

PROCLAIM

A publication of Northminster Presbyterian Church

WE ARE ALWAYS
PREPARING

Winter/Spring
2026



Are You Ready Yet?

Are you ready yet?

That was the question before we headed out on a family trip.

I hated the question because my answer was almost always the same.

No, I am not ready. And being asked the question stressed me out even more.

Eventually though, I did get ready. Usually at the last minute, and unlike Kevin McCallister (think *Home Alone*) I never missed the family trip. My bag was in the car, and I likely overpacked.

This prepared me well for adulthood. Now, I get my stuff ready early. I know how to make use of every square inch of my suitcase. And I am an efficient packer. Let me know when we are leaving for a trip. I can be packed in less than an hour. *Let's go.*

One of the questions I have been wrestling with lately is how can I — how can we — be ready for the journey into whatever we might face in the coming weeks and months in our community, in our city, in our country, in our world?

I must confess it is so easy to feel ill-prepared for whatever we might meet or whatever might meet us, wherever we may find ourselves.

How can we ever be ready?

One of the most important things I have learned is that our work, our actions, our service to others must be grounded in and grow out of our interior work. For when we are depleted, we have less to offer.

What does this interior work look like? I wish I had a prescription for you, but I don't. And it likely wouldn't be helpful anyway. There is never a prescription for spiritual life, the interior life. The best we



can do is to be descriptive about our own journey and listen to that of others, so that in those intersections we might learn something about what might work for us.

As we prepare to enter the Season of Lent, what if instead of removing something from our daily lives — chocolate, soda, social media — we added a practice that might deepen our interior life? Here are some you might try:

- Journal: pick a prompt and write - no judgement, no editing.
- Go for a daily walk: take a different route in a familiar place.
- Take a regular nap: yep, disengage from the grind culture just for a while.
- Walk the labyrinth weekly: a labyrinth will be in the chapel at Northminster.
- Read a daily devotional: there are amazing online resources for this — d365.org is one.
- Find a quiet place to quiet your mind: think about your day — pick a focus word.
- Create a new online playlist full of your favorite music or maybe some new music.

- Read one of the Gospels or maybe all four — Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
- Go to a new coffee shop every week: introduce yourself to the barista.
- Join a yoga class: there are eight offered each week at Northminster.
- Rediscover your favorite book.

The interior life doesn't have to be fancy. It doesn't have to cost much or anything to get started. It is just about setting an intention, going for it, and giving yourself room to fail and grace to start again. This is how we build the necessary muscles for the work ahead.

Are you ready yet? **Let's go.** ✦



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: From left, Bo Walker, Mary Walker, Mika Asende, Clint Winkler and Tony Dzwonar converse in the Gathering Place after worship and prepare for the week ahead.

Prepare for a Wonderful Treasure Hunt in the NPC Library

Upstairs on the second floor, near the elevator, is the Northminster Church Library. There are many treasures for all ages. Board Books for our youngest, picture books and Bible storybooks, a new Teen section, a Parents shelf, devotional materials, praying, Bible study, reference sources and more.

As a Matthew 25 Congregation, our kids and youth may want to know what that means. Here are several stories to introduce *the why* and *the how* we want to live into being a Matthew 25 Congregation. They can be found in the Library on the big table.

Teen 361.37 CLA 77

Creative Ways Kids Each Can Serve

by Sondra Clark

Ideas for simple ways/projects kids can help others.

Teen Graphic Novel LEW Bks.1-3

MARCH by John Lewis

Go behind the scenes of some of the most pivotal moments of the Civil Rights Movement.

JHAN ***Born on the Water*** by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Rene Watson

A powerful picture book from the 1619 Project provides a pathway for readers of all ages to reflect on the origins of American identity by chronicling the consequences of slavery and the history of Black resistance in the U.S.

J398.2 MUT ***Stone Soup*** by Jon J. Muth

Can you convince reluctant folks to share what they have and benefit everyone?

J SCH ***Give a Goat*** by Jan West Schrock

A classroom learns about Heifer International and discovers when people work together, big things can happen.

J303.48 ALL ***Sometimes People March*** by Tessa Allen

Sometimes people march to resist injustice, to stand in solidarity, to inspire hope.

