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NORTHMINSTER

Life

REOPENING

During our May meeting, your session unanimously voted to reopen our Northminster doors for in-person worship beginning Sunday, June 14 at 10:30am. This date is dependent on the Governor not extending any shelter-in-place orders. As you no doubt expect, for the time being there will be some changes in the way we worship in-person.

Here's what to expect:

- Please enter through open doors to minimize the touching of handles.
 - We encourage everyone to wear a mask if possible, but the choice is individual and no one will be turned away!
 - Bulletins will be placed in the pews in advance to minimize touching or close contact. We ask that each family/individual sit only where bulletins have been placed to make sure we practice safe social distancing.
 - Hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the pews for now. Please bring your own Bible. Hymns will be in the bulletin.
 - We will limit congregational singing to minimize the spread of airborne particles, but we have lots of creative ideas in the work so the music will continue to be an important part of our worship of God.
 - We will not be passing the offering plates. Instead, we invite you to drop your offering in the plate located at the exit doors following the service, or continue to use online giving.
 - During our time of passing the peace, we ask that you stay at your seat and show signs of peace to those within your view.
 - As we conclude the service, we ask that everyone exit the building while maintaining the appropriate distance from one another.
 - Do not feel pressured to return to in-person worship services on June 14. We will be working diligently to continue online worship so that everyone may participate, even from home.
- To state the obvious: If you have a fever, if you feel the slightest bit under the weather, or if you have multiple health concerns, please plan to continue worshiping online for the time being.

Perhaps the most difficult part about returning to worship is the fact that we have such a loving church fellowship and we miss the opportunity to hug and shake hands as we greet each other. What a blessed problem! But, alas, for the time being, we simply cannot do what we all love to do. We hope that this season of physical distancing will come to an end sooner than later, but until then we want to make sure everyone stays safe and healthy.

With help from the medical professionals in our congregation and with guidance from the State, the presbytery, and our denomination, we are still actively working on how best to return to the sanctuary and there may be additions to this list. Please know that balancing some return to normalcy with everyone's well-being is our major concern. We appreciate all of your efforts to help each other in this way.

Sam Alderman, Worship elder
Jennifer Whitehead, Ministry Assistant
Ralph Hawkins, Teaching Elder

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NPC YOUTH

Our youth have checked in with video chats lead by Pastor Ralph twice over the past 3 months but have not been together since the chili cookoff and dessert auction. Sunday, May 30, will be our first gathering and excitement abounds! Thanks to Kari Alderman, we have rented a theater at AmStar Theaters for a special showing of Wonder Woman. We will have the facility to ourselves with a limit of 20 people in order to keep us socially-distanced. Watch for more activities in the upcoming months.

We have just received information that Montreat Conference Center is not hosting any face-to-face conferences in June, which unfortunately includes the High School Youth Conference. This is a disappointment, however, it is better to be safe than have someone get sick. Likewise, the June camps for Dogwood Acres have also been cancelled.



MUSIC NOTES

It is reassuring to know that during these many weeks of distancing, our sanctuary has still been filled with beautiful music, provided by our volunteer singers & instrumentalists. Although our bell and chancel choirs will still not be meeting for quite some time, we encourage each of you to continue worship and prayer through song at home. Music is a universal gift with which God has blessed us—let us bless His name with that gift in return!

Stay safe and healthy, until we meet again!



PUZZLING TIMES

During these "puzzling times", several NPC members have enjoyed working on and swapping jigsaw puzzles. A collection of puzzles is being amassed at the church for YOU to enjoy!

They are housed on shelves in the room next to Ralph's office. Feel free to borrow one at any time. If you would like to add to the collection, just drop the puzzles off at the church. When you complete one, please list your name/date on the inside of the box top. Enjoy!

WELCOME BACK, BENJAMIN!

After 11 long weeks of recovery, we have welcomed back our beloved sexton, Benjamin Gail! He is so thankful to be back, as we all are, and is easing into his work schedule by working from 9:00-1:00 for the time being. If you were not able to make it to his welcome back drive-thru parade, worry not, you will be able to see him the next time you're able to come to the church. Welcome back, Mr. B, NPC loves you!



