

This month at Northminster

November 2020



Northminster Reads

“Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.”

Virtual Book Discussion

November 18, 7:00 pm *or*

November 22, 5:30 pm

On November 18 and 22, we'll be reading *“Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.”*

The author, Lenny Duncan, formerly incarcerated, is now a preacher in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He serves as pastor of Jehu's Table in Brooklyn, NY.

Join us on Zoom on Wednesday, November 18 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm (Meeting ID: 864 8309 7345 Passcode: 151450) OR Sunday, November 22 -- 5:30 - 6:30 pm (Meeting ID: 832 8658 5411 Passcode:

370466). *Note: The ID and Passcode are different for each session.*

Lenny Duncan connects the church's lack of diversity to its lack of vitality. This book is part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter. *Dear Church* offers a new vision for the future of the church.

Who is invited to this virtual discussion? All who are committed to the church's role in confronting and dismantling systemic racism.

Questions? Email Carol McDonald at cmcdonald@northminster-indy.org

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



I am searching for an image, phrase, or metaphor that captures our experience of time moving forward in 2020. Days are passing, yet there is a subliminal sense that we are standing still. “Running in place?” “Making good time but we’re lost?” “Living in a feedback loop?” Our minds can keep replaying what we have lost and all that we are missing, while time continues to march on.

In a renewal of our minds, we can recognize what is present, what we have, and what has never been taken. The sun continues to rise and set, with greater splendor especially on partly cloudy days. The trees have not disappointed us with their annual palette of colors. The earth and its creatures continue their hibernation preparation. New opportunities are continually being recreated to connect with family and friends, near and far.

“Next year in Jerusalem”

But have you felt it? A quiet desperation threatens to creep into our hearts and minds as we approach times on the calendar which anchor us in our faith community, times that typically are celebrated together in the church and its sanctuary. In the practice of becoming attuned to what is, we can begin to see anew the richness of what we have or has always been present, which we may have previously missed. These times need not be “lost” times but ones that are reimagined and refocused. Times that



allow us to practice a new intentionality in their design and our anticipation.

For some years, Ann and I have had special honor to join close friends in celebration of Passover with their family. The evening is always rich with meaning and memory, but I am always struck by the closing phrase, “Next year in Jerusalem”. The phrase is not spoken to diminish the present experience. It is a reminder of what can be, capturing a powerful hopefulness for the time yet to come.

The calendar will be moving us through special times of celebratory gatherings. We must be intentional to not experience these times as diminished, but rather seek the richness in them that may have been missed in our past routines. And may we say, “Next year...” with more than mere longing. May it become a powerful statement of our collective hopefulness.

Update from Pastor Ruth

On Sunday, October 11th, about 10 cars with Northminster members did a drive-by visit at my house as part of Day of Caring. I think there were people from 1 month to almost 80 years old in those cars, and I was so excited to see everyone! We visited in the street with our masks on and kept our distance, but it made me realize once again how much the Northminster community is a part of me. To see babies, teenagers, their parents, retired folks, deacons, elders, and even clergy (Carol McDonald!) reminded me of what a rich and multigenerational congregation we are and how unique it is in our culture for so many generations to gather together. That is one of the greatest gifts the church can give to us.

Another gift the church gives to us is the message of hope in difficult times. 2020 has been a difficult year for all of us, and yet we know that we are never alone and are loved by a God who will never let us go. I have certainly felt that love as I have continued to recover from my cardiac and other physical challeng-

es these last 2 months. I continue to be grateful for your notes of encouragement and your prayers for my recovery.

I also know we are all grateful for Dave Smazik's new leadership and for Carol McDonald as she continues to help with worship leadership and taking on some of my responsibilities.



I am starting to feel "normal" a few hours a day and I look forward to reconnecting with all of you soon. But I also realize that I have more than just physical healing to do, so I ask for your continued patience and support. I love you all and hope to "see" you all again soon. - *Ruth*

Alzheimer's Walk Fundraiser

On October 3rd, Team **Purple Striders** walked nearly 4 miles in the Walk to END Alzheimer's. Our Senior Ministries Coordinator, Denise Harrington, was the team captain. The walk was virtual and happened "everywhere," allowing participants to walk alone, with family, and in their neighborhoods. The weather was perfect for walking on the Fall Creek East trail for the **Purple Striders**. The opening ceremony was virtual, and the team was able to watch it before taking off to walk. The symbol for the walk is the pinwheel and each color has a meaning. **Orange** represents support for the cause, **purple** symbolizes a loved one lost to the disease, **yellow** denotes a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, **blue** indicates someone living with Alzheimer's or dementia and **white** represents the eventual 1st Survivor of Alzheimer's. Every dollar raised counts and helps to provide research to end this disease.

Denise walked in memory of her mother, paternal grandmother, and for caregivers of someone with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Those who joined Denise at the walk have also been affected in some way by this disease. Thank you to Carol Frohlich and Leona Melton for walking. Northminster has a general Caregivers Support Group that meets weekly on Mondays at 6 pm, virtually. Contact Denise at dharrington@northminster-indy.org or 317-509-7085.