J GUN ***A Shelter in Our Car*** by Monica Gunning

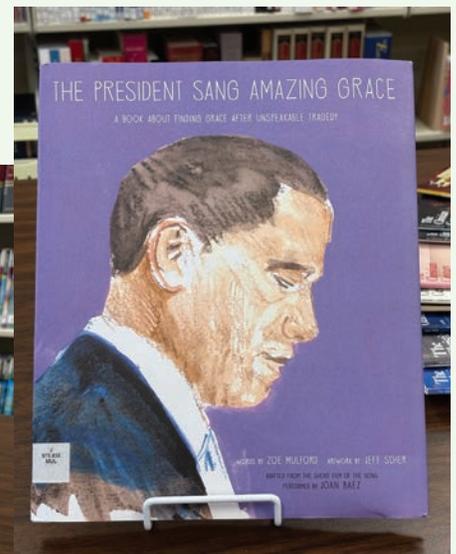
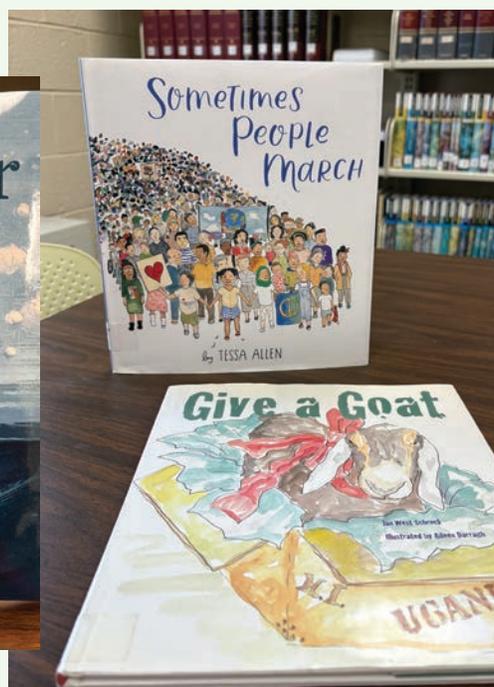
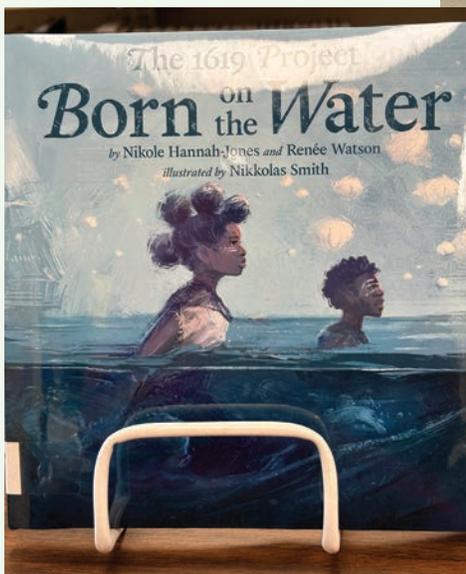
Homelessness is a housing problem. One family's experience living in their car.

J PAU ***Peace*** by Baptiste Paul

From saying hello and pronouncing your friend's name correctly to giving more than you take and saying I'm sorry, exploring definitions of peace and actions small and large that foster it.

J 973.932 ***The President Sang Amazing Grace*** words by Zoe Mulford

Following the 2015 mass shooting that took 9 lives in an historic Black church in Charleston, S. C., President Obama sang "Amazing Grace" to a grieving congregation and nation. It reminds us that love is stronger than hate, and grace is truly amazing. ✦



2025 New Member Class

Betty Belschwender

Betty has been attending Northminster since she married Jack in 2008. He was a lifetime member but it was only since his death last year, that she decided to join. She was a graduate of Greenfield High School and attended St. Michael's Catholic church where Fr. Reading made a great impact on her for his warmth and how he engaged with people. For many years, she was the floor manager at Adidas (formerly Logo 7). More recently, she has placed her sharp eye for detail with the Chancel Care Committee, as they tend to the placement of everything from pew bibles and communion table bread. In her spare time, Betty enjoys reading a good mystery and traveling with Shelby Senior Trips that included visiting Montreal and Quebec. But the best recent trip was joining family for a week in a house on Hawaii's big island where they enjoyed amazing sunsets.



Maureen Dunlap

Maureen's journey began in Versailles, Kentucky, where she attended Margaret Hall School, a small Episcopal boarding school. Her path led her to First Presbyterian in Columbus, Indiana and Second Presbyterian here in Indy before she found her home with us.



Having grown up in a progressive Presbyterian church in Southern Indiana, Maureen felt an immediate connection between her own values and those of Northminster. Maureen also shares an appreciation for our music ministry and she finds the Sunday "Children's Time" to be a valuable part of our community life.

Professionally, Maureen has been "cheffing" since 1990. Throughout her career, she even spent time thriving in the kitchen in historic Williamsburg, Virginia. Today, she manages custom meal preparation for local clients—and rumor has it that she has some "mad bread-making skills!"

Mary Giesel

Mary Giesel hails from Huntington, West Virginia, where her family owned a shoe store. She followed the Ohio River to the University of Cincinnati to study nursing. Eventually she landed at Aspire, a community mental health service where she treats people coming out of jail. Mary comes to us from Orchard Park Presbyterian. Her husband passed away several years ago and she has two children, a son who graduated from Wabash and is now studying immunology, and daughter at Hope College looking to teach elementary education. Mary "likes" to cook, enjoying the fun of group get-togethers (like church dinners)



and she enjoys baking. She says she dabbles in running (ran a marathon at 44) but claims she can teach the sport to anyone ("It's all about pacing.") Recently she enjoyed a trip to the South of France, mixing the pleasure of a Mediterranean beach in Nice with the chills in the Alps.