THANK YOU, CHURCH FAMILY

Dear NPC family,

Thank you for all your expressions of concern: prayers, cards, flowers, phone calls. I felt your love surrounding me after my recent fall. In Christ's love, Ann R. Smith

Northminster family,

Words that express my gratitude are hard to find. For 4 years, I have been blessed to find myself adopted into the most amazing church family I could ever ask for. After learning of recent financial strain and my hopes to allow my son to attend a special camp specifically for teens with Asperger's (a high-functioning form of autism), the personnel committee reached out to you for help. Your incredible generosity not only covered the cost of camp for Ryan, but also paid for transportation costs, needed clothes, and even his required camp physical. Your gifts have been an answered prayer to my family. Through this camp, we pray that Ryan is able to learn skills that he simply cannot learn from home. These skills will help him tremendously as he prepares to transition into college in August of 2021. Because this camp is designed to provide small group settings, they will have to make very few adjustments to make sure all campers and staff stay safe due to COVID-19. He will attend camp from June 20-July 2. Please pray during this time that he gain insight and understanding that will help him grow into the young man God has created him to be.

With Humbling Gratitude, Jennifer Whitehead



BACKPACK MINISTRY



Throughout this time of uncertainty with school needs and schedules, our Neighborhood Ministry elder, Lynn Denny, has been staying in touch with our local elementary school, Rosa Taylor, to learn and understand their current needs, from dropping off chips for distribution, to simply encouraging staff, Northminster is here to serve our community.

Christmas In July

For the last seven years, you have graciously supported Northminster's Backpack Ministry, which primarily provides nourishment for Rosa Taylor Elementary students who are experiencing food insufficiency.



In addition to providing nourishment and school supplies, we also provide items that the school nurse requests, such as underwear and socks. Our members also help to keep the school clothes closet organized.

This ministry will continue to serve Rosa Taylor and its students to the best of our ability throughout the upcoming year. Some changes to what we can provide for the school, such as extra soap or Clorox wipes, will be integrated into our backpack program. We are simply here to fill a need for the school in whatever capacity God has called us to fill.

The entire month of July, you will have the opportunity to help combat these needs. Stay tuned for more information in your upcoming bulletins, emails and July Newsletter!

