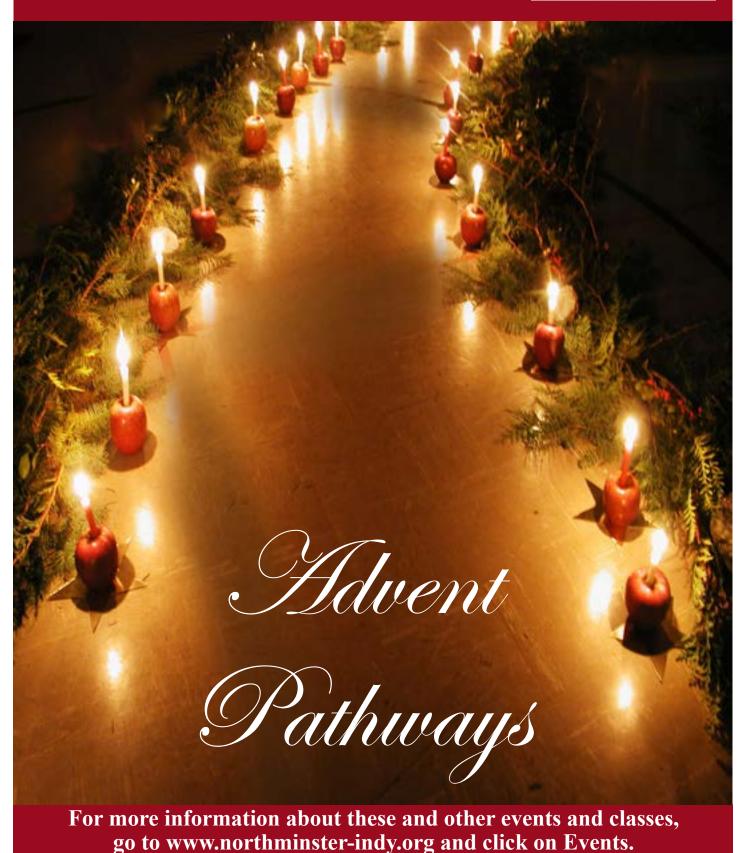
# This month at Northminster

December 2020







In a year that continues to be unpredictable and unlike any other in our lifetimes, it seems fitting that I am writing an article for Advent on a November day when the thermometer has reached nearly 80 degrees. As we continue to plan, scrap those plans, and try again to create a celebration of Christmas 2020, it occurred to me that this topsy-turvy experience of life may provide the truest encounter and celebration of the Messiah's coming that we've ever had.

The Messiah, who appeared in the most unexpected way, shattered all 'tradition' and understanding of how that arrival would unfold. For those who were anticipating the Messiah, an infant born

to commoners in a simple, rural setting held more unbelievable facets in its story than we've had in ours in the last 9 months.

There was an incredible vulnerability and uncertainty present in the Messiah's life from the first day to the one that culminated with a cross. But the most unanticipated part of the story was that it didn't end there. God's faithfulness and steadfast love manifested itself again in resurrected life and power, resulting in an eternal gift that continues to recreate life – day by day, week by week, month by month.

We may be more suited to live into this incredible story in 2020 than ever before. We may experience the Messiah's coming in ways that will have us recalling this Advent and Christmas as "that time something changed for us": that time we were able to face our



vulnerabilities and uncertainties with a new awareness of God's faithful, steady, certain, eternal love. A 'routine' 2020 may have left us unprepared to recognize the possibilities of what could transpire. In our usual traditions, we may not have fully experienced how a simple birth could cause our lives to go topsy-turvy -- not to expose our vulnerability and uncertainty but to free us to participate with Christ in the creative work of being Christ's body in the world. Let us join together in walking this path to the birth of Jesus.

"... prepare for an unexpected eternal encounter at Christmas."

My prayer for Advent is that we prepare for an un expected eternal encounter at Christmas. The 9:00am worship services will allow space', figuratively and

physically, for worshippers to encounter the Word read, spoken, and made visible through the sharing of weekly communion. These services will provide a contemplative opportunity to consider how the Messiah's certain coming can impact our uncertain lives.

The 11:00 am services this Advent will allow us to fully participate in the season with unique elements included in our worship as we journey together toward Christmas. The segments of each service will be pre-recorded and made available on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.

What could possibly yet happen in this unpredictable year? We could be extraordinarily changed, prepared to fully participate in a journey that is unlike any other in our lifetimes. May it be so.

#### **Advent Bible Studies on Zoom**

Join Associate Pastor Ruth Moore as we study the scripture passages that will form our worship and sermons during Advent. Opportunities to join in the learning and discussion are as follows, with instructions to join at the end.