Amber Gilman

Originally from Soldotna, Alaska, Amber Gilman often has to clarify her hometown's name—no, she didn't "sell vodka," despite what a confused judge once thought! An attorney by trade, she was drawn to Northminster Presbyterian Church because of our congregation's commitment to social justice and active service within the neighborhood she loves. She previously attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, and Amber brings a deep sense of advocacy to our community. When she isn't working, you might find Amber enjoying a Turner Classic Movies marathon, riding her bike, or locked in a friendly "Jeopardy!" battle with her husband. She loves walking her dogs through local parks. Amber's been playing guitar since age ten and would be happy to help you master a Beatles song!



Kathleen and Meredith Hull

Their friend Linda Furuness encouraged the Hulls to give Northminster a try. While they came to a Presbyterian church from Methodist and Catholic religious backgrounds, they shared careers in pathology at the IU School of Medicine. Kathy, a North Central graduate, is a retired Professor Emerita of Pathology and was Director of the Hospital Autopsy Services. She was also the first Director of the IUPUI Office for Women. Meredith, from Greenfield, is Professor Emeritus specializing in surgical pathology at IU. He was also Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education. While Meredith added hiking and cutting wood to his list of favorite pastimes, the Hulls both enjoy gardening, reading and traveling. Florence, Italy, is at the top of their favorite list of visits, one that Kathy remembers as "magical."



John Hunt

John Hunt, husband of organist Clarice Stegall, credits his high school teachers at Springfield High School in Pennsylvania, as having given him the fundamentals and confidence to build on his skills to do whatever he set out to accomplish. As it turns out, he accomplished quite a lot. In 2018 he retired after fifty years in audio, video, graphics and printing, and then started his



own welding and fabrication business named JohnnyFix Welding & Repair, LLC. He says he's one of those lucky people who "gets paid to play." Moving from Church of God Scientist, John considers himself a teacher, is encouraged by Northminster's active participation in the communities we serve, and enjoys sharing his knowledge and experience. But his life is not all melting metal. He enjoys time outdoors with Clarice near their home in secluded woods, surrounded by fields, streams and wildlife of all kinds.

Kairi Kanda

Kairi Kanda graduated from high school near Virginia Beach and graduate school in San Antonio, TX. Her Ph.D. in science drew her to Lilly where she has been since October 2024 as a science writer. Kairi has to know regulatory protocols, medicine, and editing with precision. In her free time, she is currently writing three novels, all romances, and all different enough that they don't step on each other's toes: fantasy and science fiction. Kairi (pronounced Ki-ree) can see herself teaching a dance class, which is another hobby she has enjoyed. Raised a Catholic and saved by the Baptists, Kairi formed close and lasting friendships with a group of other graduate students in San Antonio and found a home in Madison Square Presbyterian Church. When she settled in Indianapolis, she found us.



Sherie Kendall

Sherie was born in Anderson, IN and raised in Pompano Beach, Florida. She left Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts after one semester when she was called home during a family crisis. She moved back to Indiana and lived in Kokomo and Marion while raising a family and operating a property management firm. Sherie decided to follow her dream to study medicine, and entered the IU School of Medicine earning a Ph.D. in neurobiology at age 50. Her dissertation helped secure a position at the University of Kentucky, and as Assistant Professor of Biology at Midway College. She was a Baptist in two places and was baptized by the Baptists twice. Sherie became a Presbyterian and a choir member while in Lexington and sang under the direction of our Montreat friend, Marlon Hurst. When she retired in 2014 and moved to Indianapolis, she became a neighbor of NPC's Frank Sauer who brought her to Northminster.



Dorothy "Dotsie" Longworth

Dorothy "Dotsie" Longworth found her way to us through a connection at Lucas Oil Stadium, where she works part-time. Her colleague, Jim Mann, invited her to give Northminster a try. She



grew up at Second Presbyterian, where her 97-year-old mother is likely the longest-tenured member! Dotsie's own faith journey also includes 40+ years at Castleton UMC and time at Meridian Street UMC. She holds a deep appreciation for the study of scripture.

A graduate of North Central High School (and a proud mom of three NC grads!), Dotsie's impressive service includes: 40 years teaching Sunday School and leading youth ministry, 9 years as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), where she advocated for children in the foster care system, and 6+ years (and counting!) spent joyfully watching her grandsons during the week and attending her grandchildren's activities. When not with family, you might find Dotsie logging onto Zoom for a unique Bible study that began eight years ago with a then-Marion County Prosecutor and a homicide detective!

Now retired from a 32-year career as a business analyst at OneAmerica, Dotsie loves to visit the mountains—especially Wyoming and North Carolina.

Patti Martin

A self-described "kid from Akron" and a proud University of Toledo alumna, new member Patti Martin moved to Indianapolis in October of 2021 after spending several years living in the South. Since her move, she has been quite busy, notably completing the extensive genealogy research required for her DAR membership – no small feat! When she isn't tracing family roots, you can often find her staying active with her sorority alumnae group, especially during their monthly Euchre games. At Northminster, Patti has quickly become a familiar face; our Wednesday night programming was a major draw for her, and she now shares her time and energy as a dedicated Youth Group volunteer. Most recently, and somewhat to her own disbelief, she was ordained as a member of the Deacon Class of 2028. We are so grateful for Patti's spirit of service and her presence in our congregation.



