

# PROCLAIM

Publication of Northminster Presbyterian Church

## Generosity

Spring 2025

80 years



# Generosity On Our Doorstep – Literally

On a regular Tuesday evening in March, Allison and I were driving to an event at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation when we drove past Northminster. The south parking lot was packed with cars. Upon seeing the full lot, Allison exclaimed, “Whoa! What is going on at the church tonight? It is only Tuesday.”

What a great question. It is one that could be asked on multiple days of the week nearly every week of the month. This wonderful building that has been placed in our trust is used throughout the week for all the things one might expect in a church — Board of Deacons, Session, Team Night, Circles, Men’s Prayer Breakfast, Youth Group; children’s ministries; Wednesday night meals and programming, preschool, choir rehearsals, and, of course, worship services.

But that’s not all.

Throughout the last 18 months, many of our community partners and local organizations have used this wonderful sacred space for their own meetings and gatherings. Some have met here for years. Others are new to the building. Here is just a sample:

- 80+ master gardeners meet in Calvin Hall once a month. They share a meal together, hear from an expert in the field, and trade tips and tricks for growing plants.
- The Broad Ripple Village Association Land Use Committee meets in Calvin Hall once a month.
- Each week, Northminster hosts AA and Al-anon.
- A Friends in Faith interfaith conversation was held in Calvin Hall.



Clockwise from top left: Mirror Indy Chat & Chew, Wednesday night dinner, workshop on Planning Your Celebration of Life, and Exodus Refugee presentation.

- Mirror Indy (Free Press Indiana) held a community listening session called Chat and Chew in the Gathering Place.
- The Court Watchers from around Indianapolis gathered to learn and strategize one evening.
- The CICOA Dementia Friendly Spring Event used the north parking lot, gathering place, and ramp to welcome and educate 100s of people from around the area.

Welcoming community organizations into our space to make use of this wonderful facility in a great location is just one more way that Northminster Presbyterian Church extends its faithful generosity to the community around us. It is another example of engaging with our neighbors near and far in Christ’s love. This is a part of our calling as a convener of important conversations and a connector of local resources, people, and organizations. The possibilities are nearly endless.

Oh, and that random Tuesday in March was when Exodus Refugee held the first of several Community Nights for education and advocacy here at Northminster. They have since held two more. And the parking lot was indeed full of cars that belong to interested people throughout the community. What a glorious sight to behold. Generosity in action. ♦



**Northminster Presbyterian Church**

## Mission

Seek, Serve and Embrace

## Vision

Engaging with Neighbors Near and Far in Christ’s Love

## Values

Christ-Centered  
Grounded in the Word  
Relevant  
Inclusive  
Nurturing  
Serving

On the cover: Even indoors, neighbors enjoyed the Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19th.

# 80 Years of Generosity

80 years

**2025 marks Northminster's 80th anniversary. This year, each Proclaim issue will contain photos and recollections of our 80 years here at 1660 Kessler Blvd. Our present-day mission — to seek, serve and embrace — embodies eight decades of the comfort that comes from being embraced by a family of faith and the joy that is felt in seeking and serving our Lord and Savior.**



*Holy Moses!* The Vacation Bible School theme in the early 2000s attracted a lot of attention from traffic on Kessler and educated lots of kids.



1968 Youth European Pilgrimage



2013 Mission Trip to Kenya

Originally commissioned in 1945 as a “mission church” for the Broad Ripple area, it would seem Northminster was destined to be a church of generous Christians. This offering of NPC history provides a small taste of our many mission efforts. We have not been braggadocious about what we have done over the years. Instead, we have respectfully shown Christ’s love to our neighbors in the pews, in our community and in faraway places.

As a fledgling mission church in 1952, NPC members cleared the brush and trees on the property to make way for a new Sanctuary. In 2023, members helped refresh the westside, the original “front yard” of the church. During an outdoor worship service in August ’23 we dedicated Ralston Commons, a place for neighbors to gather and for children to play safely. Over eight decades, members have generously given of their time, treasure and talent to: keep our facilities in shape, fix emergency meals for members, pray for others, run the streaming equipment, sing in our choirs, greet folks on Sunday mornings or at Sound and Spirit concerts, take leadership roles and so much more. “Things” just seem to happen in our church — all made possible by the quiet generosity of members.

Beyond our property, neighbors nearby have seen Christ’s love. Consider, for example, since the 1980s when members have delivered Thanksgiving food baskets, or today’s members who lend a hand at Gleaners or the Westminster Food Pantry. Many may remember the Youth Group’s Souper Bowl of Caring food drive on Super Bowl Sundays, which took on extra meaning when the Colts won the 2007 Super Bowl. Our generosity was evident in the ‘90s and ‘00s when we helped host homeless families in the church as a part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network and today by supporting Family Promise. We never seem to run out of ways to show Christ’s love.

Over the past 80 years, we have engaged our neighbors far away as well. Since the post-World War II resettlement efforts for 3 families, to present-day Exodus Refugee resettlements, we have seen a need and met it.

In 1968 our youth took a pilgrimage to Europe and spent 2 weeks in Germany building a playground for local children, and this trip was the start of a several-year exchange with a German church. In 2006, our youth and leaders took several mission trips to Cancun, Mexico to help a church with building projects. In 2013, a multigenerational group took a mission trip to Kenya. A follow-up trip in 2020 was scuttled due to Covid but remains on the radar.

