

This month at **Northminster**

September 2020



**Interim
Pastor,
Rev Dr
David
Smazik
begins
September
8th**

(Page 2)



David Smazik and wife, Ann

**For more information about these and other events and classes,
go to www.northminster-indy.org and click on Events.**

Dr. David Smazik Joins Northminster as New Interim Pastor

What an exciting time for our congregation! Limited in-person worship has started up again, and everyone's patience during the interim pastor search process has been most sincerely appreciated. Following a unique, COVID-19-inspired "virtual hiring process," we're absolutely delighted to share that Rev. Smazik starts officially on September 8, preaching his first Sunday with us on September 13. Recently, members received a letter from the Church sharing more about the interim pastor search/hiring process, and if you tuned in for Sunday service livestreaming on August 9th, you had an opportunity to view a brief video message from Pastor Dave himself. While worship will continue to look different for a while, there will be opportunities to get to know Rev. and Mrs. Smazik in the coming months.

Currently based in Morristown, NJ, Rev. Smazik hails from the Chicago area and their son and his family are still there, while their daughter and her family reside in Milwaukee. As they join Northminster and the larger Indianapolis community, Pastor Dave and his wife, Ann, look forward to being closer to their midwest family members and to bringing with them a great deal of experience and enthusiasm for the work ahead. We, too, are excited about the opportunity to build on expertise and new ideas as we proceed down a visioning path to help our congregation maximize our talents, passion, and energy resources. With God's help, Pastor Dave will help guide us toward a future in



which we are able to renew our support of each other, our local community, and beyond with a re-envisioned ministry and missions focus.

Change can be both exciting and stressful. Please pray for the Smaziks as they navigate a move from the east coast, and also for their current congregation, where the Smaziks currently are saying their goodbyes after 10 years with Dave serving as senior pastor. And we ask that you continue to pray for our congregation, our ministers, our dedicated church leaders, and our staff. Together, we feel truly blessed and ready to begin a new chapter in pursuit of the next 75 years (and more!) at Northminster.

Thank You from Pastor Ruth

My family and I would like to thank the congregation for your encouraging cards and notes on the death of my mother Charlotte. As many of you know she had been sick for months, but we are never really ready to lose someone we love, are we? I talk a lot about being the presence of Christ to one another, and you all have been that presence to me the last few weeks. Your notes and prayers have sustained me, and I am so grateful to all of you. I ask for your grace during this tender time as I process my grief and do the work of settling my mother's estate. And thank you for continuing to walk this journey with me. - In Christ's love and service, Ruth

Officer Nominations Needed

Our Officer Nominating Committee needs your help. This is an exciting and yet challenging time for Northminster as we begin our relationship with our Interim pastor Dave Smazik and continue to explore what it means to be the church as we look to the future. We need people to serve as both deacons and elders for the class of 2023 – a 3-year term of service. Could you or someone you know be a leader to help us do that? Please send names to Susan Glant in the church office: sglant@northminster-indy.org or 317-251-9489 ext. 10.

Becoming (Being) Anti-racist: A Spiritual Journey

Are you interested in exploring anti-racist scripture, literature, policy, and current events that address taking meaningful action on systemic racism? In this ten-week program that will meet on Sundays from 5:30-6:30, you will have the opportunity to

- Examine faith-based and public policy strategies and organizations leading local and national anti-racist initiatives.
- Examine personal perspectives on white privilege.
- Engage in prayer practices seeking racial equity and justice in the United States.



course uses resources from the PC(USA), speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the book *So You Want to Talk About Race*, and current events on the internet.

