This month at
Northminster
March 2021

Lent 2021 continues:
Living in the Wilderness
- page 2

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

The wilderness, an appropriate motif for any Lenten season, is especially so this year. We have been thrust into a wilderness between what we have known and what lies ahead. It can feel like a barren space. As we continue to move through Lent, a daily devotional is available as a survival guide (see our website or contact the church office: office@northminster-indy.org). Touchstones, from the Psalms in the Sunday morning Bible Study and the Exodus experience in our worship services, will continue to help us reflect on our experience.

March 7th        Survival – Exodus 17
March 14th      The Basics – Exodus 20
March 21st      Our Priorities – Exodus 32

On the other side of the Lenten wilderness, we will arrive at the outskirts of Jerusalem. The initial excitement of that arrival will be shortly overshadowed by a depth of darkness that shatters any anticipated promise. But Easter will dawn! Our source of hope lives on.

Remarks from Ruth

As we await the beginning of Spring in the month of March, we get impatient for warmer weather and for signs of new life and growth in God’s good creation. As we wait for more of us to get vaccinations for Covid-19 we get impatient. As we look for our lives to get back to what we consider “normal” – what is normal anyway? – we get impatient.

After a year of pandemic living maybe you are hitting a wall when it comes to working at home, parenting, or partnering or fill-in-the blanking. It makes sense to wish for a change of venue, whether that is a jaunt to a sunshine filled beach, or an overdue reunion with extended family, or maybe just the allure of gathering with friends or eating in a restaurant. What can you do to remain positive and hopeful and help you get through the last legs of this year long slog we have been going through?

(Continued, page 4)
We’re excited to welcome the lovely and talented Nancy Fortenberry, the newest addition to Northminster’s team! Nancy will join in late March as our new Director of Youth and Family Ministries and, by all accounts, she will be a great match for the Northminster family. She comes to us with 30+ years of experience in ministry.

Nancy specializes in understanding the importance and value of kids, college-age audiences, and young parents. She knows firsthand how important it is to weave solid youth church experiences into a whole lifestyle for young people as they move forward with their lives. And it’s that larger future proposition that excites Nancy so and what she feels is her true calling.

Nancy has known Pastor Dave and Ann Smazik since she was 15 years old. She shared that the Smaziks saw something in her at a young age and mentored her toward leadership skills – so that by age 17 and while still a high schooler, Nancy assisted Ann with the registration process at the Seneca Hills summer camp in PA led by Pastor Dave. It was around this time that Nancy felt God tapping her on the shoulder for youth ministry.

Getting to Know Nancy
• Nancy is a job coach and vocational counselor in Carroll County School District, North Carrollton, MS, and she runs a coffee cart as a job training vehicle for students to learn/practice social and business skills. Coffee is a big hobby for her – she loves the gathering, hospitality, and conversation that coffee can create between and among people. She’s also an active member of First Presbyterian Church in Greenwood, MS.
• For Nancy, it’s more about the ministry than it is the job. She currently does a lot of outreach to students in an economically-challenged area. It’s a place where many youth have no access to a parent’s car, no public transportation, etc., so she even accompanies them to take their driver’s tests in her personal car. That’s just part of her life and who Nancy is.
• When Nancy moves to Indianapolis, her two 2 adult children will remain in Mississippi. Her daughter, Sarah Hererra, is 25 and was married this past summer. Nancy also has a special-needs son James, 22, who is a real joy in her life.
• She’s really excited to move to Indiana, as her sisters live near Ft. Wayne. Both sisters have husbands who are in ministry and they run a Christian camp in northern IN.
• An Ohio native, Nancy was thrilled to learn that Indianapolis boasts both Graeter’s AND Handel’s ice cream locations, so a trip to one or both will be high on her list when she arrives, even if it’s still pretty chilly here.
• Home base for Nancy and her family in MS is in the same location where the movie The Help was filmed. In fact, the house where the main character, Skeeter, lived is only a couple of blocks away! She’s eager to move to a larger metro area, as the nearest major city in MS is 2 hours away from her.
• Nancy holds a B.A. in Psychology/Christian Education from Taylor University.

Looking Forward to Northminster
While Nancy admits that it was “odd” to accept a job in a place she’s never been to, with people she’s never met, she has been praying for all of us and already has the feeling that she’s part of an extended family. She particularly enjoyed meeting Lily Banks during the interview process, noting that Lily was a great representative of Northminster’s youth demographic.