That’s a glimpse into the last 80 years. No doubt our days leading up to our 100th anniversary will see many more opportunities to generously engage neighbors near and far in Christ’s love. ✦



Sunday morning volunteers for the little ones

Interested in learning more about Northminster’s history?

Visit this link: <https://www.northminster-indy.org/about/history/>

# Generosity For The Long Term

You can't tell the full story of Northminster generosity without including the Northminster Foundation — for the generosity of contributions to the Foundation and the generosity of distributions from the Foundation to support the Church. Foundation summaries have often appeared in annual reports, at congregation meetings, and in the pages of this magazine, but the full story of the Foundation's impact can be hard to retain.

## How's YOUR Foundation IQ? To test it, try the Pop Quiz (page 6).

But before you do, it might help to check the next six paragraphs.

**Birth:** In 1987, after a dozen years of talk and preparation, the Northminster Presbyterian Church Foundation, Inc. was formally incorporated and, as an "integrated auxiliary" of the Church, automatically shared Northminster's tax-exempt status. Before 1987 ended, the Foundation's endowment fund received gifts of \$211,000, including \$176,000 from the Church's "Gifts and Bequests Account."

**Spend or save:** Almost immediately—and like personal savings accounts—the Foundation's endowment felt the tension between spending today

and saving for tomorrow. Created to support Northminster's current and future ministries, the Foundation could, under its bylaws, distribute the endowment's annual earnings to the Church, but could dip into principal only for a "dire emergency." Initially, the Foundation board decided to distribute only one-third of its earnings, leaving the rest to build endowment principal. But by the end of the Foundation's first full year, the Church faced a "significant pledge shortfall," even after staffing and compensation cuts. In response, the Foundation board agreed to spend all endowment earnings for Church operations.

**Tapping Northminster's savings:** By 1996, the Foundation's endowment assets had grown to \$1.3 million, and its Church support levels had crept above \$50,000 per year. But in the aftermath of the Mathias murders that December, Church revenues dropped into "dire emergency" territory, and the Foundation began distributing all earnings and some principal to meet the moment.

**Smoothing:** Starting in 2006, with its investment strategy yielding

average annual returns over 7%, the Foundation adopted a Church-support formula still in effect today—5% of the endowment fund's average asset balance (using a 20-quarter rolling average). That distribution percentage, commonly used for endowments, was designed to smooth market volatility while allowing the Foundation to boost Church support and still retain some earnings to build Foundation assets.

**Other Foundation funds:** In addition to its endowment fund, the Foundation has also maintained special-purpose funds created by donor-restricted contributions, including the Mathias Fund (to support seminary students) and the Relief Fund (with half its earnings for the Church's mission support). The Foundation also holds and invests Church-owned funds.

**Patterns:** In recent years, the Foundation's endowment balance has fluctuated around \$2 million, and its standard Church-budget contribution is around \$100,000 annually. For calendar years 2000 through 2024, the Foundation's regular annual support



The Gathering Place is constructed to provide a new front door and welcoming area to the previously L-shaped church building.



2005

2010

2015





Aerial shot of the church with highlighted area showing houses that were purchased to create the north parking lot.

provided more than **\$2.12 million** for Church operations, an amount greater than the endowment fund's \$2.0 million average balance over the same period.

### **Spoiler alert! If you're going to take the Pop Quiz—without cheating—now's the time to do it!**

From 2000 through 2024, the Foundation often answered the call for more money—above the standard annual support levels—to help the Church weather difficult times or meet other special needs.

**Post-Mathias response:** Following the 1996 Mathias tragedy, the Foundation began committing \$5,000 per month in Church support, but beginning in

*Continued on page 6*

## Foundation of Generosity

Beginning in 2025, we're talking differently about giving at Northminster — and it's exciting.

This change is encompassed in the word "Generosity." When you think about giving at Northminster, odds are the first thing that pops to mind is the passing of the plate at every service or the annual fall pledge campaign — in other words, money. But when you think about generosity, different pictures likely crowd in —

- the person who gives their time to a cause close to your heart;
- the friend who always volunteers their home for any gathering;
- the colleague who stops what they are doing to listen when they see you have something on your mind;
- the stranger who looks you in the eyes at Costco and smiles, even though they seem as harried as you.

It's like that at Northminster, too. Here, there is a place for you to express and receive Generosity in the way that fits you best.

One way to express Generosity does involve money, not only through your annual pledge but also through the Northminster Foundation. Created in 1987, the Foundation's mission is to protect and grow our church. Foundation representatives are part of the new Generosity Committee at Northminster. The goal of the Committee is to bring together all concepts of Generosity in support of our congregation and our neighbors near and far.

To learn more about the Foundation and what it does for our church and community, check out its webpage at <https://www.northminster-indy.org/about-us/npc-foundation/> or the new Foundation brochure posted in various spots around the church. Look for its green tree logo. Giving money may be one of the ways you choose to express Generosity; if so, consider giving to the Foundation in support of its mission to protect and grow the future of Northminster. You can do that through a variety of estate planning tools (see the website or brochure for more information) or through a gift right now.

