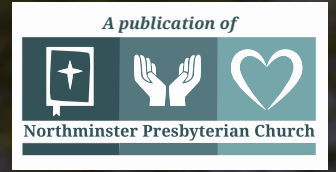


PROCLAIM



Spring/Summer 2026

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black and white patterned sweater and yellow boots, hugging a young boy from behind. They are on a blue and green playground structure. The boy is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and camouflage pants. The background shows green trees and a clear sky.

HOPE SPRINGS

I love Spring

I love spring . . .

The green of new birth that seems to somehow illuminate the world with a glowing internal light;

The tender shoots bursting forth through the once frozen ground;

The yellow of the daffodil;

The purple of the crocus;

The return of the songbird melody;

The warm days bathed in sunlight and cool cloudless nights;

The slow gentle rains.

I love spring.

Spring reminds us of the persistence of nature and the beauty of new beginnings.

Of all of the things to love, one of my favorite things about spring is when a rogue seed finds its way into a crack in the sidewalk or pavement, and a tiny flower peeks its little head out from what would appear to be the harshest of environments and the most impossible of circumstances. Hope springing forth in the most unexpected place. It stops me in my tracks every time. This is what resilience looks like. It is surprising and unforeseen. And it reveals what was inside that seed all along.

What are the moments that resemble the possibility of spring in your life?

What are the places where, if you just stopped long enough, you would notice a small flower of hope peeking out of the cracks in the concrete you once thought impossible to break through?

You have them, you know. The same tenacity and resilience that resides deep inside that tiny seed dwells in you, too. You just need the vision to see it and the patience to notice.

That is also true for this community of faith we call Northminster Presbyterian Church. We are still here despite — or perhaps because of — the challenges we have faced throughout our over 80 years of history. It hasn't always been easy.

.....

In this time when many things seem to be actively trying to stifle hope or at least block it from view, maybe Northminster is that tiny flower growing in the most unexpected of places as a reminder that all things are possible and hope never dies. Spring has arrived. ☪

.....



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



MATTHEW 25

Northminster is proud to be a Matthew 25 congregation focused on building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.



On the cover: Stephanie Alexander, a member of Northminster since 2008, and youngest son Blake Noah (age 6), enjoy the Northminster playground on a beautiful spring day. Stephanie is a mother of five – Robin, Danielle, Jenise, Soloman and Blake – each of whom have been part of Northminster while they were growing up.

Hope springs from the Northminster library

Upstairs, right next to the elevator, you'll find the Northminster library. Treasures include:

Words Kids Need to Hear

by David Stahl [248.84 STA]

I believe in you; You can count on me; I treasure you; I'm sorry; Please forgive me; Because; No; I love you. All are statements kids and teens need to hear from their parents and other close adults. Words matter. Words can bring hope.

Celtic Prayers from Iona

by J. Philip Newell [242.80 NEW]

Christianity in the Western Isles of Scotland on the holy island of Iona clashed with 6th century Roman missions. It became a spiritual resistance movement among the prayers of the people who lived there. Prayers that celebrated the essential goodness of all created life without being naïve or unaware of suffering and the bondage of evil. Newell attempts to incorporate aspects of this ancient stream into modern prayer today. Words matter. Words bring hope.

Three books of essays from a very wise woman who states, "When life is at its bleakest, when we are doomed, stunned, exhausted and overcaffeinated, all truth is a paradox, and this turns out to be a reason for hope."

Stitches: A Handbook of Meaning, Hope and Repair

by Anne Lamott [204.4 LAM]

Almost Everything: Notes on Hope

by Anne Lamott [170.44 LAM]

Dusk Night Dawn: On Revival and Courage

by Anne Lamott [B LAM]

Pebble: A Story About Belonging

by Susan Milford [J MIL]

A pebble on a rocky shore longs for something more and finds it in the palm of a small boy's hand. Words and actions matter. Words bring hope.

Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed

by Emily Pearson [J PEA]

A young girl's good deed is multiplied as it's passed on by those who have been touched by the kindness of others. Words and deeds matter. Words bring hope.

An Angel for Solomon Singer

by Cynthia Rylant [J RYL]

A lonely NYC resident finds companionship and good cheer at the Westway Café where dreams come true. Words matter. Words bring hope. ☮



Hope springs when a home becomes reality

I've long been intrigued by this Robert Frost definition of "home:" "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." For all the wisdom that quote contains, it doesn't work for families who *have no place to be taken in*. For example, in Indianapolis recently, *three generations* of one family were found living on the street, trapped in an all-too-common cycle of homelessness.

Until a few weeks ago. That's when *Streets to Home* gave that family a chance to leave their encampment and relocate to permanent housing.



What is *Streets to Home*?

Streets to Home Indy is a new (as of 2025) public-private initiative to end chronic homelessness in Indianapolis. It employs the proven "housing first" philosophy – that we can help more people more effectively if we first get them housed and then work on their other challenges (substance abuse or mental health, for example), rather than rewarding them with housing only if and

when they fix their other problems.