Topics include: White Identity Development, Racial Awareness Experience Activity, PC(USA) Engagement and Scriptural Basis for Anti-racism Work, Legacy of Martin Luther King, The Arts and Literature of People of Color, Health Disparities and Social Conditions,

Policing and Criminal Justice, White Anti-racist Allies – Past and Present

We will be using a spiritual growth approach that encourages a focus on your relationship with God, joining wholeheartedly in the group process through prayerful listening and response, and sharing your spiritual journey with others. No book is required. The

Meetings will be via Zoom on Sundays from 5:30-6:30 beginning September 13 and ending November 15, 2020. The leader is Mary Beth Riner, Elder and Spiritual Director. Please register by September 4th by email at mary.riner@gmail.com or by phone at 317-417-8730.

As You Love Yourself - Krista Wright, The Ecumenical Yogi

Here's a challenge. Try to pick up a magazine or watch TV or engage on social media without running across something related to the benefits of self-care: meditation, mindfulness, yoga, etc. They sound great. We are exhausted and stressed and know that we need them. When we start investigating, they seem intimidating - too many odd words, too much sitting still, too much twisting around. Too much other-ness. Yet, we long for the comfort that they promise. Something about them seems like home, but we struggle to find the path that leads there.

Maybe we are looking for the turnoff in the wrong place. What do we already know? How about Matthew 22 or Mark 12? Mark (NIV) says, "...Love your neighbor as yourself." The Good News Bible makes it even more explicit, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." Ok. Got it. We spend a LOT of time dwelling on the first part of that. The neighbor

part. But what about the second part? Jesus was really crafty here. Or, maybe it just seemed so obvious to him that he tossed it away. (No wonder his disciples stayed so confused.) We must love ourselves first. Love. The real thing. Toward ourselves. First. The way we love others is a reflection of the love we show ourselves. No wonder there is so much hate, impatience, intolerance, polarization in the world. How can we possibly love anyone else if we are mired in our own shame and self-loathing? This is where we must start, though. We must admit the truth of who and where we are.

Our culture, and often even our religious practices are of little help here. Jesus was a Middle Easterner practicing and teaching an Eastern religion. We are Westerners who have appropriated this Eastern teaching and shaped it into something we can recognize.

(Continued on pg. 4)

Great News from Family Promise / IHN

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis (otherwise known as IHN) was recently awarded \$260,000 from CARES Act funds from the City of Indianapolis. This will allow Family Promise to rent 10 more apartments for 12-month leases to house homeless families, a vital mission to keep families, congregations and volunteers safe during this pandemic. This will bring the total number of rental units to 20! Once again, **Northminster has volunteered to be part of a team to gather housewares for one of these new apartments.** Having apartments as fully-appointed as possible for our families is an important component of our outreach. Please go to <https://bit.ly/FPapartmentSept2020> for needed items – and watch the weekly E-News for dates and delivery details.

Day of Caring

While we cannot safely gather and do our “normal” Day of Caring at church and in our community, the Mission Team is working on outdoor opportunities for us to reach out and serve our neighbors. There will be projects you can do at home too. Look for more information about dates and projects.

But if you or someone you know has outside household projects like yard work that need to be done please contact the church office at 317-251-9489.



As You Love Yourself *(Continued from page 3)*

We have resisted the elements that do not reflect our culture. Eastern religious and spiritual practices like Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. (and yes, even Christianity) start with the self, with looking inward. All those self-care practices we read about originate there. Today in the West, we are all about looking outward, doing, working, striving, stressing, pressing forward toward a goal. We are focussed outward. This is why we don't regard the second part of the verse, yet the second part, the one about loving yourself first, is an undeniable Christian mandate that is impossible to carry out without being still and looking inward. Jesus was only preaching what was and is already a familiar, integrated practice in the Eastern world.

It's interesting to note that breath and spirit are the same word in the languages of the Eastern practices. This must be what draws us to the paths of self-care. We sense with our intuition and know from the teachings that Spirit is ever- and all-present, and we are intended to embody it. Whether we are conscious of it or not, when we breathe, we internalize Spirit. We

inhale before we exhale. Move inward before we move outward. We spend lifetimes repressing and avoiding our pain by distracting ourselves with constant, outwardly-directed motion. “Love your neighbor” becomes an excuse to avoid the pain. When we are still and focussed inward the pain rises to the surface. We encounter ourselves. It's scary, and, it's the beginning of “love yourself.” It starts with the breath.