The Foundation Board's goal is to increase awareness and participation in the Foundation. Today, only a small percentage of the congregation are members of the Legacy Society — those who contribute to the Foundation or the Church through their estate plan or to the Foundation during their lifetime — but we know there are more people to whom this speaks. Please look for more information throughout the year about how the Foundation can be one of your paths to Generosity. ♦



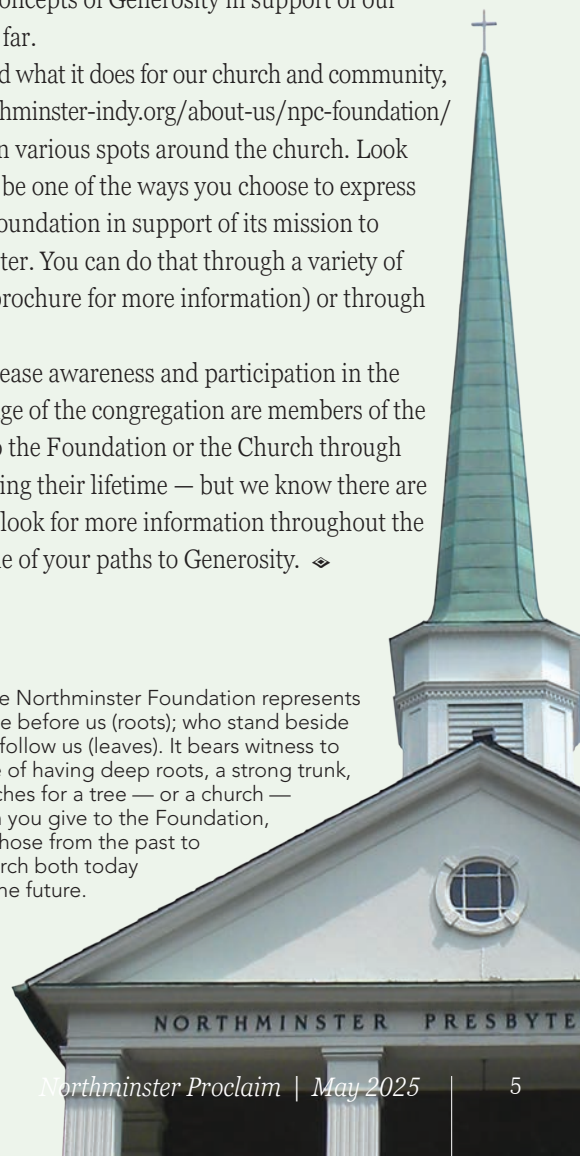
The logo for the Northminster Foundation represents those who came before us (roots); who stand beside us (trunk); who follow us (leaves). It bears witness to the importance of having deep roots, a strong trunk, and wide branches for a tree — or a church — to thrive. When you give to the Foundation, your gift joins those from the past to benefit the church both today and long into the future.

Supplemental Support

Standard Annual Support

2020

2024



## Generosity For The Long Term (continued)



The new Fisk organ is installed and the chancel is reconfigured to accommodate the instrument and better acoustics.

*Continued from page 5*

2000, budgetary needs rose significantly. For the following six-year period, the Foundation's supplemental support exceeded \$258,000.

### **2009 Capital Project loans:**

In 2001, the Church began acquiring Kingsley Street houses to make room for what became the 2009 Capital Project (north parking lot, Gathering Place, other upgrades). The Foundation lent the Church \$271,745, interest-free, to purchase two Kingsley houses and, in 2008, an additional \$188,255 to refinance the third house purchase. And in 2009, the Foundation made an additional \$100,000 interest-free loan to assist with the Capital Project. As compared to a normal investment return of at least 7% on those amounts, the interest-free loans cost the Foundation over \$360,000 through 2013. At that point, the Foundation forgave those loans entirely, reducing its assets by another \$560,000.

**Special Presbyterian note investments:** Starting in 2009, the Foundation made special investments averaging about \$140,000 in below-market-rate notes (like short-maturity bonds) issued by the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP). Northminster was borrowing millions from PILP for the 2009 Capital Project, and the Foundation's PILP investments helped the Church earn a reduced borrowing rate on its Capital Project loan

through the 2020 payoff date. Assuming the PILP notes paid interest rates 1% below market during those years, that accommodation cost the Foundation \$16,800.

**Debt reduction assistance:** In 2013, after the Church had run two capital campaigns and still owed PILP significant amounts on the Capital Project loan, the Foundation increased its support percentage temporarily by a supplemental 2.5% (to a total support level of 7.5%) to help pay the debt. By the end of 2019 (and after a third capital campaign), the Church's PILP debt had dropped substantially, so the Foundation reduced the supplemental support percentage from 2.5% to 1%, which continued until the PILP loan payoff in 2020. In all, the years of debt-reduction assistance exceeded \$290,000

**Organ/chancel project:** In 2019, the Foundation made a special distribution of \$52,000 to assist the Church with unexpected costs of the organ and chancel-redesign project.

**Operating deficit relief:** To help address a significant Church operating deficit for 2019, the Foundation approved distributions of approximately \$56,000.