Allison Shivers

One of the first things you learn about Allison when you meet is that they're a FAN – in all caps – of IU, The Indiana Fever, and "obviously Team USA." What you may not know as quickly is that Allison is a Lego master, building all kinds of amazing sets, including vehicles that move.

Allison graduated from a small private high school, Midwest Academy, in the class of 2017 and now works at Goodwill "just three minutes from church." Allison enjoys playing the guitar, reading cookbooks, and all kinds of fun music. 💎



Session Class of 2025: Signing Off

When Northminster's 2025 Session held its last meeting, outgoing member Craig Hittle passed around his meeting nameplate and asked other elders to sign it — much like a Little Leaguer getting his teammates to autograph his baseball after the season's last game. It was a surprisingly moving gesture, signaling that his term on the Session had really meant something.



In that spirit, we posed a few questions to all five elders in the “graduating” Class of 2025 — **Elizabeth Brandes, Jennifer Dzwonar, Craig Hittle, Lisa Longo,** and **John Purcell** — whose Session term (2023-2025) was the first to begin during the Brian Shivers era. Here are some excerpts from their answers:

When the Nominating Committee called, why did you say yes?

[Brandes] Guilt!! No, honestly, it was an honor to be asked after only having been a member at Northminster for several years. I was simply hoping that I would be able to offer something of value and share some of my marketing/communications background.

[Dzwonar] I had served on Session here before, and I enjoyed getting to know Northminster from that vantage point. Also, having served on the Pastor Nominating Committee that brought Brian Shivers to the church, I wanted to help make his transition to Northminster

as smooth as possible.

[Hittle] Admittedly, serving on Session wasn't something I was actively pursuing and initially I felt like the timing wasn't “right.” But as I prayed about it, it became clear to me that being called was really a blessing rather than an obligation.

[Longo] I was excited about serving during the beginning of a newly installed pastor's service. I knew it would be a critical time for both new pastor and lay leadership.

[Purcell] When Deb Ronco called, our year-long Pastor

Nominating Committee process was almost over, and I was ready for some time off from church. But once Brian said yes to our call, I wanted to say yes to Deb's.

How did this Session experience compare with your expectations (and any prior Session service here or elsewhere)?

[Brandes] I was pleased to see how Session members are occasionally willing to disagree with each other candidly, without taking offense, which isn't often the case in volunteer situations, including at some other churches.

[Dzwonar] Both of my Session terms were very positive. The last three years were differently challenging in the best way: with two new pastors bringing their ideas and experiences; and their “outside” perspectives about Northminster. Plus, an upbeat financial situation.

[Hittle] I thought it would be more passive. However, I immediately felt welcomed and heard by the more

experienced elders and incredible staff, and it quickly became apparent that God's call to us isn't passive, nor is our congregation and leadership.

[Longo] There was a lot of energy as we worked on what felt like something new — seeing the strong commitment to faith and service that has long existed at Northminster, but seeing it through new eyes and being able to appreciate and acknowledge the strengths of our congregation.

[Purcell] Many similarities, but some differences. We'd been through some rugged times (pandemic, budget strains, staff turnover), but now we were off to a fresh restart. Two new pastors who were upbeat, energized, and dedicated to serving the marginalized — their enthusiasm was irresistible.

What leading impression/s are you taking away from the experience?

[Brandes] It's a good environment where the pastors can, and do, serve as sounding boards, but they ultimately help keep the Session in check by enabling elders to educate themselves on issues and make informed decisions — in a timely manner.

[Dzwonar] This governing body is/ was incredibly thoughtful, committed to Matthew 25 at every turn, and looking out for both the short-term and long-term interests of the church.

[Hittle] We can do so much more together than we ever could on our own.

[Longo] It's one of the ways I have developed new friendships and gotten to know church members in a deeper way while strengthening my own faith.

[Purcell] Northminster is in a really good place. Great leadership, lots of new faces (including young families), a healthy financial position, and an active (and visible) mission focus in the community.



Elizabeth Brandes



Jennifer Dzwonar



Craig Hittle



Lisa Longo



John Purcell

Session 2025 Graduates

What meeting moment/s do you particularly remember?

[Brandes] The devotionals at the beginning and end of Session meetings are always interesting and often quite relevant to what's happening in the world. It's gratifying to see what individuals share, and to watch how other elders react honestly – sometimes emotionally.

[Dzwonar] When Foundation president Jerry Gray recently attended a Session meeting and was asked about how the Foundation is doing, his response was, "Doing well. Straight, hot and true." What?! We cracked up, and that became the standard response to how other teams were doing.

[Hittle] Perhaps the meetings I'll remember most are when we were bringing on Karen as our new Associate Pastor. Karen's arrival and the meetings we had discussing her gifts and her potential impact were really inspiring.

[Longo] One of my favorite elements of Session meetings is the devotional time at the beginning of each meeting. Those are often the truest testimony to faith and the healing and affirming power of community.

[Purcell] I'll look on this period as a Good News time. I'm thankful for our members' generosity, our mission focus on "the least of these of [Christ's] family," and our stand against the Christian Nationalism heresy.

How do Brian-moderated Session meetings compare with Brian-led Time with Children?

[Brandes] Well, while he often does *end* Session discussions with "are you ready for the question?" those are usually the *first* words the children hear on Sunday mornings!