GOOD SAM

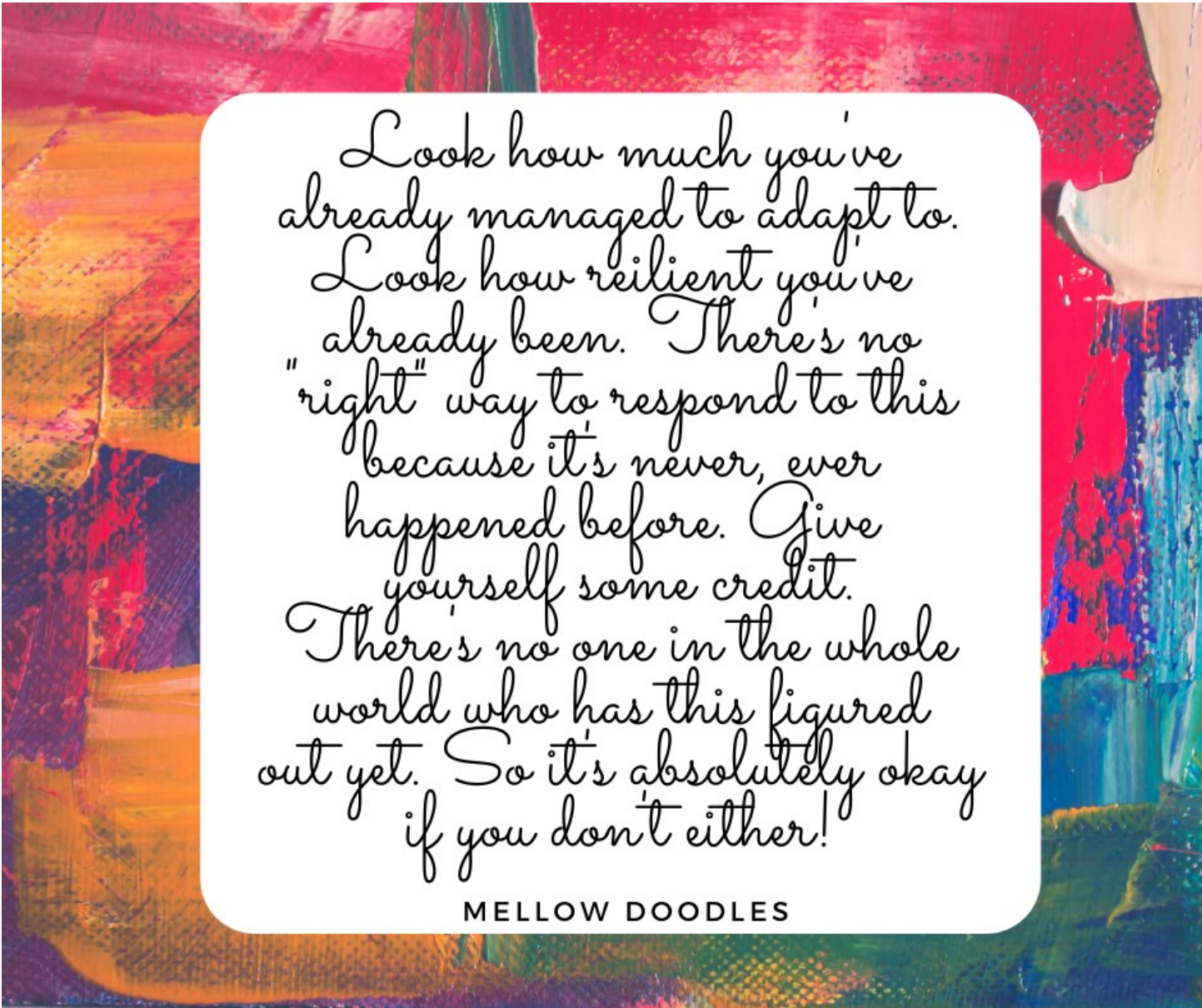


The scripture tells us to "love your neighbor as yourself." What better way could you love your neighbor than helping them in times of need. The Good Samaritan Offering does this for the needs in our community and for the needs of our congregation. **In these recent months, the office staff have not been able to take calls as they normally would. However, Centenary Community ministries has been able to modify it's ability to assist the community. Because of stipulations set forth for receipt of the recent government stimulus checks, many individuals would not be able to receive these needed funds. Centenary has been able to assist over 50 people with signing up for their stimulus check.** Thank you for your generous support of the needy people in our community!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Your Session conducted it's **third** meeting by teleconference with good humor and reflection on "where our congregation is being led" to do God's work. The day we worship together again is inching closer, and we praise God for his holy presence during this most unusual time.

- **Great News:** Our dear friend, Benjamin Gail, has returned to work with renewed vigor and improved health. Thanks be to God!
- **Blessings:** Session members expressed deep appreciation for **Ralph, Jennifer, and Sandy** for their ministry to us all. Members have witnessed their commitment, discernment, creativity and God given talents to allow us to shelter in place.
- **Worship:** After spirited discussion and careful consideration, the Session voted to adhere to the Governor's orders for reopening. The current 'shelter' order expires on June 12, so hopefully our doors will be flung open on **Sunday, June 14**. We will continue to **video the services** in case members or guests don't feel comfortable about worshipping together. Plans will be in place to **practice CDC guidelines for social distancing/wearing of masks/limiting contact**. The congregation will receive explicit directions that will help all of us to stay healthy. (Elder Sam Alderman)
- **Neighborhood:** The committee is coordinating with the administration at Rosa Taylor Elementary about ways Northminster can effectively help during the next school year. In May snacks were donated for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. (Elder Lynn Denny)
- **Outreach and Mission:** The '40 Days of Food' project continues to be a blessing to Loaves and Fishes Ministry as they provide extra support during the Covid-19 period. Our collaboration with Centenary Community Ministries through our **Good Samaritan** fund has been a blessing to many people dealing with unusually hard times. (Elder Judy Hill)
- **Congregational Care:** This committee has been tirelessly working to minister to members facing health issues and reaching out to uplift spirits. (Elder Sandra Ridgeway)
- **Property:** Plans are being finalized for the purchase of new pew cushions in the sanctuary. (Elder Beau Kitchens)
- As we return to a new normal, plans are ready for **Youth Discipleship** (Elder Ann Weaver), **Adult Discipleship** (Elder Charlotte Nolan), and **Membership** (Elder Emily Brown).



Look how much you've
already managed to adapt to.
Look how resilient you've
already been. There's no
"right" way to respond to this
because it's never, ever
happened before. Give
yourself some credit.
There's no one in the whole
world who has this figured
out yet. So it's absolutely okay
if you don't either!

MELLOW DOODLES

WAYS TO GIVE

Although the way we worship on Sundays has undergone a temporarily drastic change, our church continues to be blessed with the strength and love of its members, that which truly makes up the church itself. We are encouraged by your acts of giving. You give of your time and talents by making phone calls, picking up extra groceries for those who cannot leave home, and praying for those in need of God's peace and strength. Thank you for continuing to be the church outside of our building's walls. As you prayerfully continue financial gifts, we want to make sure you're aware of all available methods of giving. You can always mail your gift to the church at 565 Wimbish Rd. Macon, GA 31210. You may also give online through the NPC website at northminstermacon.org, through the Give+ App, or by scanning this QR code with your phone.



Again, we thank you for your incredible outpouring of love during these strange times. You, the church, rise to the challenge of giving your time, talents, and finances even in times of trials! Blessings upon you.