**Sewer repair:** In 2022, to cover emergency sewer repairs (meeting anyone's definition of "dire emergency"), the Foundation made a special contribution of \$23,000.

### And so ...

In short, during the 25-year period starting in 2000, the total of Foundation supplemental support exceeded **\$1.6 million**. If the Foundation had limited its distributions during those years to standard Church support and invested all the supplemental amounts at 7% interest, the Foundation today would have about **\$4.0 million of additional** endowment assets.

Keep in mind that all the Foundation's support for the Church during those years – whether as standard annual support or to meet special needs – came from individual gifts directly to the Foundation, individual gifts to the Church that were deposited in the Foundation, or investment earnings on those gifts – gifts often made many years earlier. By any measure, that's an inspiring example of generosity. Generosity for the long term.

*[Author's note: a more detailed explanation of the 2000-2023 financial events and computations are contained in a five-page report and available to any hardy soul who asks.]* ♦

### POP QUIZ

#### Testing Your Foundation IQ

1. Since 2000, the Northminster Foundation has made grants to how many charitable organizations?
2. In what year did the Foundation's endowment fund first reach \$2.0 million?
3. From 2000 through 2024, how much total support did the Church draw from the Foundation's endowment fund?
4. If the Foundation had provided only standard Church support since 2000 (5% for example), how large would its endowment fund have been at year-end 2024?

*(answers on page 10)*



# Hand-crafted by Jim Arend

I asked my husband if he could contribute some questions that I might ask Jim Arend about his woodworking projects. He (John Purcell) wanted to know when Jim started woodworking ("I was about ten."), betting it was in the Boy Scouts ("Nope. My friend wanted a tree house and he had some wood. It was 6 feet off the ground.") He wanted to know Jim's biggest project ("Our mini-barn with the gambrel roof."), the biggest failure ("Definitely the tree house. My friend's parents tore it down about two days later because there were no railings and, well, it was six feet off the ground!"), even whether or not Jim had injured himself and had to go to the emergency room for stitches ("Not yet.") These are the questions a jealous man (John Purcell) asked while running his hands admiringly over our own Jim Arend-crafted bowl purchased at a church auction years ago.



A native of Bluffton, Indiana, Jim earned first an associate degree in architecture and another in civil engineering from Purdue University on the Ft. Wayne campus, and completed his BA in construction from Purdue in Indianapolis. He retired in 2008 after thirty-five years with the Indiana State Department of Transportation.

Growing up, Jim was one of those kids who saw potential in about any piece of wood. An early source was the old wood-slatted orange crates (see above "tree house") but he repurposed other kinds of wood for a car with carriage wheels, the sort you steer with ropes. As a boy his

creations were for play but there was no denying that he developed an admiration for different kinds of wood — oak, maple, cherry, pine, birch — and a curiosity about how he might create useful and beautiful objects. Indeed, there is almost a reverence when he described looking at an ordinary board and imagining how it might work as kitchen cabinets, Grandfather and Grandmother clocks, or nametag storage system for the church, all of which he has done.



Jim and his wife Norma are celebrating 55 years of marriage this year. He says she's the best decision of his life, and Northminster has benefitted from their commitment since they joined the church in 1990. They have partnered as they taught in our Sunday preschool, shopped during Clothe-a-Child, and served Sunday morning coffee and donuts. Jim also serves as a Sunday morning host and wears the red tag that says "Ask Me." So, I did.

How does this power couple thing work? Jim recalled a time he and Norma were at the Indiana State Fair and he saw something called a Shopsmith, a magnificent piece of wood-working equipment that does all kinds of complicated things. Jim bought it. And while they were there, they bought Norma a Viking sewing machine that does the same thing with fabric — a lot of complicated things. While she was sewing shorts and dresses for Northminster volunteers to deliver to people in Africa, Jim was working



out how to make a holder with various hooks and spindles for the red canvas activity bags for children attending worship services with their parents.

He made three versions, two wall-hung with thick, sturdy wooden hooks located in the balcony and by the north entrance to the Sanctuary. A larger, portable unit is a fun, circular spindle with bags hanging on spokes. It spins.

It's the name tag holders, so handy, so carefully crafted, that have served us so well. The first one located in the Narthex



has an attractive split pediment top with a natural wood finial that suits the Northminster church style so well. Both are portable for when we take our services to a park. Next time you grab your nametag, take a moment to study the slot that saves your place, the curves and other details.

Since coming to Northminster, Jim Arend has been on the Building & Grounds Team, installing himself as a permanent fixture in the life of our church. His next project is partnering with the venerable Bill Lord in designing a new sound board unit in the balcony. And that will be worth a trip upstairs to see. ♦



# "This Is Where the Money Went"

Take a minute. Close your eyes. Now go back, way back in pre-Pandemic time. Turn the Way-Back Machine to 2016 (an IYKYK reference for any Rocky & Bullwinkle fans). That is when Northminster's Session initiated the call for a special campaign, *Abundant Joy*, to address three major goals:

- 1. Purchase a new organ: \$1M
- 2. Pay down Northminster Building Fund debt and replace Reserve Funds: \$800k
- 3. Create a Mission Endowment Fund: \$700k

The campaign ran from 2017 through the end of 2019. Incredible as it may seem, our goal was \$2.5M. Northminster's sights were never higher. And our faith was never stronger. The *Abundant Joy* leadership team of Rev. Teri Thomas, John and Cheryl Plunkett, Jennifer Dzwonar, and Kristin Keltner — to name just a few — set out to recruit congregants to make pledge phone calls, house calls, and send out letters, postcards, and emails. This writer was one of those recruits. I'm unsure what difference I made in terms of member commitments. I just know I met some extraordinary "Northminsters" I probably would not have gotten to know otherwise. Stepping into others' homes and their lives is a humbling experience, one in which I was very insecure and somewhat fearful of in the unknown. Looking back, I was never more grateful for those introductions, coming from faith in working with others and trusting in those others who believed in the Call, the campaign, and in me.