[Dzwonar] You get the feeling Brian could spend ALL DAY talking with the kids and enjoying every moment. You also get the feeling Brian could spend ALL EVENING in a Session meeting and enjoying every moment - happy, sad, challenging, stressful, funny, or poignant.

[Hittle] I'm always amazed at how Brian uses simple questions to bring out the best in people, both during Children Time on Sundays and in Session meetings. He allows people to feel safe, to feel heard, and to be their authentic selves so they can express what's really in their hearts.

[Longo] There are lots of stories and lots of questions in both scenarios. And a constant affirmation that we are all children of God, we are loved deeply, and that is enough!

[Purcell] Session meetings last a bit longer, and the room's a lot smaller, but the Brian of one is the Brian of the other – open, curious, encouraging, faith-filled, loving. ✨

Session 2026 Prepares Northminster for our Short- and Long-term Future

By Jennifer Young Dzwonar, member since 2008

Each member of Northminster's Session (called a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church) is elected by the congregation to a 3-year term, and the terms rotate so that about one-third of the Session turns over each year. As of January, here are the Elders and their assigned areas of responsibility.

Chris Baker

Finance

Monica Brase

Communications

Christie Call

Personnel

Blaine Dinwiddie

Building & Grounds

Eva Ellington

Connections (youth elder, 1-year term)

Todd Ellington

Spiritual Growth

Liz Higgins

Spiritual Growth

Don Knebel

Finance

Matt Kroeger

Mission

Jim Mann

Generosity

Emily Plunkett

Community Engagement & Outreach

Mary Beth Riner

Worship & Arts

MaryAnn Ruegger

Mission

Donna Schmahl

Connections

Mike Shannon

Generosity

Bo Walker

Buildings and Grounds

December 2025

Advent

On Sunday, Dec. 7, following worship, dozens of people of all ages hung out in the Gathering Place making Christmas crafts, decorating cookies, and sipping hot chocolate piled high with marshmallows (if you so choose). Some of the crafts went to Westminster Neighborhood Services to accompany holiday baskets for families in need. It feels like the holiday season truly begins once the frosting, chocolate and glitter kick in with this event each year. ❖



Comfort & Joy

The second annual Comfort & Joy event offered an opportunity for respite near the end of a sometimes loud and hectic season. Sitting in the sanctuary in silence reading a beautiful liturgy on grief. Listening to soulful instrumental music while lying or sitting in the Gathering Place. Walking the labyrinth. Warm and quiet reflection is open to all. ❖



Prepare to be Wowed: The New Music of Sphere Born

Northminster has a connection with a new, independent, professional choral ensemble under the direction of Simon Thomas Jacobs. This unique group of singers, called *Sphere Born*, recently held its first concerts.

You may remember Jacobs, the phenom organist and choral director (and commercial airline pilot for Delta!) from a special NPC Sound & Spirit organ concert held on Oct. 26, 2025. It was during this concert that Jacobs went public with his announcement about the formation of *Sphere Born*. The group is committed to choral excellence, artistic and scholarly integrity, and educational outreach. Singers are choral professionals and soloists that can adhere to a highly demanding and collaborative musicianship environment. *Sphere Born* also engages its home-base Indy community and broader Midwest fans by performing a wide variety of programming, including a cohort of lesser-known and contemporary choral works.

A UK-native, Jacobs calls Indianapolis his “adopted home city,” where he has maintained a presence dating back to 2011 when he spent three years downtown as Associate Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral. A music graduate of Cambridge University, and the 2013 First Prize and Audience Prize winner at the St. Albans International Organ Competition, Jacobs ranks among the world’s finest concert organists, receiving an Artist’s Diploma from Oberlin College in 2015. After significant planning work by Jacobs, it’s exciting to see the new, nonprofit *Sphere Born* join Indianapolis’s vibrant local music scene.

Northminster also boasts a key connection to *Sphere Born* via one of its singers — Elisabeth Kleinsmith, Family Engagement Coordinator here at NPC! Elisabeth shared her thoughts so far: “Singing with *Sphere Born* has been nothing short of inspiring. The level of musicianship and commitment from each singer has made this experience deeply rewarding — and we’re just getting started! There is an obvious sense of collaboration and mutual respect, which creates a musical environment where we all excel and thrive together.” An NPC chancel choir soprano and member of *Sphere Born*, she is uniquely positioned to help cultivate a collaboration between these two communities. “Collaboration is what choral music is all about! Together we can continue to support local artists, expand access to high-level choral music, and contribute to a thriving musical culture within our city.”

Learn more about *Sphere Born*, its schedule, and support at <https://sphereborn.org/>, follow them at <https://www.facebook.com/sphereborn>, and watch the Jan. 16 TV news *Sphere Born* interview with Jacobs on CBS/WISH-TV at <https://tinyurl.com/rdec2baj>. ❖





Coffee Bar 2.0

By John Purcell, member since 1986

Northminster's previous coffee bar was championed by Building Committee member Andy Longo in 2009 and was completed on a tight budget with help from member Mike Boris. As the Gathering Place became Northminster's new "front door," the coffee bar became a focal point.