Recognizing our homelessness as a serious and worsening issue, several housing-related organizations, private funders, and local government have pooled resources to create *Streets to Home*. It launched its first phase last summer and already has made a difference:

- As of this publication, since late summer 2025, it has housed 135 individuals (including that three-generation family).
- Of those people approached with housing offers, 92% have chosen to leave the camps/streets for long-term housing.
- Participants have completed moves in an average of 26 days, compared to 100-150 days in other, previous homelessness programs.
- Nearly all those participants (94%) remain in their rental units.
- The relocations have effectively "decommissioned" three long-standing encampments.

By the time Phase One ends this August, *Streets to Home Indy* expects to have housed 300 to 350 of our chronically unsheltered neighbors.

How does the initiative work?

Phase One has worked with local landlords to identify a supply of existing rental units, all fully furnished and move-in ready. Staff have visited homeless encampments to explain the program and to offer housing, plus 12 months of rental assistance and wrap-around services (such as case management, mental health and substance abuse services, health care, and employment assistance).

The Phase One budget of \$8.1 million has looked for \$2.7 million from each of three funding sources: the



Jennifer Shivers spoke at the Indy Action Coalition event as Mayor Hogsett listened.

City of Indianapolis, the Indianapolis Foundation, and private philanthropy. With a recent \$1 million gift from Elevance, Phase One funding is now virtually complete.

While Phase One work continues, the initiative's leaders are well into planning for what comes next. The details for Phase Two, which will likely extend through the end of 2028, are still in discussion, but will likely require larger funding and greater governmental support.

A wrong turn on the way home?

In one purported "solution" that *Streets to Home* actively opposed, the General Assembly passed the controversial Senate Enrolled Act 258. Effective this July, the new Indiana statute attacks homelessness, but with a stick, not a carrot, by creating a new crime of "street camping." The Class C misdemeanor carries maximum penalties of 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. Opponents had successfully resisted the bill in the previous session but lost the battle this time around (although adding some mitigating provisions).

Who's behind *Streets to Home Indy*?

We are! Along with lots of others like us. The Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention, CHIP, (which also administers federal housing programs in Indianapolis) leads the initiative, with



Jennifer Shivers and other leaders of Indy Action Coalition on stage at the We Make Us Safe event.



oversight by the Mayor’s Leadership Council on Homelessness.

Northminster has focused much of its Matthew 25 attention on housing (including eviction and homelessness), traditionally with such partners as GIMA (Greater Indianapolis Multifaith Alliance), Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity and, more recently, with IAC (Indy Action Coalition) and Live Free Indiana. We’ve worked hard at *Streets to Home*, through the leadership of our pastors, financial support from our Matthew 25 fund (\$25,000), contributions from NPC members (about \$19,000), Wednesday night sessions with housing leaders, and strong turnouts for public advocacy events to obtain and sustain City action commitments.

In 2024, we sent a 37-person delegation to screen “Beyond the Bridge,” the eye-opening documentary telling how Milwaukee and Houston ended chronic homelessness. Last year, we dispatched 40 members to IAC’s first “public action event” to pressure public officials on homelessness and similar issues.

And this March, NPC representatives (led by Jennifer Shivers, Susan Holewinski, and Amber Gilman) helped plan, promote, and present IAC’s “We Keep Us Safe” event, which drew 500+ advocates to St. Luke’s Methodist Church to press Mayor Hogsett for continued Streets to Home Indy funding (as well as an ICE-related public safety plan). This time, NPC produced a turnout of more than 60 — the largest single church delegation. Jennifer Shivers, joining the leadership team on the dais, made the opening presentation. And the Mayor said yes.

We need to keep saying yes, too. Yes, that our homeless neighbors need places to go and, yes, that Indianapolis can provide the places to take them in. 🏠



A few reflections from three lay leaders on their — and our — recent homelessness advocacy efforts:

Susan Holewinski: “Our participation aligns perfectly with the church’s mission. [The latest event drew] people from around the city as well as the suburbs” and “motivated them to unite and ask for public action to improve the greater Indianapolis community.”

Amber Gilman: Live Free Indiana’s “leadership has given me a deeper appreciation for how local organizing and storytelling can create momentum for

change — the kind of community-based advocacy that feels important right now and connects to our call to care for our neighbors, stand with those who are marginalized, and put our faith into action in tangible ways.”



federal government. I look forward to our building power and influence in our next steps to build the caring community that all our neighbors need.”

Jennifer Shivers: “Seeing Northminster members embrace this work has been inspiring. Together, we are building the relationships necessary to take our advocacy beyond the city limits and into the halls of state and



The Communion and Chancel Care Guild

By Barb Angotti, member since 1972

If you ever happen to be at church at 9:00 on Monday morning, you will see and hear members of the Communion and Chancel Care Guild busily working in the sanctuary to prepare it for worship. Tasks include dusting, refilling oil in the Christ Candle, emptying the baptismal font, polishing the piano, replenishing Kleenex boxes, refilling attendance pads, and vacuuming the pew cushions. In the process, members often find many “treasures” left behind in the pews. They work with willing spirits, energy, dedication, and a sense of camaraderie that makes the work and time spent together enjoyable.

