and financial stability
- Growing and retaining members, and prioritizing achievable plans (can’t do it all at once) backed by the needed resources
- Increasing and supporting our youth base

What issues/causes are they passionate about?
- Helping others to be excited to serve; everyone has gifts they can use
- Food insecurity and homelessness
- Women’s autonomy over their lives, livelihoods, bodies, decisions, families, futures
- Learning more about social justice initiatives
- Youth engagement
- Creating a “community safe space” to open our doors and offer services — health fairs, homework help, a place for parents to "breathe" and attend a class while kids take part in recreation outlets (new playground space) and arts opportunities (concerts, classes, a community choir, etc.)
*How the Northminster Foundation Invests Its Assets*

By Pennie Lumley, member since 1965

In the Articles of Incorporation of the Northminster Presbyterian Church Foundation it says that one of its purposes is to endow the Church “in a secure and prudent manner.” In the thirty-five years since its inception, in 1987, the Northminster Foundation has followed that guideline consistently.

The Northminster Foundation’s investment portfolio is diverse. It has invested about 60% of its assets in stocks (usually in mutual funds) and 30% in bonds. The percentages have varied according to market conditions. Remaining funds are held in cash. In mid-2022, the Northminster Foundation owned stock in 138 corporations, almost all headquartered in the United States. Sixty-four of these corporations were valued at $20 billion or more, including Microsoft, Wells Fargo, Apple, Comcast and General Electric. The remaining corporations were valued at less than $20 billion.

The Northminster Presbyterian Foundation invests in two Presbyterian-related funds. The New Covenant Income Fund specializes in socially responsible investing. It is composed mainly of government and mortgage-backed bonds, and its value currently stands at $363 million. The New Covenant Income Fund operates according to the dictates of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and steers clear of companies dealing in alcohol, tobacco, gambling, weapons, etc.

The Northminster Foundation is a longtime investor in the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. PILP is a non-profit corporation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) which makes low-cost loans to churches and governing bodies for the purpose of construction and renovation. (Northminster’s gathering place was made possible by a loan from PILP.) In other words, the Northminster Foundation’s eggs are not all in one basket.

Mark Durham of Investment Advisory Indianapolis, Inc. has been investment advisor to the Northminster Foundation for twenty years. He has belonged to Northminster since 1981.

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*Words to describe how they feel about their upcoming work:*

- Top terms: excited (3), hopeful (2), curious (2), energized (2), committed, warm, hopeful, enthusiastic, open, interested, collaborative, joyful, grateful, faithful, challenged, needed

*The future is bright for this class!*

I hope that all members (and visitors) find a way to get involved (ministries, projects, volunteer opportunities) in the work that these servants will help lead at Northminster. I encourage you to contact an existing or incoming Elder, Deacon or Foundation Board member to learn more.

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*2025 Class of Officers*

**Ordained Elders**
- Elizabeth Brandes
- Keane Ricchiuto (youth elder)

**Installed Elders**
- Jennifer Dzwonar
- Craig Hittle
- Lisa Longo
- John Purcell

**Ordained Deacons**
- Ned Edington
- Carol Euliss
- Mari Ann Jackson
- Mason King
- Charlie Scheuermann
- Mary Walker
- Jackie Gritton (youth deacon)

**Installed Deacons**
- Nancy Flamme
- Mary Holland
- Emma Longo
- Carol Mann
Last summer was my first time at the Montreat Worship and Music Conference near Asheville, North Carolina. John and I went after many years of “encouragement” from my friend Krista Wright who was a co-director in 2022. We enjoyed housemates the Schmahls, Mary Boris, Katie Ray, Nancy Flamme, Ruth Chadwick Moore and met up frequently with John and Krista Wright, Ian Clarke and Carol McDonald. I enjoyed the classes and especially the two choir practices a day that culminated in a concert on the last night. We met in a circular stone auditorium with a timber dome. The stage became a chancel whose backdrop changed daily as participants explored The Stranger’s Guise.

Mary Boris isn’t a stranger to the conference. She and Mike and their four sons, Matt, Jacob, Gabe and Will attended many times. They are a family of talented musicians, vocal, string and percussion, who have contributed innovative and fun ideas to accompany Northminster services.