The annual campaign for 2017 was close to target but the capital campaign only hit about 52% of the goal or just over \$1.3 million. However, a vision had been cast to reach these three financial milestones. Pledges were collected from 2016 and into 2020 with 40% of pledge

receipts going to an Organ Fund, 32% going to pay down debt and 28% to the Mission Endowment.

In 2019 an opportunity to purchase a custom-built organ at a special rate presented itself if we acted quickly. With some additional fundraising that year, we began planning for the CB Fisk, Opus 154 organ to be installed in March 2020. This completed the first leg of the campaign.



In February 2020, the session approved using part of a bequest to the church to retire the debt targeted in the *Abundant Joy* campaign. By this time the balance was down to approximately \$200,000 because of campaign pledges and other payments. The second leg of the campaign was completed in mid-2020.

And then there is the third leg of the *Abundant Joy* campaign — a bounty of generosity. The Mission Team was charged with creating something transformational with the Mission portion of the campaign funds. They decided to establish a grants program to award local organizations with a proven record an amount that would significantly impact their program per the following parameters:

- Reduce poverty among children and their families in Central Indiana, assisting in the education, feeding, clothing, and housing of children (2/3 of Fund gifts)



- Assist Global Interfaith Partnership programs, specifically mission work in Kenya (1/3 of Fund gifts)

Generally, 5% of this fund is made available annually to the Mission Team to use as they see fit per the above. [Note: The principal can be accessed for special projects by the Mission Team with approval of the Session.]

### The Joy That Keeps Giving

Over the past six years, the Mission Endowment has sponsored the following:

2020	Umoja School Sponsorship
2021	St. Mary's Center School on Wheels
2022	Little Timmy Project / NPC Playground
2023	Community Food Box
2024	Ralston Commons / Community Food Box / Umoja / Habitat for Humanity
2025	Umoja / Westminster Neighborhood Services / Gleaners

As of 12/31/2024 the value of the Mission Endowment is \$460,711.

Additionally, the Mission Endowment continues to support our work in Kenya. An NPC trip to Kenya in 2013 to build barns, lead worship, visit local church families, and perform other missionary



tasks, began a longtime commitment to this project. A portion of the Endowment carries on Kenyan mission work.

To paraphrase 1980s rocker Robert Palmer’s lyric, “[This is] Telling where the money went.” NPC’s Mission Team continues its work through prayer and fellowship to be considerate stewards of the committed financial support of Northminster Presbyterian.

This campaign served as a financial strategic vision. In 2016, the financial commitments were not at a level to call the campaign a financial success. However, through the faithful generosity of NPC members and the diligent work of Session, volunteers, and staff leadership to keep the vision alive, the campaign goals were all realized in 2020, in the midst of a Pandemic. The Opus 154 and the Mission Endowment are reminders that stepping forward in faith may not have been the path we planned to take, but in the end the vision was fulfilled. ✦

Annual Generosity

The Mission Endowment (or Foundation Mission Fund) is separate from Northminster’s annual Mission Grants funding. The Endowment discussed in the article provides support for selected 1-3 organizations each year. Our annual Mission Grants giving is 10% of our annual pledged income each year (both Foundation and annual budget money combined) and is given to a total of 15 mission partner organizations that work in the following areas:

- Hunger
- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Inclusion

EVENTS



FEB: Northminster Annual Meeting



APR: Easter Egg Hunt: 3,000 eggs divided by 62 kids equals 48 eggs per child!



Answers to the puzzle on page 15:		
4. A	8. D	12. K
3. C	7. J	11. B
2. E	6. L	10. F
1. G	5. H	9. I



# One of the Most Important Gifts We Give Is Our Time – To Others and To Ourselves

## Galentine's Brunch

In February, Northminster hosted a “Galentine” Brunch at the church for mothers of young children. The intention behind the gathering was to create a space where moms could slow down, feel seen, and enjoy meaningful connections with one another. We had a wonderful turnout!

We began with a lighthearted and heartfelt devotional excerpt centered on the power and image of Jesus’ love and how we are called to reflect that love in our everyday lives. It set the tone for a time filled with encouragement and laughter.

The brunch featured homemade tea sandwiches, a build-your-own bouquet station, and plenty of joy from both moms and kids. The room was full of warmth and community—it was truly a special way to celebrate love, friendship, and motherhood. A special shout out to Pastor Karen Herbst-Kim, Krista Wright, and Emma Moore for helping set up and serve the food and drinks, and to everyone who shared their time to attend!