Along with its responsibilities in the sanctuary each week, the group sends cards to members of the congregation who are ill, home from the hospital, or grieving, parents of new babies, nonagenarians celebrating their birthdays, and families on the first anniversary of a member’s death.

On Sundays, Guild members prepare the elements for communion, set the communion table, and clean up afterwards. Not lost in the preparation of the elements is the sacredness of the duties that we are privileged to share.

The Guild has 17 members who are divided into groups of four. Each group serves a month at a time on a rotating basis which means that every group serves three months a year. This is a loyal group. Many of its members have been part of the Guild for a long time and have formed close friendships in their service to Northminster. 



Aimee Scheuermann cleans the Communion Table as a member of the Communion and Chancel Care Guild.

Members and Years of Service

Group Chairmen

- Marilyn Baumgardt (15)
- Linda Furuness (16)
- Sally Gray (9)
- Sara Neitzel (4)

Members

- Betty Belschwender (6)
- Debbie Bulloff (3)
- Carla Cook (2)
- Susan Hedrick (2)
- Mary Holland (14)
- Susie Koriath (3)
- Dotsie Longworth (1)
- Carol Mann (3)
- Marilyn Mart (4)
- Jenny Moehring (6)
- Aimee Scheuermann (2)
- Lynne Tobin (9)

Chairmen

- Barbara Angotti (25)
- Sally Gray (9)

Worship Art Crew

By Lisa Longo, member since 2003

The stacks of adorned Greek crosses grew on a table in the gathering place as congregants entered church on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. There were 90 individual crosses, exactly the number needed, all uniquely designed to represent a personal prayer or a story of faith. What were they going to become?



Brian Shivers, Christie Call, Cy Donnelly and Mike Boris cut and prepare crosses to be taped together with lots of double sided tape.

Following the 10 a.m. worship service a group of eight of the Worship Art Crew went to work. With glue, scissors and a variety of different tape products, the group worked together to layout and assemble the banner and paraments for Lent 2026. By 6 p.m. there were only three still working but the job was done and 90 crosses were placed on purple cloth and hung in the sanctuary. Together these crosses form a tapestry of our collective devotion, reminding us that Christ’s love binds us, shapes us, and sends us out as signs of hope.

The worship art crew embarks on several projects such as this throughout the year. There are two major seasons,

The finished Lent parament on the pulpit.



Answers to the Scrambled Geography Puzzle on page 15:
 1. Jerico
 2. Ephesus
 3. Corinth
 4. Babylon
 5. Galilee
 6. Mt. Sinai
 7. Capernaum
 8. Joppa
 9. Damascus
 10. Jerusalem
 11. Nazareth
 12. Bethlehem



The finished Lent Banner hung in the sanctuary.

Lent and Advent, and several special Sundays such as Pentecost and World Communion Sunday. Sometimes the project is done by 2 or 3 members of the crew, and sometimes up to 20 get involved over several months — such as the Right Hand of Fellowship quilted banners and paraments project. Some crew members design and some fold stars and glue crosses. Some are responsible for ordering and placing flowers for Christmas and Easter. Crew members choose to participate project-by-project, depending on their time and interest. If you're interested in joining us, please contact one of the crew members, listed below. 🙏

Worship Art Crew members:

Mary Boris	Lisa Longo
Christie Call	Jackie Lutzke
Cy Donnelly	Joyce Mallette
Nancy Dynes	Sara Neitzel
Carol Frohlich	Mary Beth Riner
Jerry Gray	Rebekah Ryan
Mary Holland	Julie Shannon
Amy Johnson	Jennifer Shivers
Anne Kenley	Krista Wright

The world's most successful advocate: Still showing us the way after 2,000 years

A recent sermon by Rev. Brian Shivers brought home to me the fact that Jesus was, in fact and in deed, the First Advocate. Jesus' words "I am the way" and His actions caused a seismic shift in the world that continues to this day.

As the Bread For The World coordinator for Northminster over the past decade, I have often struggled to explain the concept of this organization. They don't collect food or goods. They don't provide housing or other necessities for making life easier for the multitudes. And perhaps the most controversial: They work alongside those who some consider the most egregious abusers of power and wealth on the planet.

In a moment of really listening for clarity, our pastor's words touched that lightning rod of realization, that "A-HA moment" — oh, God IS the Word. And the Holy Spirit that infuses the world with the Word. And Jesus IS the embodiment of His Word. So, it stands to reason, as logical as Star Trek's Mr. Spock, that Jesus was the first authentic advocate. And His Spirit continues spreading His advocacy today.

"Jesus said, 'If you do not believe in me as the Father; believe because of the works themselves.'" — Rev. Brian Shivers

And so, we organize our Offering of Letters each Lenten season, adding our voices to the chorus of those speaking out for the most common decent act of humanity — that everyone has the sustenance they need to not just survive, but thrive.



On Sunday, April 26 after worship, many Northminster members and visitors wrote letters to elected officials on behalf of Bread for the World. Pictured here, from left, Blake Howard, Stephanie Alexander, Tony Dzwonar, Max Ruegger, Allison Shivers and Chris Holewinski.