Teri Thomas and Andy Longo launch the Coffee Bar, 2010

But after 15 years of heavy use and several rounds of creative repair, the cabinets and equipment began to break down and show their age. Many people took notice and one gave us a generous (anonymous) gift, to make it more functional and welcoming.

Coffee Bar 2.0 opened for business in December. The upgrade included new cabinetry, countertops, backsplash, and lighting in an enlarged space; a coffee maker that can brew two high-capacity pots simultaneously; larger and more functional storage space; additional equipment (ice machine, bottle-filler/water fountain, enlarged sink and garbage disposal, and pullout trash/recycling bins); and a brighter, more inviting look.

Baristas report improved operation; drinkers compliment the new (and slightly stronger) coffee; staff and pre-school teachers praise the ice machine and bottle-filler, and; we're all grateful to that unnamed member who spoke up, and stepped up, to make it happen.

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 Mary Holland.



Mary and her husband Jim at a No Kings protest.

How do you share your generosity with Northminster?

"When I joined Northminster, I realized I would get out what I put in, so I've been involved in just about everything," Mary says with a laugh. First, she taught Sunday school, then joined the choir in the early '90s, where she now also serves as the choir librarian.

When she retired from her professional job, she became involved with chancel care, various committees, Circle Three, Spiritual Striders, and has been a deacon three times. You may have seen or spoken to her in the church office, where she volunteers on Mondays. According to Mary, "It's a wonderful place to be."

What motivates you to share your gifts?

When Mary sees a need, she rolls up her sleeves and meets it. The choir librarian role happened that way. "It's a job I think many people would find tedious, but it appeals to my sense of organization," Mary said.

What's your Northminster origin story?

Mary grew up in the Presbyterian faith in North Carolina but dropped out of organized religion during college. "In my early 20s, I started looking for a church and explored several, but my sister-in-law and mother-in-law were here," Mary recounts. Northminster appealed to her sense of community, her daughter joined the youth group, and "I stopped searching," Mary said.

What's something about you that most people don't know?

"I worked for almost 40 years at Wishard Hospital (now Eskenazi Health) as a psychiatric crisis clinician," Mary said. "I loved my job. I found my forte helping people in crisis." ♦



Mary with daughters Emily (the bride) and Laura, and close friend Jen.

Fall Fest Prepared Us for a Fun Holiday Season

This past November, Northminster hosted its first Fall Festival, which was an afternoon filled with music, food, and fellowship at the start of the holiday season. In the unseasonably beautiful weather, families enjoyed outdoor live music from The Porchmen — the perfect musical backdrop for the day.

Guests devoured a delicious spread of a variety of home-cooked chili and cornbread, lovingly prepared by our church volunteers. Children and families participated in pumpkin painting, yard games, ribbon dancing, and a build-your-own candy-apple bar, offering simple fun for all ages.

The gathering reflected our growing community of young families and our commitment to offering easy and low-stress opportunities for connection and outreach in our neighborhood. We hope to build on this event in the future by combining it with our annual Trunk or Treat tradition, continuing to create new experiences that foster a sense of belonging for all — in Fall. ♦





Pat Freije: Faith Keeper, Dream Builder

The first impression of Patricia Freije is her infectious smile followed almost immediately by a hearty hug. Welcoming one into her showcase home is another first impression. And that only scratches the surface of who Pat Freije is.

Patricia was born February 3, 1932, in Flackville, a former neighborhood on Indianapolis' northwest side known today as "Venerable Flackville." Her father was a traveling salesman, her mother a stay-at-home parent. Siblings Ann and John were older, and Pat, the youngest. Active in her community Methodist Church as a teen, Pat had a typical adolescence until, at age sixteen, Bill Freije walked into Pat's brother-in-law's drugstore. Sparks flew. On the heels of a whirlwind romance, Pat and Bill were married just after Pat turned eighteen and graduated from Ben Davis High School. They became parents almost immediately, ushering in four children: Debbie, Bill III, Julie, and Matthew. In 1955, the Freije family began attending Northminster Presbyterian Church; the Freije name has been cemented in Northminster's annals ever since; and Pat's faith in Northminster and its leadership has never wavered.

"I want to tell you, we have had some faithful, knowledgeable, Holy Spirit-inspired ministers. They were all faithful servants. Our church has preached the Lord's word—period. It's been wonderful. I was on the Hannah prayer group as well as Bible study groups with Rev. Don Durrett and Rev. Teri Thomas. Bill and I worshipped every Sunday [fifth row, west side of sanctuary]. Bill was an Elder and Deacon and was on the Building and Grounds committee for years and years. Even after he was off, they would call him for any heating and A/C because he was a professional engineer.



Pat Freije with Northminster youth

"It's just been a real blessing. I was an elder before Bill and then [served] as a Deacon twice. It was an honor to serve communion. It was an honor to be active in my church when I was physically able. I was so grateful for that opportunity."

A little-known contribution from the Freijes is the appearance of the *Today* devotional on Northminster's devotional tables in the Gathering Place, Narthex, church office and other spaces. Any time you pick up an issue of *Today*, give a moment of gratitude to Pat Freije, who still drops off an order each month (yes, she still drives locally).