As a member of the Chancel Choir for close to 25 years, Mary has been inspired by the music programs. Many of the hymns we sing every year were brought back from the conference. But having been there to see the daily changes of the auditorium into a chancel for services, I realized, she hasn’t been just singing. For several years Mary, along with fellow Northminster members Lisa Longo and Rebecca Ryan, have designed and set the look in our own chancel, from banners to communion table settings. Together they understand creating for a large space, often selecting richly colored fabrics placed along a back wall or hung from the ceiling or from battens that span above the proscenium. Mary uses fabrics like silks and satin ribbons, draping them in surprising places, energizing them with copper and paper and other unusual elements to suit changing holidays, seasons and gospel messages. Mary got her start in applique following the lead of previous generations of “banner ladies.” It’s a tedious art of piecing together fabric to make a picture, a landscape, or tell a story. “I knew Mary was interested in broadening her textile work,” explained Krista Wright. “So, with the sanction of Marlon Hurst, my Co-Director and the planning team, I asked Mary to provide one stole for the liturgists…”

While PAM (Presbyterian Association of Musicians) contracts artists each year to design the tee shirts, book covers and even the chancel in the auditorium for a cohesive look for the Worship & Music Conference, stoles are not included. Often liturgists supply their own. Mary focused on the Genesis creation text which was the theme for the Worship & Music weeks, along with the Celtic rune of hospitality that ends “often goes the Christ in the stranger’s guise.” Mary is not the first to be caught up in the creation, from the fish in the sea to the stars in the sky. Wherever does one stop? And she couldn’t. Mary made five reversible stoles, which offered liturgists a choice of ten (!) stoles a day. “Yes,” confessed the artist. “Crazy me.” I have found, while taking on a costume or craft, that sewing can create in me such
frenzied that it challenges both the
English language and my basic Christian
principles. But there is one way the more
patient Mary and I are alike: Sometimes
we’re late.

As co-director of the conference, Krista
was heading to the Worship & Music
Conference a week early and had planned
to take the stoles with her.

“Mary, in her typical conscientious
perfectionism, wasn’t satisfied with them
when I needed to leave,” said Krista.

Indeed, Mary was not quite finished
with her enormous project, so she
recruited Mike to drive her all the way
to Asheville a few days later (an 8-hour
drive) while she hemmed her little heart
out in the back seat, arriving just in time
for the commencement of Week 1.

The wonderfully designed stoles were
worn throughout the conference and sold
like hotcakes when auctioned at the end of
Week 2.

Mary’s story, her diligence and
devotion, would suit any stewardship
theme, every stitch to God’s purpose.
But last year’s theme of Time, Talent and
Treasure fits like a glove. Mary herself,
being the treasure. ✧

Please consider joining Northminster friends at the
2023 Worship & Music Conference!

Who: Youth and adults interested in a week of learning, listening, discussing,
hiking, crafting, relaxing, worshiping, singing and simply being in a glorious
setting.

When: Sun. June 25 – Fri. June 30, 2023 (Northminster attends Week 2 of
the two-week conference)

Where: Montreat Conference Center in beautiful Black Mountain, NC

Accommodations: Northminster rents a house (or two!) in Montreat for the
week, with private bedrooms, shared bathrooms and shared kitchen/cooking.
Each house sleeps about 12-14 people, is in walking distance to all conference
activities, and has a lovely front porch for morning coffee and evening talks.

What:
• Each day of the conference includes at least one worship service with a variety
  of leaders and music.
• Each day, participants attend up to four sessions (50 minutes each) on topics
  of their choosing on all aspects of worship, scripture, music, and more.
• You may choose to participate in the choir (no audition needed) that practices
each day and sings in a few worship services each week.
• You may audition for the Chamber Choir that provides special music in
  worship and a dedicated concert at the end of the week.
• If you’re not musical at all, there are plenty of sessions on liturgical art,
  storytelling, Presbyterianism and more.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the following people who have
attended Worship & Music Conferences in the past: John & Krista Wright (each
have been directors of the Conference and have the inside scoop), Mike & Mary
Boris, Tony & Jennifer Dzwonar, Nancy Flamme, Andy & Lisa Longo, John &
Maureen Purcell, Lori Schlabach or Jeff & Donna Schmahl. ✧
Opening doors and welcoming more of our neighbors – that’s a key goal of NPC’s Sound & Spirit which began in 2004 as a program that celebrates the tradition of the musical arts. And for those of you who attend S&S, you already know what an expressive and uplifting experience these concerts (always free!) can be. These upcoming S&S events are already planned for 2023:

- **Abel Family Quartet**: 5 p.m. on 2/26. Indy-based string quartet plays Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms.
- **Handel’s Messiah, Part II and more!**: 4 p.m. on 3/26. Features our Chancel Choir, orchestra, and soloists.
- **Jonathan William Moyer, Organ**: 4 p.m. on 4/23. Organ repertoire from the Renaissance through the 21st century.
- **Spoiler alert!** NPC’s director of music ministries, John Wright, has also confirmed a bonus concert in the fall of 2023 (10/27) featuring Ireland’s The Jeremiahs!

But what goes into the work of seeking out unique opportunities to experience a broad variety of musical genres via this outreach arm for Northminster?

- Decisions about musical acts to schedule – usually 4-5 concerts per year – are typically made in July/August, and our ability to host high-quality groups depends on 1) funding for S&S and 2) what compensation the artists expect.
- As with other aspects of church programming, plans are made by trusting that individuals will continue to come forward with donations; scheduling often occurs without having all funding on hand. Timing can also be a challenge when working with the church calendar to space out events accordingly.
- The primary criterion when looking at annual programming options is the quality of the group or individual(s) coming in. Even though S&S events are free to the public, John Wright shared that he considers the lens of a potential attendee who might ask: “Is this concert interesting enough and is it high enough quality that I would buy a ticket and attend?”
- It’s also critical that S&S represent different genres of music: jazz, bluegrass, Celtic, and classical so far. And the artists come from different places — some are international, some local, some are from other domestic locales.
- In managing scheduled events for S&S, John often reaches out to agents directly. Often he already has established relationships with individual band members, and sometimes groups catch John’s attention via word of mouth. He’s always listening for names of additional artists for future consideration, and ideas sometimes come from S&S concert attendees. One thing John has to consider is what types of music will work the best in our sanctuary — in our acoustic space.
As we look to build new, and strengthen existing, ties with the community, here are some things to know, particularly if you’d like to help support S&S:

- It’s critical that these concerts remain free. As John likes to say, “The arts are for everybody, not just an elite group.”
- We want to get more people in the door, and we need friendly volunteers who will greet them during intermission and hopefully add them to the S&S mailing list. Even if we only have 50 people at a concert, word is out there, and perhaps attendees would return for a future concert or for worship.
- When the west side playground area is complete, could we consider staging a concert outdoors? With a reception to follow? Or maybe we offer part of the concert indoors, part outdoors. This would provide more intimacy inside, and more people might see/hear the outside portion around the neighborhood.
- Marketing is a huge contributor to the success of S&S, and Timothy, our new communications director, is really helping create more buzz around S&S.

How can you get involved? Well, S&S is always looking for hosts to serve at concerts – welcoming faces help ensure that we provide solid hospitality for our visitors. Also, we often provide a pre-concert meal for our musicians, and various church members (Monica Brase, Ellen Fosnaught, John Plunkett, for example) have helped with meal preparation. Occasionally we offer lodging. So...if the Sound & Spirit move you to help out in any of these areas, please reach out to John Wright.

Things have changed in the last couple of years, too. (Did you know, for instance, that our own Marko Petričić, DMA just released a compact disc of Bach works recorded on our new Fisk organ here last summer?) Now that we have a highly respected organ and newly renovated — and acoustically improved — chancel space, Northminster is in a position to offer more concerts than in the past. Our current goal is to host 7 concerts per year if current funding levels continue. In fact, given continued growth in concert attendance, and with the addition of a new organ, which can be life-changing for a congregation, John has even bigger dreams for the 2024 schedule. Can you imagine featuring TWO bluegrass bands in one night? And perhaps some additional opportunities to hear the Chancel Choir with orchestra? Or maybe the introduction of a new musical genre to the list.