"Advocacy is believing in that which we cannot see. Advocacy is faith in action, a transformative change." — Rev. Brian Shivers

The work of advocacy is more than partisanship; it is much more than politics. Advocacy is the small voice, the small step, the small victories that multiply, adding up to a greater wave, a larger victory, a bigger result. A seismic shift.

Feeling moved to be in action and to become an advocate? We welcome your presence, your support, your voice to join us.

Mull over Rev. Shivers' call to action: "Do the things He did. Walk the way He walked. Walk the way He showed us." 🙏

What exactly does Bread For The World DO?

According to its guiding mission statement, BFTW prays for, organizes, and sends representatives to the halls of governments and rulers, those in power and positions, to speak for those who have no voice and are the hungriest, the poorest, and most vulnerable in the world. They advocate for contributions and donations of sustenance both literal and figurative in the language of laws and resolutions, of alliances and partnerships, of the influential who support and defend the basic rights of existence for everyone. Fighting for the hunger in their bellies and the hunger in their souls.



Hope springs behind the scenes of Northminster's Chancel Choir

On Sundays, when the organ swells and the Chancel Choir enters in a wave of black and white, the sanctuary of Northminster Presbyterian Church transforms. As a choir member, I was curious about the invisible threads that hold everything together. A choir of 40-45 voices doesn't just appear; it is organized, cataloged, robed, and deftly managed as part of a process that happens long before the first "Alleluia" is sung.

To pull back the curtain, I sat down with three individuals who provide direct, volunteer administrative support of our choir: Mary Holland, our music librarian; Gayle-Sue Murphy, affectionately known as the "robe lady;" and Andy Longo, our choir president.

The Architecture of the Choir's Music Ministry

The story of Northminster's Chancel Choir is one of growth and intentionality. Gayle-Sue, who joined the choir in 1980, remembers a different era. "We're now in our third generation of robes," she told me, recalling the blue robe colors of decades past. For twenty-five years, the program was guided by John Williams, followed by a period of interim directors and organists.

The year 2000 marked a "turning point" for NPC. The church made a bold decision to transition from part-time music leadership to a full-time Director of Music, bringing in John Wright. This wasn't just a personnel change; it was a



commitment to making a "full-fledged, serious music program" a permanent pillar of Northminster. As Andy noted, this decision has been the bedrock for the ongoing quality of the choir, which includes several professional musicians alongside dedicated volunteers.

The Librarian's Labyrinth

If you want to understand the scale of our ministry, look no further than the music library. Mary, who has been with the choir since the early 1990s, manages a collection that might make some small-town libraries envious. "Believe it or not, we have more than 900 titles of choir music pieces in our library," Mary shared. "Usually, we have about 40 copies per piece. That equals about 36,000 copies of music at our disposal for Northminster's combined choirs!"

Mary's work is a weekly rhythm of precision. Every Monday, she arrives to face the "clean up" — the process of sorting the music turned in by choir members after the Sunday worship service. She refiles the anthems, helps prepare music for the upcoming week, and ensures that if a piece is missing, it is replaced. In addition to many on-site filing cabinets, Mary also oversees the digital music catalog for NPC. She manages the flow bridging the gap between John Wright's vision for the service and the physical folders we hold in our hands.

The President's Desk

Andy helps manage the people and the space. Andy joined the choir in 2003 and

has served several terms as president, as did the presidents before him.

"It's about being the 'go-to' person," Andy explained. His role ranges from things such as unlocking the choir room doors and helping to move pews for special performances to tasks such as proofreading and serving as a consultant to the Director. During John's sabbatical in the fall of 2025, for example, Andy served as a critical liaison between the choir and the interim director, Amy Hughley, ensuring the choir and Amy felt supported. For Andy, the role is about "building the bench," ensuring there is always a new generation of leaders ready to step up and serve.

The Custodian of the Cloth

Gayle-Sue's work begins in the heat of August. While the rest of us are enjoying the final days of summer, Gayle-Sue is coordinating with John to identify incoming new members and section leaders.

The task is more complex than it looks. Assigning robes involves a flurry of fittings, hem adjustments, and zipper repairs. Gayle-Sue even developed a custom database — her "Christmas project" one year from former member and friend, Terri Hubbard — to track every robe in the inventory. She washes the robes for incoming members and ensures that singers look their best. Having been at this since 1980, she knows the inventory better than anyone, though she looks forward to the day she can help a successor transition into the "next generation" of robes.





Memories That Shape Us

When I asked these three volunteers about their most impactful memories at Northminster, the answers were deeply personal. Andy recalled the sanctuary renovation and the building of the new organ — a project requiring immense congregational generosity and vision. He also remembers the massive undertaking of performing Handel’s Messiah, which required building risers and extra chairs in three rows – a true “all-hands-on-deck” moment for the choir and others at NPC. Andy also mentioned his participation in NPC’s 2012 Kenya trip as having a very memorable and impactful effect on his faith.