Nancy is also excited about trying out some new approaches, launching new youth traditions, and beginning to build foundational relationships at Northminster. She’ll start by first getting to know the youth and finding out what they like and want from a strong youth program here – even during a pandemic. Nancy encourages all Northminster members to connect with her on Facebook or drop her an email at nancy.tortenberry@gmail.com. She would appreciate knowing where the good coffee shops are.
Sunday Morning Lenten Study Continues
Invitation, Command, Challenge
Now through March 28 -- 10:10 am

Join Associate Pastor Ruth Moore and Parish Associate Carol McDonald on Sundays in Lent as we explore the Psalms that will be sung during our Sunday morning worship. Discover the gift of song while living in the wilderness.

March 7 -- Psalm 95
March 14 -- Psalm 19
March 21 -- Psalm 106: 1-6, 19-23
March 28 -- Psalm 99

Join the Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 987/997 5854
Passcode: iheartnpc

Join by Phone option
(Dial any number - no long distance charges)
  +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
  +1 929 436 2866 US (New York)
  +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)
  +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
  +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
  +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
Meeting ID: 987 3976 5854
Passcode: 565899696

(Remarks from Ruth - continued from page 2)
As clergy coach Rev Martha Spong suggests, start by being gentle with yourself and compassionately ask yourself the following questions.

* Who am I missing most right now? How can I reach out to them?

* What can I do to care for myself today? This week?

* What part of my work feels hardest to manage? How might I make some measurable progress on it today?

* What fears are active in my mind? Who could I share them with and get some perspective?

* What daydream of the post-pandemic future would raise my spirits?

We are in the midst of Lent, a time to be intentional about drawing closer to God as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. I encourage you to participate at 10:10 am in our Zoom Sunday Morning Lenten study on the Psalms. We will look for God’s invitation, command and challenge for our lives. I invite you to join our Zoom coffee hours on March 7 and 21. I urge you to reach out to another member in the congregation through the Congregational Life Team’s Call a Member Campaign this month. (See additional information in this newsletter.)

COVID-Related Assistance Is Available

If you have been impacted by COVID-19 and need assistance, help is available. Thanks to the generosity of Frank and Laura Smock, the PCUSA Smock Church Deacon Funds established grants for PCUSA churches in the State of Indiana to assist their Presbyterian church members who require emergency assistance as a result of the COVID-19 crisis in areas such as medical bills, utilities, rent, etc.

The NPC Deacons are administering this assistance fund. A committee has been selected to review and select submissions. Applications will be assigned a number and reviewed anonymously to ensure the privacy of individual families as well as equity and fairness of the distribution of funds. Understand, this is a one-time gift to support you at this difficult time. You may apply online at http://bit.ly/SmockEmergencyAssistNPC or contact Lori Schlabach at 317-251-9489 if you prefer a paper-based application.
Northminster Reads – March & April

We will spend two evenings discussing, and reflecting on, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson. This amazing book will open our eyes to the reality of the caste system that still governs us and will convict us of why that system must be eliminated from our culture.

On Sunday, March 21, at 5:30 p.m. we will focus on Parts One, Two, and Three. On Sunday, April 18, at 5:30 p.m. we will focus on Parts Four - Seven. Two evenings of discussion will allow us to delve more deeply into the important concepts Wilkerson presents. Join Parish Associate Carol McDonald for these 5:30 pm Zoom meetings.

Meeting ID: 756 536 8661   Passcode: 410957
Or dial any of these numbers to join by phone (no long distance charges):
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
Meeting ID: 756 536 8661 Passcode: 410957

Call A Member Campaign - March 2021

**Who:** All Members of Northminster Presbyterian Church

**When:** Month of March 2021

**What:** Agree to call one member and check in. Yes - one call is all!

**How:** Contact Elder Emi Johnson, Chair of Congregational Life. Reach Emi via email, text or phone and you will receive the name and number of someone to call: Emi95642@gmail.com, 530-306-2341 (phone or text).

(Kudos and a shout-out to Elder Adam Newsom for this great idea!)

Zoom Coffee Hours on Sundays, March 7th and 21st

Sunday Zoom Coffee Hours will continue through March. Please join other NPC members at noon following the service on **March 7th and 21st.**

The coffee hours will be hosted by Northminster church members. We all want to see each other and connect, even if you are traveling or are away. To join:

- Go to [zoom.com](http://zoom.com) and login or open the app on your device.
- Click “Join a Meeting” or “Join.”
- Enter the Meeting ID - 905 147 7476
- Enter the Meeting Password – iheartnpc

**To join by phone:**
- Dial 312.626.6799.
- Enter the Meeting ID - 905 147 7476, then press #.
- Meeting Password - 352 522 473, then press #.
Family Promise in the Time of COVID-19

Northminster was scheduled to host homeless families through Family Promise/IHN for three weeks in 2020. Obviously, that did not happen, due to the pandemic. Luckily, Family Promise was able to provide temporary hotel housing for numerous families in the early months.