We are very excited to share that Dr. Marko Petričić has released a brand-new 2 CD set! The CDs feature a unique recording of J.S. Bach’s organ collection, Clavierübung III, that was performed on Northminster’s C. B. Fisk, Op 154 organ and on Marko’s bayan, Pigini. The two discs combine 103 minutes of music that was recorded in our sanctuary over several days this past May. Marko hopes that this new CD set marks the beginning of a series of more artistic endeavors that will help put Northminster on the national and international map.

Provided below is a QR code if you would like to purchase the recording directly from the MSR classics website, and it also soon will be available on Amazon.com. Marko has a limited number of copies that he can sell in person, so please talk to him if you are interested.
told I needed to start all over again. It took a lot of work and testing to show (North Central) administrators I could enter high school. That experience and others made me realize how tough it is for immigrants and refugees to work through the system here. That colored my choice for a major when I was accepted at U of Indianapolis. I want to assist others like our family in helping them adjust to America. So now, I’m majoring in Public Health, with minors in Psychology and French, with the goal of working for UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) or UNICEF as a public health educator.

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the lord your God.”
Leviticus 19:33-34

MEMBERS PROFILE
Welcoming Strangers Who Become Friends

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the lord your God.”
Leviticus 19:33-34

SETTING: Condominium complex on Indianapolis Northside four days post-Christmas 2022; Lutumika home. Connie Coleman and I are warmly welcomed by Nunda Lutumika into their townhouse where delicious smells of cooking spices fill the air. Salima Lutumika comes from the kitchen, as daughter Helene and son François also emerge from their rooms, to collectively greet us. We are invited to get comfortable in the main living area, settling into deep cushions of a large richly carved wood-trimmed sofa with framed prints dotting the walls; a brightly lit, decorated Christmas tree fills one corner.

INTERVIEWER: Well, here you are, five years almost to the day since you landed at Indianapolis International airport in the U.S in late January 2018. We thought it might be time to check in to gauge how you all are doing, how you feel you have acclimated to your new country, region, community, and church family.

HELENE: Well, when we arrived, I had a difficult time getting adjusted into the right classes at school. In the beginning, I was told I needed to start all over again. It took a lot of work and testing to show (North Central) administrators I could enter high school. That experience and others made me realize how tough it is for immigrants and refugees to work through the system here. That colored my choice for a major when I was accepted at U of Indianapolis. I want to assist others like our family in helping them adjust to America. So now, I’m majoring in Public Health, with minors in Psychology and French, with the goal of working for UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) or UNICEF as a public health educator.

The Lutumika family (from left to right), François, Helene, Salima and Nunda.

The Lutumika family on their first Christmas in the U.S. receiving gifts from Northminster friends.

The Lutumika family (from left to right), François, Helene, Salima and Nunda.

The Lutumika family on their first Christmas in the U.S. receiving gifts from Northminster friends.

2018
2019
2020
**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, talk about the languages you all speak.

**HELENE:** We all speak five languages – Swahili, Kirundi, tribal Kimbe, French, and now English.

**NUNDA:** (holding up two fingers indicating a small space between) We have progressed—a little bit. I am now full-time at Heartland Food Products Group. We have moved to our new home.

**CONNIE:** But you have done much more than that. You drive now; you didn’t know how to drive when you first arrived. And your English — your language skills are much improved. Plus, you have found others from your native country of Congo and made friends among that community.

**FRANÇOIS:** I remember a fellow (countryman), Siddiqui, when we first arrived, and I was in awe of where he was at the time – his English, his confidence and ease and sense of belonging here. At the time, I thought, “I will never be this comfortable.” And now, here I am today, kind of where Siddiqui was, and even beyond. I completed a certificate and will complete my Associate degree at Ivy Tech in May and will transfer this summer to IUPUI for an Industrial Technology degree. I also have a paid internship with Pacer Digital Systems. They just extended my internship, too.

**SALIMA:** (not as confident in her English language skills) nods — Yes. I am now full time at Telemon.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how has Northminster helped, or perhaps needed to assist more, as you adjusted to life in America?

**HELENE:** Oh, you guys (Northminster) helped a lot. We did have caseworkers, we had a caseworker at Exodus (refugee center) for a short time, like two months, three months, then ‘Bye. It was like, “you are here, now do your own thing.” But you all stayed and helped us along every step. And you still help us. You have become our second family here. Connie, Tony (Dzwonar), Carol (Frolich), and others, all contributed something to us and our new life here.