Mary’s memories touched on the church’s journey toward inclusivity. She recalled the emotional weight of the hearings on gay marriage and clergy within the PCUSA, remembering the passion for inclusion that has come to define much of NPC’s identity. She also shared a lovely moment when a former choir director, Betty Bergin-White, took the choir outside on a snowy day to sing an “Alleluia” into the crisp winter air. For her, concerts like the Duruflé Requiem remain highlights of her musical life here.

Gayle-Sue reflected on the power of the church to unify in times of grief, citing the funeral of Fred Mathias as a moment that really brought families together in a profound way. Musically, she was most moved by our recent performance of Mozart’s Mass in C Major and the “Kyrie”

from Will Todd’s Mass in Blue (with the Jazz Trio), noting how confident and at ease John Wright appeared leading both the choir and the orchestra.

A Final Note: The Call to Participate

As our conversation wound down, I asked what advice these volunteers would give to someone sitting in the pews today, perhaps wondering if there is a place for them at Northminster beyond Sunday morning.

Their message was a three-part harmony of encouragement: “Get involved!”

“Don’t just sit on the sidelines,” Andy urged. “If you have opinions, share them. If you see a need, jump in.” Mary reminded us that “whatever you put into something, you get back twofold,” a sentiment Gayle-Sue echoed by noting that you don’t even have to be asked to join a team; you can simply show up and offer your hands. They all agree: sit up front, ask questions, and don’t be afraid to be noticed.

As for me, I think back to that Duruflé Requiem concert several years back. It was my first introduction to the choir, and it was a key factor in my decision to join NPC. I didn’t know then about the 36,000 pieces of music, database, or meticulous robe fittings, but I know now that support of Northminster’s music ministry is sustained by the dedication of people like Andy, Mary, and Gayle-Sue — one folder, one zipper, and one “Alleluia” at a time. 🙏

Peace Choir Lifts Their Voices in Text and Song



The Peace Choir sings in worship.

On April 19, the Peace Choir, directed by Katie Ray, shared a beautiful song during worship, “I Lift My Voice” by Andrea Ramsey. Even more amazing was that members of the Peace Choir added additional text to the song.

Verse 3 by Luciana Higgins, Ava Purdue and Ella Purdue ; verse 4 by Quinn Mann; verse 5 by Benneit Kincaid and Bear King; and verse 6 by James Mann.

.....
I Lift My Voice by Andrea Ramsey with additional text by Peace Choir singers

*When I lift my voice, let it be in song.
A defiant note in the face of wrong.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll stand side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

Refrain: *When they try to divide us
It will only unite us
I lift my voice*

*When I lift my voice, let it be for good.
Let me care as much as I know I should.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll be side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

*When I lift my voice, let it be for love.
Let us sing our prayers to God above.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll stand side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

*When I lift my voice, let it be a sign.
That the Earth’s our home, we must keep it fine.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll stand side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

*When I lift my voice, let it be for love.
Let us fly through skies like a little dove.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll stand side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

*When I lift my voice, let it be a sound.
'Cause the smallest noise can shake the ground.
I won’t stand alone, we’ll stand side by side,
'Cause we know that love is always justified.*

EASTER EGG HUNT



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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
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APR 4 @ 10 - 12



Three cheers for Civic Champs

One afternoon, Northminster's Director of Communications, Timothy Foster, and I settled at a table in the Gathering Place to talk about a new thing for keeping track of all our volunteers and our many projects.

The new thing is a program called Civic Champs and he was showing me how to use it.

"First you download the app," Timothy prompted.

It's a cute app. The logo is an open hand with a "C" in the palm. It's as if the hand is raised in affirmation, a big "YES, I'll do it!"

I opened my laptop.

"Most people do it on their smart phones," Timothy offered.

"Well, Timothy," I countered. "I am not 'most people.'"

I was acting my age and whining that I really didn't want to learn something new. In the early days of the "smart" phone, my friends giddily encouraged me to "get appy" and download all the available applications that would rock my world with organization and information. And, Great Scott, wonderful places to store and sort your photos. And then: Warning! Warning! Will Robinson! Your storage is running out!

(Apologies for the historical reference. Google "Will Robinson." On your smart phone.)



With some urging and gentle guidance from Timothy, I downloaded to my phone and signed up on Civic Champs in no time. All I had to provide was my contact information and an emergency number, you know, in case I broke a leg while running in the Drumstick Dash (as if that will ever happen).

The idea to get all of us on a single app is intended to streamline how we manage volunteer projects. Certainly, there are a number of apps out there for this purpose. The committee chairpersons can manage their Team lists, they can post descriptions of duties and post deadlines, and they can even make last-minute changes, and send reminders to the volunteers. As a lifelong volunteer, I'm almost as excited about these apps as I was when I discovered spell-check.

Up to now, some of our committee chairs and Team leaders have discovered a variety of apps/websites to use, which meant that a volunteer looking to sign up for say, taking flowers to homebound members using one signup program, might need to sign up with yet another to help on electronic recycling day, on another day. And then other sign-ups on that age-old piece o' paper passed around the room, perhaps several times. The church, too, wanted to know who, what, when and where our members are working. Too many systems to track is too many.