#### **Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study** - 11 am on Nov 24, and Dec 1, 8 and 15.

Women of all ages are invited to join in this Tuesday morning group. We begin our time with sharing and then share our prayer requests. We will be studying the Advent theme of "Advent Pathways" by studying prophets in the Old Testament, with a specific emphasis on Isaiah. Chapter 40 of Isaiah will be the scripture texts we will learn about and discuss.

Never been a part of a Bible study group before? Want to be able to share your prayer requests or ask questions when you don't understand or agree with something in the Bible? Want to invite your friend or neighbor to become acquainted with Northminster in a supportive small group? Then the Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study is for you and whomever you

invite. This group of women has a history of building each other up in the faith and forming relationships in the church, so come join us! This group will continue to meet in January, beginning again on the 5th.

#### **Sunday Morning Advent Gospel Study** - 10:10 to 10:50 am on Nov 29, Dec 6, 13 and 20.

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the birth of the Christ into our lives and the world. The Advent lectionary gospel texts help us do that. Each week we will discuss a different familiar gospel text that will challenge us, remind us, and re-frame us as a people, as God breaks into the world to be in an intimate relationship with us. Emmanuel – God with us. Join us for sharing and discussion on the following texts - Nov 29: Mark 13: 24-37, Dec 6: Mark 1: 1-8, Dec 13: John 1: 6-8; 19-28 and Dec 20: Luke 1: 26-38.

To join any of these online Bible Studies using your computer, iPad or smart phone, go to our website, click on "Events", then "Advent Bible Studies."

Questions? Contact Associate Pastor Ruth Moore at 317-753-3164 or ruthcmoore@northminster-indy.org

#### **Advent Wednesdays at Northminster**

Advent Pathways ... Journeying through the Labyrinth to the Manger in Bethlehem December 2, 9, 16 and 23

Advent 2020 promises to be like none we've ever experienced. Because we all need an extra serving of joy this year, we will be offering an Advent Devotion each Wednesday evening. It will be "aired" at 5:00 p.m. each Wednesday on our webpage and will be available on Facebook and YouTube as well. These weekly offerings are designed to nurture all ages, but will be geared especially for children, youth and families.

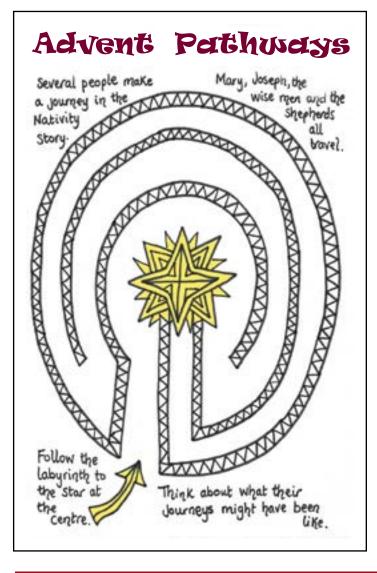
What can you expect: the Lighting of Candles ... Scripture and a Story ... Music for the season provided by our Section Leaders ... Guided Prayer – each week Northminster members will walk a section of the labyrinth journey as prayer is offered to God. We hope this "new" Advent endeavor will enrich this special season for you and your family. Watch the weekly Friday e-mails for further details.

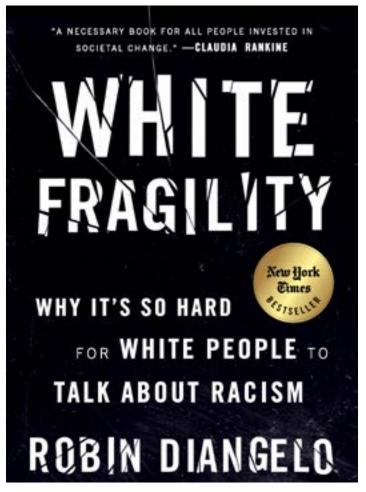


#### **Advent Kits for Church Families**

To support our Advent theme for 2020 -- "Advent Pathways," the C.E. Team, and the mighty Melissa Hopkins, are preparing Advent kits for our church families with children and youth. These kits will include supplies for an Advent wreath (including candles and a liturgy you can use at home), a paper labyrinth you may "walk" with your fingers (you may also color it!), and some miscellaneous Advent craft supplies.

Kits will be ready for pick up on the Gathering Place Porch on Sunday, November 22, from 10 - 11 a.m. Alternate pick-up date is Wednesday, November 25 from 3 - 6 p.m. If neither of these pick-up times works for your family, please contact mhopkins@northminster-indy.org





# Northminster Reads – January 2021

We'll be reading "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism" by Robin Di-Angelo. This timely book illustrates the phenomenon of white fragility -- an in-depth examination of how write fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality and what all of us can do to engage more constructively.