## Family Movie Night

Family Movie Night at church is a fun way to bring our young families together. Life with kids can be fast-paced, and it is easy to miss out on simple moments of connection. Our hope was to create a space where families could share a cozy evening and enjoy a beautiful movie that sparks conversation and togetherness.

I chose *The Wild Robot*, a story about the power of kindness, courage, and discovering one’s purpose. After watching it for the first time when it was first released, one of the lines that stuck with me says, “Once, there was an island with all sorts of animals, and they fought, and they ran, and they hid. But mostly, they were scared. But then, a robot fell right out of the sky. Roz. She had some strange ideas. Thought kindness was a survival skill. And you know what? She was right.”

In a time when the world can feel overwhelming and divided, the reminder that kindness is powerful—and even essential to survival—is more important than ever. Our hope is to make Family Movie Night an annual tradition, where families can laugh, reflect, and enjoy being together. ✨

**Pop Quiz Answers from page 6**

1. One: Northminster Presbyterian Church
2. In 1999 it reached \$2,005,377
3. \$3.8 million (\$2.2 million in standard support and \$1.6 million in supplemental support)
4. About two and one-half times as large, over \$6.7 million



# Northminster as an Organ of Generosity

By 2012, it had become apparent that Northminster's pipe organ was going to need extensive repair work — and that it would be quite expensive. Given the organ's age, it seemed unwise to keep putting money into it, so a music committee was formed to investigate other options. The group met with a number of organ builders, searching for one who could provide an instrument that would best support the versatile kinds of worship music that were our focus and goal.

In the organ world, one brand is known to be the "Cadillac of organs" — Fisk. We chose Fisk organ builders not because of their reputation, but because they seemed most able to provide a fitting instrument for our congregation's worship of God through music.

Organ building takes time, and committee member Mike Boris explained how the process unfolded. Fisk clients spend time in 3 levels: designing, building, and installing. There is only one client at a time in each level. NPC waited in the design level while another organ was under construction for a church in California. Sadly, a sudden storm with serious mudslides destroyed that church, so Fisk contacted us and suggested they could begin building sooner — providing us with an organ earlier and a lower price. We accepted!

Northminster had raised a considerable amount of funds for the project, but the congregation responded with amazing generosity when an additional amount was needed. Gifts began pouring in from so many donors that we were able to cover the project, and the organ building began in 2018. Installation took place in early 2020, right at the beginning of the pandemic, and we were able to appreciate our new organ and its contribution to our then-all-online worship.



We also knew we could use the organ in ways other than worship — with such opportunities as programs, concerts, and even recitals and lessons.

I spoke with our Director of Music Ministries, John Wright, regarding Sound and Spirit, a Northminster community music outreach initiative. He noted, "Since its installation, we have been intentional about making sure the organ is used at least once in each choral concert. People may come expecting a choral concert, but we want to make sure they also experience this magnificent instrument."

Regarding generosity, John said, "One of the things that I am most proud of is how Northminster members and friends helped finance the new organ. From gifts of \$10 to \$20,000+, our people really came through with the funding, preventing us from relying on one large gift or taking out a loan."

When discussing our Fisk organ, the ultimate authority to speak about it is our Music Associate and Organist, Dr. Marko Petričić. See Marko's letter to the congregation below. ♦

Dear friends,

It is a joy to play this organ each week in rehearsals and services, supporting choral and congregational singing and exploring organ repertoire from various eras with so many registrations and limitless possibilities. For the larger needs of the church such as outreach and education, this organ is also serving as an amazing asset.

- Last May, we had a closing service for the Indy chapter of the American Guild of Organists with the guest organist, Robert McCormick, leading the festive hymn singing service. Over 50 organists and choir directors from Indianapolis enjoyed our organ and much improved new acoustics of the chancel space.
- In February, we hosted the Sound and Spirit solo recital by Katherine Joliff, an organ performance student at the Eastman School of Music. A national award-winning young organist from Indianapolis, she started her organ journey with lessons at Northminster while in eighth grade. This was a record-breaking crowd for an organ recital — we had 139 people in the middle of winter
- I recently also brought my organ students from Ball State University to see and play this wonderful instrument, and we're hoping to have a studio recital here during the fall of 2025.

I would like to inspire your imagination for the end: there is one more organ stop that we can add to complete this instrument — a 16' Dulcian on the Swell division. Fisk purposely left the room for this final stop that can be added with a financial gift from a donor or a group of donors. Conversations already are occurring, and if you would like to find out more, or are interested in participating, please talk to me. This organ will keep serving Northminster, its people, and our extended community for many years to come!

Marko Petričić



# Italian Night 2025

Italian Night is a bi-annual fundraiser that takes place on a Saturday evening in February to benefit Youth Programs at Northminster, and it's always bellissimo! People of all ages from the church and community gather in Calvin Hall for delicious pasta, homemade (truly!) sauces, garlic bread, meatballs, sausage, and salad. This year, the food was raised to a new level with homemade desserts selected by each table based on their fundraising. Everyone had a fabulous time, and our Youth will benefit for the next two years when we do it all again. ✦





## Existing Space—New Life

There are two small rooms at the back of the narthex that have always been there, but you may not have noticed them because their doors were always tightly shut. Originally, these rooms were coat closets and then when additional entrances and coat storage spaces were added to the church building in different locations, they became general storage rooms holding everything from decades of untouched items to regularly used tools for safety and worship.