**CONNIE:** Yes, I want to stress that we have all become friends – like family. It’s not us helping strangers. We will always be part of each other.

**HELENE:** We are so lucky we had you guys. Like the first year of college, Connie and John – and my dad – took me to school, and I was—it was so emotional. (her voice trembles)

**FRANÇOIS:** Many of my (Congolese) friends did not get the chance, the support, like we have gotten from Northminster. Like many did not have the sofa, tv, the furnishings, like we had (in our first apartment).

**CONNIE:** We set up their first apartment with furniture, linens, and food, whatever else they needed. Oh, and François works, as does Helene.

**HELENE:** I still work at the YMCA whenever they need me, and at HomeGoods (retail store). Plus, I serve on the Black Student Association at UIndy, as well as the ASA (African Student Association).

**INTERVIEWER:** And of course, addressing the elephant in the room, COVID hit. The rest of us went bananas, but you all—you were just getting adjusted. In fact, Helene and François, you two had to learn remote learning! And Nunda and Salima, you continued working, with precautions, of course?

**SALIMA & NUNDA** (both nod in agreement)

**CONNIE:** But none of you had COVID, right? You all had the vaccine. They never got sick. ♦
Welcome to 2023: Northminster Youth Welcome Opportunities

As we enter the new year, we are halfway through the school year. For each and every student, that can be both exciting and scary at the same time. They see the end in sight, but there are always things to accomplish before they get to the finish line. We, as a youth group, have some exciting and, likely, challenging opportunities ahead!

First off, Northminster Youth Group has been invited to participate in the Center for Interfaith Cooperation Youth Dialogue. CIC engages emerging leaders to become a catalyst for change through interfaith understanding and cooperation. Youth will meet in person for a 5-week series of dialogue and a tour of sacred spaces. Northminster has also been invited to host the group in our facility on Sunday, March 5th. This is a wonderful opportunity to welcome and share who we are as Presbyterians. The schedule will be on Sunday afternoons beginning on February 12th and will be at the Hindu Temple.

Northminster Youth and a team of adult leaders will also bring back Italian Night to NPC! This is a long-loved event for all ages! It will be an opportunity for our youth to lay out the welcome mat for our church family as they raise funds for ongoing events to promote spiritual development, such as the Montreat Youth Conference this summer.

The youth will also spend time over the next few months preparing to lead this year’s Youth Sunday which will take place on Sunday, May 7th. This is a meaningful service that is entirely led by the Middle School and High School youth. It is also when we honor our Senior Graduates as they close this chapter of their lives and prepare for the next.

Northminster Youth continues to move forward week after week, welcoming new activities and opportunities. Thank you to all who make this possible through your support and encouragement. Keep watching for more ways that you can be part of their world. They have a lot to offer!
Please Join Us for Adult Education Classes

Through May and starting again in September, we host a variety of Adult Ed classes and we welcome everyone to jump in for one, two or as many classes as you can make. Please check the church website for dates and details.

On Sunday mornings at 11:15, immediately following worship, we gather in Calvin Hall (in-person only) and host speakers on a variety of subjects related to our involvement as a Matthew 25 Congregation, e.g. the housing crisis, evictions, legislation to help reduce poverty, anti-racism learnings, and more.

On occasional Sunday evenings at 5:30, we gather online (only) for Northminster Reads to discuss a book related to fighting racism.

On the second Wednesday of each month at 6pm, we host Northminster Speaks (in the sanctuary and online) with interesting presentations on a wide range of topics.

On occasional Wednesday evenings at 6pm, we meet in the board room downstairs and online for classes on many topics, such as our recent series on World Religions, again related to Matthew 25.

Find answers to the puzzle at the bottom of page 2.
Pokagon Family Retreat: Winter Fun

Again this year, Northminster families of all ages gathered for a January weekend at Pokagon State Park, and this time we set a record: 78 people! We tobogganed, hiked, swam, played arcade games, played board games, played cards, worshipped, made crafts, ran around, prayed, sang, shared communion, socialized, bonded with old friends, met new friends, and enjoyed communing with God and some of our church family.

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.dzvonar@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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