Case in point: *Today* pamphlets will continue to be available long into the future of Northminster via its inclusion in the Freije trust. Pat added, "I hope and pray people use this, because it puts you in the Word each and every day."

In 1981, after seeing her youngest off to college, Pat Freije began her career as a custom home builder and designer. Note: Pat had her earned high school diploma but no college degree. She had a passion for designing spaces for others, beginning with remodeling projects for relatives, lake cottages, and her parents' home. Pat even passed out leaflets in her neighborhood. In

1985, working on attic plans, Pat walked into Reese Wholesale.

"I threw my plans on the counter, and there was a young man there, John Young, a carpenter. He saw my plans and asked, 'Can you design me a house?' I said, 'I guess so.' The bottom line is, we connected. He and his co-worker were excellent carpenters. And we started doing remodeling jobs together. Then, in 1985, John put it to me: 'If you can put up with all this nonsense, why can't you design houses?'"

That was something. I came home and confronted Husband Bill. He looked at me and said, 'Okay, but you have to get a loan on your own, and you can't put our house up as collateral. Which made a lot sense. But can you imagine what it was like, as a woman, as a contractor, to go to a bank and ask for a loan?' Even Bill's bank, where he had banked for years, turned me down. Finally, a bank gave me a loan, took a chance on me. Their comment to me was, 'You have no experience.' And my response was, 'If you don't give me the chance, how am I going to have any experience?' Pat even remembers the loan officer's name who signed off on her loan.

"My first house was in Village Farms. All my houses are listed. And here's the architect book that I studied. I [had a booth at] a Home-A-Rama, which my son helped me set up."

From 1985 to 2008, Pat Freije designed and sold 40 custom homes, giving them all names of her children and grandchildren, as well as plans for countless other remodeling projects. The kitchen across from the church office was a storage room that Pat redesigned. Her crowning achievement was sitting on the Building and Grounds committee during the transformation of Northminster's Gathering Place.

Preparing for a Life of Faith: Youth Retreat at Pyoca

As Pat is quick to point out, the greater benefit of her second career has been the relationships she has forged, including with the young builder, John Young.

“We are the best of friends. We talk at least once a week. We have a Christian bond that is binding. I can ask him for anything, and he would be here.” When asked about her experience of women’s rights movements in the 70’s and 80’s and any personal impact in an industry typically associated with men, Pat’s response was basic yet profound.

“I was always respectful to them. And they were always respectful to me. My subs [contractors], my vendors, they had my back.”

She is an avid Pacers fan, and now, a devoted Indiana Fever fan, keeping detailed rosters and statistics for each player and game in the season. In addition, Bill and Pat hosted numerous Colts parties, including a Super Bowl affair in 2012.

Today, at 93, Pat is a little slower, and her physical world is a bit more restrictive. She is a vocal supporter of Northminster’s streaming Sunday service. However, she continues to make her way in the world. She’s designed plans for just about all her children and grandchildren, not to mention friends and colleagues. In fact, she is open to anyone needing design work done. She just finished remodeling plans for one of her daughters. “If you need design work done, give me a call.”

A pause. Then a smile starts in the eyes and spreads across Pat’s face.

“You have to understand: Everything I’m saying isn’t about me, because it’s the Lord’s gift to me. I’m not the one to be praised. He is the one to get the Glory.” ❖



November 21-23 was Pyoca Camp and Retreat Center’s annual youth retreat, and we had so many Northminster youth attend that chaperone, Andy Longo, had to drive himself separately because there wasn’t enough room for all of us in the rented van! After fighting through tough traffic to get out of Indy we arrived at Pyoca in Brownstown, IN. There we got settled in our cabin, had an opening worship service and small group, and then ended the night with pizza!



The keynoter for the weekend was Rev. Tyler Brinks from First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington, and he themed the weekend around the life and work of Howard Thurman (American author, philosopher, minister, theologian, Christian mystic, educator, and civil rights leader). In between deep thinking and self-reflection, we enjoyed the nature and activities around us, exceptional food, and

lots of time spent together. Northminster’s youth were (unsurprisingly) kind and open to each other and the new friends met along the way! ❖



Prepare for anything with one of these great books

A Different Kind of Power

by Jacinda Ardern

Jacinda Ardern's memoir chronicles her election in 2017 as the youngest prime minister of New Zealand in the 20th century. An unconventional candidate at age 37, she was also pregnant and a lapsed Mormon. During her first term in office, she experienced severe challenges. She faced the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch which killed 49 Muslims, the worst mass shooting in New Zealand's history. Her quick reaction propelled gun ownership reform within a month as Parliament passed a law banning military style automatic weapons.

Ardern's political enemies thought her sensitivity was a weakness. But she writes that they were wrong: "Kindness has a power and strength that almost nothing else on this planet has. I'd seen kindness do extraordinary things; I'd see it give people hope; I'd seen it change minds and transform lives."



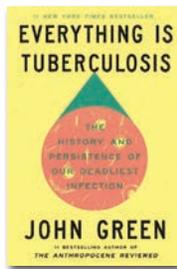
Everything is Tuberculosis

by John Green

Tuberculosis is rare in the United States, but in his book, *Everything is Tuberculosis*, (Indianapolis resident and fan) John Green forcefully demonstrates that 1,250,000 people die every year world-wide of a disease that can be easily cured.