Now the doors of the rooms are thrown open in welcome to serve our ever-growing and changing congregation. One has become a Parenting Room with rocking chairs, a changing table stocked with diapers and wipes, books, puzzles, blocks and a magnetic chalkboard wall.



The other is a maybe less familiar concept called a Sensory Room. This is a space where children, youth, or adults can take a break from our sometimes bright and loud sanctuary, or find tools to take into the sanctuary to support their worship such as fidget items, noise cancelling headphones, or wiggle seats.

A lot of what is placed in the Sensory Room is done with neurodivergence in mind. According to Sarah Griffith Lund's newly published book, *Blessed Minds: Breaking the Silence about Neurodiversity*, "Neurodiversity is a word that encompasses the full spectrum



of differences in the human brain, including those that might be identified as neurotypical and those considered neurodivergent." Folks with an autism or ADHD diagnosis might consider themselves to be neurodivergent. Mental health diagnoses can go hand-in-hand with neurodivergence.

The fourth of Lund's 10 Commandments of Neurodiversity is: You Shall Have Accommodations. "If we truly want to create communities where everyone who wants to experience belonging is welcome, then accommodations will



not be an afterthought. Noise-canceling headphones, fidget items, low lighting, large print, and elevators are just as necessary as the Bible and the cross." (Lund is the senior pastor of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indy and a friend to many Northminster staff and members.)

Our Sensory Room is outfitted with a sensory wall, a beanbag chair, a therapy ball, a sensory canoe, a sound machine, and weighted blankets all to create a safe and calming space to those who enter our building while also meeting their sensory needs.



Both the Parenting Room and the Sensory Room have dimmable lights and a small TV that can be used to livestream the service, so users of these rooms are included. There are noise absorbing panels in the rooms to cut down on the sound bouncing off the walls. Northminster staff and volunteers have been working hard to make these spaces as comfortable as possible and feel less like closets. Our final step will be to add frosted glass to the windows to add natural light while maintaining privacy.

Feel free to familiarize yourself with these updated rooms; they are for everyone, and we hope everyone feels welcome in our church building. ♦

# Book Reviews

## Mrs. Dalloway

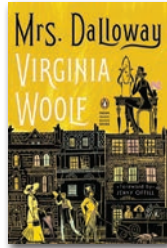
by Virginia Woolf

In 1920s London socialite Clarissa Dalloway is putting the finishing touches on a party she is having that evening. In stream-of-consciousness style, Woolf probes the musings, reminiscences, and encounters of Clarissa's day.

Perhaps that was the Queen she saw in a limousine outside the flower shop. She dwelt on the friendship between her and daughter Elizabeth and a much-disliked friend. A former suitor, Peter, stopped in and Clarissa invited him to the evening's party. Peter was job hunting in London and planning to divorce his wife. He thought Elizabeth was beautiful.

The Bradshaws arrived at the party early and were upset because one of Dr. Bradshaw's patients had died by suicide. Clarissa commiserated.

The party was a great success, especially after the Prime Minister arrived. Clarissa remembered when Peter asked her to marry him. Now Clarissa was growing old and knew herself to be beautiful, charming, and inconsequential. Peter left with a feeling of strangeness and ecstasy. It must be Clarissa, he thought.



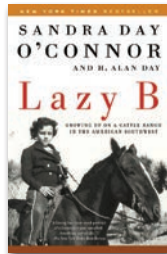
## Lazy B: Growing Up on a Cattle Ranch in the American Southwest

by Sandra Day O'Connor and H. Alan Day

Sandra Day O'Connor was the first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Sandra and her brother and sister were the third generation of the Day family to live on the Lazy B cattle ranch. Under the guidance of rough-and-tumble cowboys there were cattle drives and roundups. Sandra's father called their life of self-reliance and survival "frugal and happy."

Sandra attended private school in El Paso where she lived with her grandmother and made lifetime friends. She graduated from Stanford University and Stanford Law School.

When Sandra married John O'Connor in 1952, her father built a new barn where the rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in El Paso performed the ceremony. The local cowboy band was hired, and the barn was decorated with pine branches and mistletoe. A special barbecue was prepared in a nearby pit, and friends and neighbors contributed salads and casseroles for a gala feast. Locals said the dust didn't settle on the ranch road for days after the wedding.



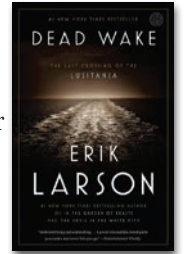
## Dead Wake: The Last Passage of the Lusitania

by Erik Larson

A gentlemanly rule of war was broken forever when, early in World War I, a German U-boat torpedoed The Lusitania. Previously, military ships waged war while merchant vessels and luxury liners were left alone.

Lusitania was on a scheduled cruise from New York City to Liverpool, England. The passengers were a bit apprehensive, but for the most part, reveled in their luxurious surroundings. British intelligence was tracking the U-boat 20 but told no one of their findings.