"Civic Champs will streamline how we track all volunteer opportunities by having them in one place," noted Timothy. I sure get it. I've served on Session and Deacons over the years, and we do a lot of things, and we tend to do it differently from year to year, or lose papers, or forget how we did last year when it went so well. Passing on reports to new leadership is a kerfuffle, to say the least.

Because individual Team leaders have paid for certain apps out of their own



pockets, Timothy was asked, among other considerations, to find a program free for the users, and Civic Champs is. Also, he looked for a program that would be easy even for Maureen and other "digital non-natives." It would provide the option to make events private or public and would send reminders to those who sign up for different projects. Some volunteer opportunities that might be "public" could include Spring work days, Summer Fun, Clothe-a-Child, Wednesday night dinner guests, dishwashers, and program attenders, even Spring flower sales. Others might be "private," accessed by only members such as Church School, Wednesday Youth Group, and Deacons' deliveries to homebound members.

"It's exciting that Northminster continues to grow, and that there's consistent interest from both inside and outside the church with who wants to get involved, helping us be more welcoming to neighbors," Timothy observed.

Many new members, especially those who join from nearby, say they were first drawn to Northminster because they noticed the action in and around the church: children arriving by bus around the holidays, free concerts, church services on the lawn, Easter egg hunts, laughter spilling out of the Gathering Place and around the parking lots. The noise creates curiosity. What else does this church do, they asked themselves. We offer Civic Champs where members, visitors and neighbors can work together.

Finally, part of putting Civic Champs in action includes the technical support of Timothy, Emma Moore, and Cheryl Plunkett. As I said before, I'm not "most people" but even I can get behind this. 🙌

Meet our hidden gem: Melodie Sarver

Hidden Gems is a feature celebrating members who quietly demonstrate generosity through service, leadership, and compassion. This initiative highlights the diverse ways our congregation shares its gifts, inspiring others to discover how they, too, can serve and strengthen our community connections. This month features Melodie Sarver.

Knowing that someone believes you are an example of Northminster Generosity, how would you describe how you share or have shared your generosity with the Church?

Melodie currently serves on the Spiritual Growth Team. She found her calling working with youth and children at Northminster. She enjoys helping at the preschool for a couple of hours each week. She volunteers at Westminster Ministries' food pantry on Mondays. Melodie is a regular at Trunk or Treat, the Easter Egg hunt, School 55, or any event where volunteers for youth and children's programs are needed. Having served on the deacons for three terms reinforces her role as a caring and committed believer in engagement and service to others.

What motivates you to share your gifts with others?

She responded directly, "I believe that if we are truly following the teachings of Jesus, then we are called to share our time and talent with others. My life is blessed in so many ways. I can do things for other people."

How would those close to you say how your light shines outside of Northminster?

Melodie served the same group of girls as a Girl Scout leader from 1st grade through freshman year in high school. All the girls stayed engaged in scouting and in the same troop. This speaks to the



Melodie Sarver

light Melodie shined on the lives of these young women and their commitment to organization and each other.

What is your Northminster origin story?

Melodie and her family started attending Northminster in 1986. She and her husband, Steve, were looking for a church home for their young family. She received a Christmas flyer, and it piqued her interest. At the time, Northminster had a very large youth program and, with young children, that was very attractive.

Interesting Note:

Melodie was in family practice nursing for twenty years, then got into the IT world. Her family practice office was the first, through the Community Health Network to roll out the use of electronic medical records. In 2011, CHN made the decision to roll out EMRs to the entire network, and Melodie was asked to coordinate this work. She retired in 2023. ☪

Hope Springs – and So Does Protest – Sometimes Quietly

By Jill de las Alas, member since 2003

NPC Knits offers members and friends a chance to knit, crochet or craft in a group setting. Knitting has a long history of political protest, and our group was inspired by the red hat movement that spread in response to the violence in Minneapolis this year.



Several members have made and given away hats, free of charge, with a recommended donation to local immigration services. We also created miniature versions of the hats to be worn as a badge, which were distributed at the No Kings rally at the Statehouse on March 28.

Anyone is welcome to join us and to bring any work in progress; crafting with intention in community is our goal. See the NPC Knits page on the website for specific dates and times. ☪



The ecumenical yogi: *Impermanence and Attachment*

First published August 16, 2020, revised March, 2026

If you have ever been a visitor to the Wright Family Compound on 90th Street, you know that my husband John is an inexhaustible gardener. Situated amongst the herbs and shrubs and flowering plants are various statues. There is St. Faicre, the patron saint of gardeners, a pineapple for hospitality, a Celtic cross, a cairn or two, even a scowling Beethoven perched atop a Doric column. There is the graceful Kuan Yin (the bodhisattva of compassion), a Tibetan Buddha with his topknot and gently closed eyes, a laughing Buddha (the familiar jolly fat man with crossed legs — By the way, there is no evidence to support the idea that the Buddha was ever that fat!), and even a young Indian Buddha in sitting meditation who looks as if he hasn't quite shaken off his princely guise. As I sit on the deck and contemplate these objects, what strikes me is their stillness and solidity, the calm they exude (Beethoven notwithstanding.) Yet, I know that stillness to be an illusion.