Then Family Promise established the Apartment Shelter Project, securing apartments for up to 20 families, with donated funds as well as a grant from the CARES Act. Many Northminster members stepped up and helped to provide housewares for two of those apartments. And the Mission Team allowed the IHN Coordinators to use $1,000 of budgeted monies to purchase gift cards which were part of the Home Sweet Home fundraiser in October. Circle 3 provided funds for Christmas gifts for one of the Family Promise families, as well as some items from the needed supplies list. And Becky Peterson and Jennifer & Tony Dzwonar even marched on February 8, as Family Promise and other groups protested a legislative bill which will have a devastating impact on those facing eviction and potential homelessness due to the pandemic.

While we may not be able to provide our regular IHN hospitality to homeless families, Northminster continues to find ways to support Family Promise. For more information, go to www.fpgi.org.

Vaccinations and COVID-19

Any Hoosier age 65 and older is eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine in Indiana. To register, go to ourshot.in.gov or call 211.

If you or someone you know needs assistance registering to get the vaccine, there is help available. CICOA Aging & In-Home Services can assist anyone who doesn’t have internet access or is unable to physically go to clinic. CICOA can help with scheduling a vaccine appointment and place home-bound individuals on a EMT list to receive their vaccine in home. Feel free to contact CICOA at 317-803-6131 or www.cicoa.org

Help stop the pandemic by getting vaccinated!

What We Know
Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19. Experts also think that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help us get back to normal.

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes a few weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19. That means it is possible a person could still get COVID-19 just after vaccination. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

It's important to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. After being vaccinated, continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and stay 6 feet apart. To learn more about the benefits of getting vaccinated, and other helpful information, go to: CDC.gov
One Great Hour of Sharing
Restoring hope, feeding the hungry, empowering the oppressed

Sounds like the perfect soothing balm for a pandemic, right? Typically received during the season of Lent, YOU can make a difference right here, right now. OGHS is the single largest way in which Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

Each gift to OGHS supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Here are just some examples:

$4.1 million granted by PDA in the United States and 57 countries in the first half of 2020

94 grants impacting 20 countries given by PHP in 2019

50 years of ministry for SDOP

Over 17,000 people trained nationally and internationally by OGHS ministries

5,676 PDA work team volunteers served in 2019

234 certified PC(USA) Earth Care congregations helped care for creation

51,000 trees planted around the world

Over 5,000 projects in economically poor communities in the United States and around the world have had an opportunity to develop solutions to their own challenges since SDOP’s inception

$190,000 recovered in stolen wages for hospitality workers in the U.S.

1,097 Presbyterian congregations purchased eco-palms for sustainable forestry and livelihoods

Here’s how you can contribute through Palm Sunday:

• You can make your offering electronically via Shelby Next.
• Mail your special offering envelope to the church office by Palm Sunday.

And you can track OGHS recipients on an interactive world map that can be found at One Great Hour of Sharing Engagement Map (PCUSA): https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs/
Surely, the season of renewal is on its way even if it is snowing outside my window as I type this. In any case, the coming season brings with it our annual Deacon's Plant Sale - one of our biggest opportunities to raise funds for the various missions that we support here at NPC! We are looking forward to some new things this year beginning with trying out a new, LOCAL vendor. Our plants will be supplied by Hood's Gardens - a wholesale grower located in Noblesville. Hopefully this will make delivery day much smoother and give us a chance to support an organization closer to home.

Our offerings this year will include only our best-selling items from the past few years - flats, hanging baskets and patio pots - which will also streamline our fundraiser and hopefully help us sell more of what people really want! Another change that will be forthcoming is an online link to order and purchase online (check your email and NPC’s website). This change will make it much easier to share our sale outside of our Northminster congregation with family, neighbors and friends. When the link is available, please share it widely so that we can make this fundraiser a sweeping success!

Orders may also still be placed via paper order form (included in this newsletter). Please mail the form along with a check made out to Northminster and add "plant sale" in the memo line.

**Final orders will be due April 2nd and plant pickup will be April 30th.**

For questions, contact Molly Winkler (mollycart17@msn.com) or MaryAnn Ruegger (maryannruegger@gmail.com).

Three Cheers for Spring - and the Deacon’s Annual Plant Sale!