Green reveals the history of TB, called "consumption" or "the fainting disease" in the past, as a plague going back thousands of years. Tuberculosis has intersected with history in surprising ways. Romantic English poets Keats and Shelley perished young from TB. The state of New Mexico was established as the "land of new lungs." The Stetson cowboy hat was created through an experience with TB. Green argues that TB was a minor cause of World War I because the inept assassins were suffering from TB. The pale and wasted appearance of young women suffering from TB became a beauty standard in the 19th century.

Today, the world-wide deaths from TB are incomprehensible, so Green follows Henry Reider, a child in Sierra Leone, on his struggle with drug-resistant TB. The story of Henry's positive attitude and resiliency provides hope that progress is possible.



The Briar Club

by Kate Quinn

A double murder in a boarding house, home to exceptional women hiding secrets, and the paranoia of Washington, D.C. during the McCarthy Era of the 1950s combine in *The Briar Club* for compelling historical fiction. Grace March, newest resident at Briarwood Boarding House, initiates Thursday night potlucks in her room for the other guests. Their lives begin to intertwine like the painted flowered vine that grows out of Grace's tiny attic room.

Grace remains mysterious, but her compassion draws out the secrets of the other women. Nora, a devoted and patriotic employee of the National Archives, falls in love with a gangster. Destitute, Reka escaped from Nazi Germany but still harbors a grudge against an American senator. Bea resents the barrier against women in her beloved baseball. British Fliss, a new mother, suffers postpartum depression while her military husband serves in the Pacific. Bigoted Arlene yearns for an engagement ring. Claire's struggle during the Great Depression has left her bitter and angry.

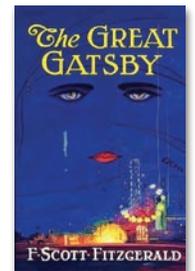
Don't peek ahead to the end: To do so will ruin the reading of a surprise finish.



The Great Gatsby

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald was first published in 1925. After 100 years, the novel continues pre-eminently in the canon of American literature. Although many read the novel as young students, revisiting it as adults provides new perspectives as life experiences mold reactions to the novel. Mature readers may appreciate Fitzgerald's masterful language, character development, and plot sequence. They may also enjoy the setting of New York in the 1920s, the Jazz Age as Fitzgerald named it. He wanted to write a novel about Twenties American society, but great literature remains classic because of timeless themes: fate and individual choice, the pursuit of the American Dream, bigotry, the corruptive nature of wealth. What themes of *The Great Gatsby* echo today? Why did Fitzgerald title his novel *The GREAT Gatsby*?





Prepared for Public Support

Pastors Karen Herbst-Kim and Brian Shivers have been at the Statehouse supporting our Mission partners on four different occasions this legislative session. Those partners who requested our public support around state legislative issues



are Bread for the World, Indiana Faith Voices for Justice, IYG and Live Free Indiana (Indy Action Coalition). 

Prepared for Primaries

By Pennie Lumley, member since 1965

On Tuesday, May 5, 2026, voters will select candidates for the General Election, which will take place on November 3. Voters must register or — if their address has changed— update their registration before April 6.

Voters need an Indiana driver’s license or Indiana pictorial identification to register to vote.

For more information, call the Indiana Election Division at 317-232-3939 or visit **IndianaVoters.IN.gov**

Find the Hidden Message

Follow the instructions to cross off words in the table. Then unscramble the remaining words to find a scripture verse.

1. Cross off words to do with WINTER.
2. Cross off words meaning LITTLE.
3. Cross off names of FLOWERS.
4. Cross off words that rhyme with SENT.
5. Cross off names of BIRDS.

MINUTE	CANARY	DREAM	MEN
YOUNG	TULIP	DENT	SHALL
FROSTY	DREAMS	WEE	WOODPECKER
WREN	STARLING	LENT	FRIGID
ROSE	SLIGHT	YOUR	TINY
SMALL	LILY	SEE	RAW
GARDENIA	BENT	SNOWY	ZINNIA
MEN	AND	WENT	MINIATURE
EAGLE	TENT	ROBIN	PANSY
CHILLY	UNDERSIZED	VISIONS	BLEAK
ASTER	CENT	DAISY	RENT
SHALL	YOUR	OSTRICH	OLD

Find answers to the puzzle at the bottom of page 9.



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Menopause Summit Helps Us Prepare and Learn Together

On Sunday, Nov. 9, more than 40 women — mostly 40+ — gathered in Calvin Hall and heard from a fabulous panel of three experts on the (un)popular topic of Menopause. Krista Wright, Northminster’s Spiritual Wholeness and Wellness Coordinator, coordinated the event and moderated a lively and educational discussion with Deb Ronco, M.D.; Stephanie Meade, D.O.; and Melanie MacLaren, Naturopathic Doctor. Members of the audience asked questions — many of which they had never thought of or asked before — and gained valuable insight into this important wellness topic too rarely discussed, even with our doctors.



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