Basic science teaches us that all matter is in motion. The more solid something is the slower it moves, but move it does. There are boulders in the Smoky Mountains that to human eyes and in human time have appeared exactly the same for hundreds of thousands of years. But that is impossible. We know that they are in motion. If we believe this law to be true, why do we insist on clinging to the illusion that anything is permanent?

In yoga there are two important ideas that yogis are asked to examine: impermanence, or *anitya*, and attachment, or *upadana*. The two ideas are related to each other and work in tandem. When we deny the impermanent nature of all things and attach to them in our longing

for stability, all we create is discontent that leads to suffering. There is no stability in wishing things were different. We wish illness and death would not touch us. We wish there would be an end to systematic racism. We wish our “leaders” would pull themselves together. We wish our team would win. We wish our child would make better grades. We wish the weather would change. We wish we could afford a new car. On and on and on and on. This is a neverending spiral of discontent, of suffering, *dukka* in yoga. Wishing things were different will not make them so. Clinging to an ideal of the way things used to be or a fantasy of a perfect reality denies one of the most basic laws of nature. Everything changes. Everything is impermanent. Hear that. **EVERYTHING** is temporary and has always been so since the dawn of time. Stability is an illusion.

So, what do we do? Where can we go for comfort when we realize that everything we have come to count on has gone?

What if we allow the constancy of motion to be our comfort? It seems counter-intuitive, but consider this. When we inhale and exhale a cycle of breath, it is gone. That breath no longer exists. A new

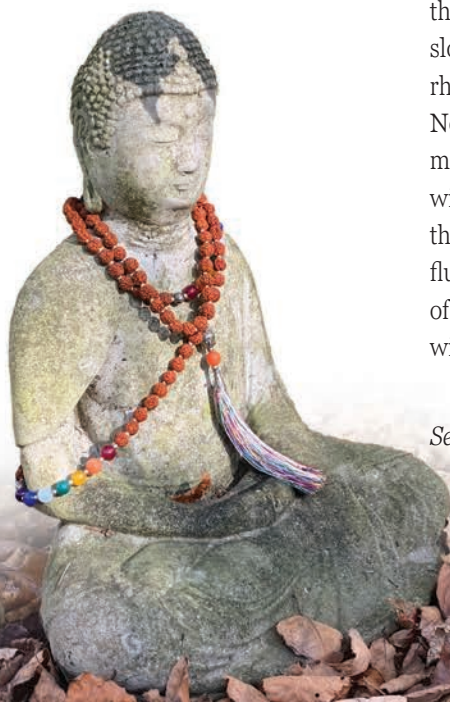
breath rises up in us to take its place. What would happen if we insisted on clinging to that one, first breath? We would die. We don't mourn the passing of the old breath. Rather, we rejoice in the new one. We live because the breath moves.

It's interesting to note that breath and spirit are the same word in the “mother” languages of the Eastern spiritual practices. Whether we are conscious of it or not, when we breathe, we internalize the Spirit. When breath moves through us, so does the movement of Spirit enliven us. The movement of matter is Spirit. All-encompassing, life-sustaining, constantly-moving Spirit. Sitting on the deck contemplating the garden statues, I can think of no better argument for the existence of the Holy Spirit.

Try this breathing exercise: Sit or lie down. Get settled and comfortable so that you can breathe easily. No need to rush. Sometimes it takes a while to find an easy position. Through your nose if you can, inhale for a slow four count. Again through your nose, exhale for a slow four count. Visualize the breath as it enters and leaves your body. Maybe in your imagination it takes on a form or a color. Greet the inhale with “Hello” and the exhale with “Goodbye.” Stay with the slow breath long enough to settle into a rhythm. Experiment with longer counts. Notice that the breath is constant in its movement. Notice that you are moving with it. Notice that with every “Goodbye” there is a new “Hello.” You have become fluid. You have found calm in the stability of the temporary. All things are possible with the Spirit.

Namaste. 🙏

See more on wellness from Krista on page 15.



Hope springs from inspiring books

Lovely One

by *Katanji Brown Jackson*

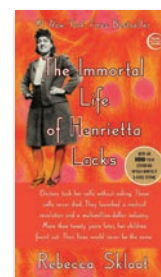
The first Black woman named to the U.S. Supreme Court, Katanji Brown Jackson's parents instilled pride in her African American heritage. As a youngster, Katanji wrote skits based on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. In middle school, Katanji came under the influence of Fran Berger, an outstanding debate coach whose students researched, practiced and participated in debate competitions all over the country. Following graduation with honors from Harvard and Harvard Law School, Jackson clerked for three federal court judges, practiced law privately, and served on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In 2022, President Biden nominated her to be Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Katanji met her husband-to-be, Patrick Jackson, when they were students at Harvard. They sacrificed for each other as they pursued their legal and medical careers. Jackson has written a fascinating story enhanced by her impeccable prose.



The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

by *Rebecca Skloot*

Scientists knew her as HeLa. She was a poor Black tobacco farmer whose cells – taken without her knowledge in 1951 – became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital in the development of polio vaccine, closing and gene mapping.