Author Larson enriches his account of the tragedy by including the comments and activities of First Lord of the (British) Admiralty Winston Churchill, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and President Woodrow Wilson of the U.S. Larson also employs direct quotations from authorities and survivors such as one from German Admiral Reihart Scheer: "A U-boat cannot spare the crews of steamers but must send them to the bottom with their ship."



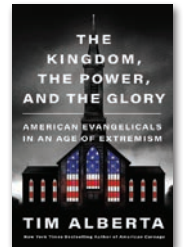
## The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory: American Evangelicals in an Age of Extremism

by Tim Alberta

Journalist Alberta, whose father was pastor of a megachurch outside Detroit, believes the purpose of the Church is to make disciples of all nations by sharing the gospel, baptizing unbelievers, and training followers of Jesus to become more like Jesus. Unfortunately, some church members want to exclude others and forget that their own responsibility is to mature and to become better versions of themselves.

In writing this book, Alberta interviewed pastors and church leaders all over the country, telling the story of a faith cheapened by ephemeral fear, a promise corrupted by partisan subterfuge, and a reputation stained by perpetual scandal.

In this book it is clear that "evangelicals" have allowed their love of country to trivialize the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.





# Generosity

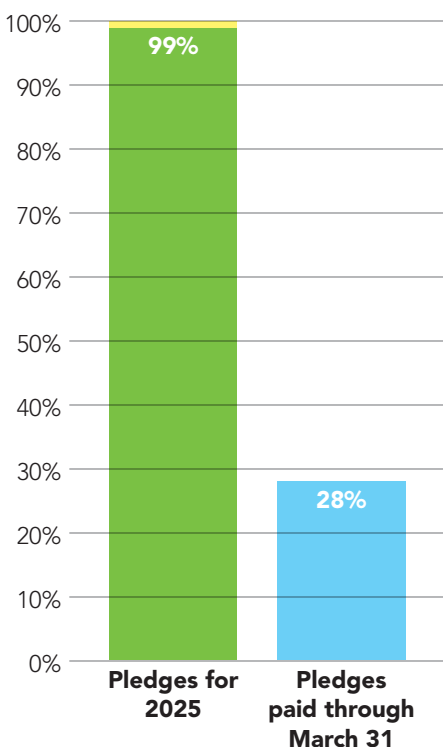
By Jim Mann & Mike Shannon, co-chairs of the newly formed Generosity Team

Northminster Presbyterian Church's Vision is to engage with neighbors Near and Far in Christ's love. We do this through the generous donations of our members, as well as through the work of all our Teams, staff and volunteers.

It is anticipated that through fiscal year 2025, Northminster will provide resources of more than \$184,000 to our Mission Partners and other benevolences. This demonstrates that Northminster goes beyond talking the talk and we walk the walk in spreading the good news throughout community — with our monetary contributions and through our generous donations of our time and talent.

Through March 2025 NPC has received pledges totaling 99% of annual budget. Also, we have received 28% of the pledged money, which is ahead of schedule just three months into the year. These are indeed encouraging signs toward fulfilling our Vision. 💎

## Percent of pledge goal



## PUZZLE

By Pennie Lumley, member since 1965

## Folks in the Bible

Below are the names of twelve people in the Bible and clues to their identity. Can you match people and clues?

*Answers on page 9.*

- |                    |                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Solomon         | A. Mother of John the Baptist              |
| 2. Huldah          | B. Sister of Mary and Lazarus              |
| 3. Moses           | C. Brought Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai |
| 4. Elizabeth       | D. Head tax collector in Jericho           |
| 5. Paul            | E. Old Testament prophet                   |
| 6. Sarah           | F. Son of Adam and Eve                     |
| 7. Peter           | G. Wise king of Israel                     |
| 8. Zacchaeus       | H. Blinded on road to Damascus             |
| 9. Lydia           | I. Dealer in purple cloth                  |
| 10. Cain           | J. Disciple of Jesus Christ                |
| 11. Martha         | K. Recognized the risen Lord at the tomb   |
| 12. Mary Magdalene | L. Abram's wife                            |



## We Can See Clearly Now

After more than a year of planning, measuring, brainstorming, contracting, permitting, preping, and constructing, the balcony wall has been replaced. What was previously a low (too low for current building codes) wood wall is now a higher, shinier glass wall. The wall allows "balcony people" to see the full chancel and pews, and it allows worship/meeting leaders to see the full balcony. It's one of those projects that, once complete, many people remarked, "Why didn't we do this years ago?" The time was finally right in 2025, and we can see clearly now, the wall is gone.



## NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1660 Kessler Blvd, East Drive

Indianapolis, IN 46220-2799

Phone: 317-251-9489

[www.northminster-indy.org](http://www.northminster-indy.org)

### Sound & Spirit

On Sunday March 16, as part of the Sound & Spirit series, the Northminster Chancel Choir, orchestra, and guest baritone Michael Preacely presented *Eternal Light*, a concert featuring *Requiem in D minor* by Gabriel Fauré, as well as works by Tye, Hogan, Trotta, and more. In the dreariness that is sometimes March and Lent, the concert's depth, beauty, and variety brought light to the audience and participants. Your generosity makes the free Sound & Spirit series possible.



*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](mailto: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.

Editor: Jennifer Dzwonar, [jennifer.dzwonar@borshoff.biz](mailto:jennifer.dzwonar@borshoff.biz)