Dr. Joan Borysenko (Google her. She is amazing.) offers a simple exercise for entering the practice of self-love: Sit comfortably and breathe normally and slowly, equal parts inhale and exhale. Close your eyes and place your hands over your heart. Breathe. Imagine that you are holding a tiny, beautiful, newborn baby, and you are loving it with every bit of energy and attention you can muster. Breathe. Now, imagine the baby is you.

Be still. Breathe. Love. Don't be afraid. You already embody the Spirit. Namaste.

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A Big Back-to-School-Extravaganza Thank You!

I have experienced many activities and mission projects at Northminster over the years, but none have been as challenging as what we accomplished this year with the Back to School Extravaganza. In just three weeks, hundreds of boxes of school supplies were assembled by Second Presbyterian Church and Saint Luke's Methodist Church.

Our job was to distribute those supplies to 8 elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 1 high school in the MSDWT school district. We had only approximate dates for the distribution and did not have the ability to adequately determine the work force needed or the amount of goods that we were going to transport. So, I had to put it all together on a "wing and a prayer". Our plans were frozen in place until St. Luke's and Second Presbyterian Church finished the sorting and boxing of those supplies.

With only two days to prepare, we moved the elementary schools on a Wednesday and the middle schools on a Monday. Monday we were faced with a massive



amount of extremely heavy boxes that needed to be loaded on a truck located uphill with mostly old people. We were in real trouble. Exhaustion and the realization that we were ill prepared to accomplish this task became apparent very quickly. The supplies were packed in boxes way too large and had to weigh over 75 pounds apiece. Calls were made and soon younger people started to show up. Even with their help everyone was physically exhausted by the end of the day.

I thank the Lord for the arrival of those younger people and the "true grit" that our older members of the congregation exhibited on that day. Because of our congregants and their determination we were able to deliver sorely needed school supplies to 4,600 children in our community. It was the hardest physical exertion day I ever remember in the life of our church and to these following volunteers I am forever indebted:

John & Maureen Purcell, the mighty Helene Lutumika, Rob, Jill (one tough woman) & Michael de las Alas, Evan (personally saved me) Schlabach, Bo (work horse) Walker, Bill Diehl, Bob Bowers, Grayson (not too young) Auer, Stella & Leah Shannon & friend O'Niel, Tony (helped lead the way) Dzwonar and anyone else whom I am too tired to remember.

Thank you all! - Jerry Gray



For more information go to www.northminster-indy.org



2020 Umoja Project Update

Each fall, Umoja Partnership raises the funds for their food security program. The food security program provides school lunch program for 3425 primary school children in Kenya, and grains for 100 child-headed households. This year we are providing food support for entire families due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Virtual Interfaith Thanksgiving Dinner

This annual event will be held online on November 15th at 5pm. You can donate items for the online auction, purchase a ticket, or donate to the event. Dr. Joe Mamlin will be the keynote speaker this year. (See details at <https://bit.ly/UmojaNPC2020>.)

The purchase of one ticket will feed a child lunch for a year, feed a family this fall, and include the purchase of a face mask made from colorful fabric, and a chance in our drawing. There will be an online auction that will include Kenyan items, art work, and many more.

#FoodForThought

This 2020 campaign kicks off on September 1 and concludes on October 16, World Food Day. The goal of this peer to peer virtual fundraiser to \$35,000. You may donate to the fundraiser or start your own fundraising campaign - set a goal and ask your family and friends for donations. Read more at: <https://bit.ly/FoodForThought2020>

Thank you for helping Umoja change communities one child at a time!

If you have questions about the Umoja project, please contact Andy Longo (andy.longo@att.net) or Nancy Flamme (nancyflamme21@gmail.com).