Irvington Presbyterian Church is a Support Group location for the Alzheimer's Association. The caregiver support group is meeting virtually on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Please contact Denise for information at dharringtonipc@gmail.com or 317-509-7085.

The Ecumenical Yogi - Krista Wright

#4 A Sea Journey at Night

Nights can be hard. Sometimes it seems like time is standing still. All we have are our thoughts, the thoughts that refuse to be suppressed when all distraction is removed. What if nighttime never ended? What if the journey from daylight to daylight went on for so long that we eventually forgot what it was like before we went to sleep and awoke in the dark? It's nighttime right now. The whole human race is on a Hero's Journey. If you know your Joseph Campbell, you have heard of the Hero's Journey.

The classical example is The Odyssey by Homer. Think also of any of the Tolkien books or Harry Potter. The Hero is trucking along, doing their thing, when an event occurs that forever alters the course of life, and they embark on a journey into the unforeseen and unknown. The transition from what went before to what will come after is called the liminal phase. Campbell refers to this as a sea journey at night. There is no turning back, no knowledge of what will come next, and no idea of where now is. The only option is to keep going. The beauty and power of the journey is that the Hero returns from the dark sea at night having learned lessons that inform and reform the whole community. Life will never be the same for anyone.

There are so many liminal phases going on right now. Autumn has arrived, and the movement toward winter has begun. A major election is coming up that will have ramifications stretching out for decades, and will likely unleash unrest and even violence in the short term. Many people are going through challenging transitions in their personal lives. And, of course, the global pandemic continues to loom with no end in sight. No wonder we lie awake in our beds at night drifting in the dark sea. No wonder anxiety levels are high, patience is thin, tempers are short.

There are ways to comfort ourselves.

The precedent for this time and these events is so important and common that it pervades literature and human experience. That is a comfort in itself. Meditate on your personal Hero's Journey. Think back to a time of transition in your life, and chronicle it in a journal.

Bring it to life through a craft or an art project. Tell your story to a trusted friend, partner, or Stephen Minister. Celebrate how you emerged with tools that you carried into the next phase of your life.

If you practice yoga, you know that everything you do on your mat is a rehearsal for life. A yoga practice is a journey. Often we come to our mats carrying baggage from life with us. Practicing makes us a little stronger, a little more flexible, a little more centered, and better able to let those things that weigh us down fall away. Even if you don't practice, you can bring awareness to the significance of "seed" pose. Curl up into a fetal position on your side cradling your head with your lower arm. Draw attention to your breath. This asana (pose) is a reminder that every moment of every day and every breath you take is a new beginning. If you sleep in this position, take a moment to remind yourself of its significance.

You might remember a couple of posts ago. There was a reference to the simple act of breathing as transition. Every breath cycle is a mini journey. When you find yourself in those dark nights at sea, visualize the inhale as it starts in a tiny spot behind your navel and flows through your body in all directions until it pours out your fingers, toes, and the crown of your head. As you exhale, follow the breath as it gently recedes back to its point of origin. Repeat this wave of breath as many times as you like. Notice how your shoulders begin to soften. Stress and tension melt away.

Approach worship as a Hero's Journey. Reformed Liturgy is structured to receive us where we are, take us on a journey, and send us out with a renewed sense of purpose and fresh perspective. Ponder this a little more closely next time you enter the worship space, either in-person or online. We are lucky to be Presbyterians!

We may not remember what the daylight looked like before, but history, literature, life experience, faith, and practice, assure us that we will see it again, even though it won't look the same.

Namaste.

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



Pet Blessing!

Celebrate the animals in your life! Join us at 12:30 pm on the Gathering Place porch on Sunday, November 1st for our annual Pet Blessing. All types of animals are welcome if accompanied by a well-behaved human! The animals will participate in a short group service, receive individual blessings and a certificate.



Above: Mission Team member Sherri Pankratz (right) presenting Northminster check to Linsey Thompson at Westminster Neighborhood Services.

NPC Electronics Recycling Event 2020

The Deacons' annual electronic recycling event was held Saturday, August 29 from 10-2 and Sunday, August 30 from 11-3. Both days were equally busy, with 52 cars coming to drop off electronics each day, for a total of 104 carloads for the weekend. Again this year we teamed with RecycleForce, an Indianapolis company that employs formerly incarcerated individuals with the goal of giving these individuals gainful employment in the effort to reduce recidivism.



Phil and Erin Bristow worked both days to reduce the number of people needed to volunteer during Covid-19. We collected a much larger amount of old electronics than anticipated by the RecycleForce team - around 7,000 pounds! This will keep one full-time RecycleForce employee busy for around 7 weeks.

We collected \$1628.35 in donations and were invoiced \$1406.20, so the Deacons' raised \$222.15!