Join our discussion on either **Sunday**, **January 10** - 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. OR **Wednesday**, **January 13** - 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. We'll be meeting on ZOOM ... Watch the Friday e-mails for the link to join the conversation. Why do we have these conversations? God calls us, through Scripture, to do all we can to "let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (*Amos 5*)

#### Clothe-a-Child

Clothe-a-Child has a complete crew of volunteers! What seemed like a daunting task a few weeks ago has resolved into a workable plan to continue this wonderful tradition despite the coronavirus. All school field trips have been banned so we will shop without students this year. It's not just shopping that will be absent: it's the after-party all jammed into the Gathering Place with crafts, pizza, cookies, donuts, great coffee, noise, fun, selfies, and new pals.

So many people have helped with Clothe-a-Child! How many Santa hats and Christmas sweaters are in your closet? Happily, you can still be assured that we will be pulling ours out of mothballs.

Here is the plan: On December 3, our Santa's helpers will shop at Target as a group and fulfill the children's requests that will be sent to us. It will be strange not to have the students along, and it will not take as long, and it will be very quiet, but we can look forward to next season and a return to our usual camaraderie.

31 volunteers have stepped up to be shoppers. We have a plan to get the job done. We'll all wear face-masks and Target has designated 2 cash registers for us. Clothe-a-Child really runs itself once it gets started and all the people are in place.

The most urgent need now is donations. The delay in advertising Clothe-a-Child stems from the uncertainty of it even happening due to Covid, but it is a GO and we are excited! Please consider donating. Each child is allotted \$125 in expenditures. You may mail a check to Northminster with Clothe-a-Child in the memo, donate online (go to Northminster's website and click GIVE in the upper right corner) or simply put a check in your Sunday offering with CAC in the memo.

Thank you to everyone for helping to make this tradition continue. You are making this winter a bit easier for some needy children.

# Westminster Neighborhood Ministries Christmas "Baskets"

As with everything else in this Year of the Pandemic, our annual participation in the Westminster Christmas Baskets will be different. We will not collect items at the church. Instead, Westminster has created an Amazon wish list from which we can select gifts to be sent directly to Westminster.

For those who are tech-friendly, you can participate at: http://tiny.cc/WestminChistmasWishList

There, you will find a "Wish List" of adult items — underwear, hats, gloves — and children's clothing and toys. Perhaps you'd like to donate an infant baby hat & mitten set, children's socks or other clothing. Or, like Santa, you would prefer to give a doll, truck, or other desired toy.

When you reach the shipping page, designate the shipment to go to Westminster - the address will pop up under your own if you have an Amazon account. (*Note from Rev Carol McDonald: "I followed the link,* 

clarified the shipping information, and then made a purchase. Easy and Fun!")

And for those who may be not be tech-savvy, you can send a check to the church, specify what item(s) you would like to contribute, and a member of the Mission Committee will gladly do the rest.

**Shopping deadline is Monday, December 7.** The list is limited so you may want to shop ASAP. You could even have a virtual Christmas shopping spree with other NPC'ers. Perhaps a friendly Zoom gathering of the Deacons, Striders, or choir for a Christmas shopping party!



#### **Food Pantry Volunteers**

Please sign up for our monthly participation at Second Presbyterian's food bank! Coordinator John Reed declares, "The water's safe! Jump in!" In other words, coronavirus safety protocols are in place. No special training needed; there are others to show you the ropes. Northminster is designated for the second Tuesday each month, but you may sign up another day that works for your schedule. Contact John at (317) 315-3142 or bjjkreed@comcast.net.

## **Family Promise / IHN**

Over the past 3 months, Family Promise has rented 20 apartments for homeless families. Northminster members have donated housewares to be placed in these apartments. On October 30, Nancy Flamme, Becky Peterson and Don & Dolly Craft set up an apartment for a Dad and 3 boys. Thanks so much for your continued support! (See photos below.)







#### **Emergency Meals**

Perhaps you like to cook – or maybe you don't. You can still help to provide a person or family with a much needed meal during a time of difficulty. You may prepare soup, dessert, casseroles, side dishes, bread, even frozen vegetables. These items will be frozen and stored at Northminster until needed. Check out the sign up at: https://bit.ly/NPCmeals

## **Joy Offering**

During Advent, we typically ask you to consider adding a Joy Offering to your contribution. Half of all contributions goes to assist retired ministers. Did you know the other 50% goes to racial ethnic education at Presbyterian schools and colleges? In light of recent events, this might be a particularly appropriate offering to make in support of racial and ethnic equity. (Envelopes are in your giving envelope boxes.)

#### Thank You Mr. Tim!

Northminster Community Preschool children recently thanked church employee Tim McElroy for all of his hard work keeping their classrooms clean and safe. (*See photo, below.*)