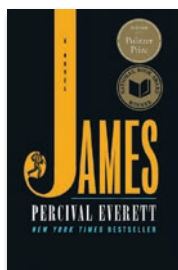
Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown. Henrietta's family did not know of her cell donation until 20 years later when the first articles including Lacks' name were published.

Author Skloot writes compassionately about Henrietta's family and discusses thoroughly the issues that have arisen since the harvesting of Henrietta's cells: discriminatory treatment of patients, informed consent, protection of medical records, and the ethics of selling donated cells. A court case determined that once cells are removed from a person, they are no longer owned by that person.

James

by *Percival Everett*

Decades of Americans have read "Huckleberry Finn," Mark Twain's tale of a young man and his enslaved sidekick, Jim, who make a treacherous trip down the Mississippi on a raft. Author Everett continues Twain's story in dialect from Jim's point of view.



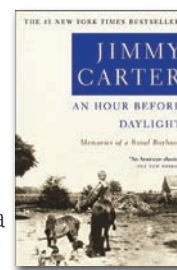
It seems James has a wife and daughter, and his goal is to secure his freedom in the American South and to return to Hannibal where he will purchase Sadie and Lizzie's freedom. Jim knows how to read and, once he gets paper and pencil, how to write. He had been able to read widely in his master's library, so quotes from the likes of John Locke and Voltaire appeared in his writings.

When asked his name, Jim replies, "James." Percival Everett has written a worthy continuation of Twain's classic.

An Hour before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood

by *Jimmy Carter*

Born in 1924, Jimmy Carter, our 39th president, relates his Depression-era boyhood on a Georgia farm. Carter describes his father, a successful farmer and strict segregationist, and his mother, a nurse who cared for anyone who needed her.



Among the people who shaped Carter's boyhood were his somewhat eccentric relatives, his friends – Black and white – with whom he hunted with slingshots and boomerangs, and the impressive Black bishop who discussed crops and politics with Jimmy's father.

Rural electrification arrived in the late 1930s when the Carter family enjoyed "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Jack Benny." Carter recalls going barefoot from early March to late October. He learned to ride a balloon-tired bicycle and much later, he conveyed his dates on the bar in front of his bike seat.

Carter grew up in a time when life was more predictable, and rules of segregation were heartbreaking and complex. Carter, in his eloquent prose, has created a portrait of an era that shaped the nation.

Wellness springs

By Krista Wright

Find the MindBody app in the App Store on your phone/computer — and find Northminster Community Yoga on the MindBody app.

We continue to call the yoga/wellness space into being. Jerry Gray has designed and is painting a mandala for the east wall of the practice space (upstairs at Northminster). Mandalas are intricate, abstract line drawings that are especially useful as points of focus in meditative practices. By the time this issue is published, it should be hanging in the room. If you haven't seen the space yet, please check it out!



Having Northminster on the MindBody operating system allows us to be seen and accessible to the worldwide yoga community thereby stepping further into Northminster's mission of community outreach. We were thrilled to host visiting yogis who were in town for the NCAA Final Four who found us on the platform.



Yoga teacher training course this Fall

Northminster Community Yoga will offer a 200-hour Teacher Training Course in the fall, *Yoga for Personal Transformation*, taught by Krista Wright and Kim Allen. It is essentially a college course on all-things yoga including philosophy, meditation, movement, physiognomy, history, diet and lifestyle. Although it includes a base-level teacher certification, the primary objective is, as it says, personal transformation. All are welcomed and encouraged to come and explore this rich tradition. Contact Krista for more information.



Enneagram workshop

On Saturday, Feb. 21st, Nancy Fortenberry led a great workshop on Enneagram, an ancient system describing nine distinct, interconnected personality types based on core motivations, fears, and desires. It serves as a tool for self-discovery, emotional intelligence, and personal growth, mapping how individuals perceive the world and manage emotions. We hosted about 50 attendees — including many community people who heard about it and were interested. I'm a 3. IYKYK. — *Jennifer Young Dzwonar*

By Pennie Lumley, member since 1965

Scrambled geography

Below is a list of scrambled words representing geographic locations in the Bible. Can you unscramble them?

1. ECJIRO

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2. SPEHUE

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3. IROCHNT

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4. OBYNBLA

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5. ELLEGIA

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6. TM. IIASN

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

7. MAPNRUCEA

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

8. PJOAP

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9. MSDUACAS

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10. LEEUJASRM

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11. ZHTANEAR

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12. MLHHEBTEE

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Find answers to the puzzle at the bottom of page 6.



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Galentine's Brunch

On February 7th, a group of young women and mothers of young children gathered for a second annual Galentine's Brunch, hosted by Family Engagement coordinator, Elisabeth Kleinsmith Russ. It was a joyful morning of fellowship and meaningful conversations. The brunch also featured hands-on craft activities, including canvas tote bag decorating and picture frame decorating, to help foster creativity, support and connection.



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.

Editor: Jennifer Dzwonar, jennifer.dzwonar@borshoff.biz