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NORTHMINSTER *Life*

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

It's hard to believe July is upon us. That's right is time for our yearly **CHRISTMAS IN JULY** campaign to raise money and in-kind donations for our **BACKPACK MINISTRY**. This year, we plan to provide **20 ROSA TAYLOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS** with a bag of food each weekend during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, we plan to provide those 20 students with school supplies to start the year off right. We are also adding a **SUPPLY CLOSET** on Rosa Taylor's campus to provide students and teachers items they need but might not be able to afford.



Each Sunday during July, will have a table in the narthex for you to drop off a check or cash and your in-kind donations. This year, we are ALSO asking for in-kind donations. Here is the twist... we will have a challenge between the youth and the adults to see which group can bring in the most items. We ask that the **YOUTH** bring in **SCHOOL SUPPLIES** from the list below. **ADULTS**, we ask you to bring **FOOD ITEMS** from the list below. Whichever group - youth or adult, that brings in the most items wins bragging rights. However, it's the Rosa Taylor students who will benefit most. We look forward to our annual **CHRISTMAS IN JULY** event. Thank you in advance Northminster Family!
Love, your Neighborhood Committee

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- 24 pack Crayola crayons
- Crayola washable markers
- Colored pencils
- Pencil box/bag
- Highlighters
- Wooden yellow #2 pencils (box of 12)
- White Elmer's glue & glue sticks
- Scissors
- Wide-ruled notebook paper
- Black and white composition notebook
- Wide-ruled spiral single notebook
- Laminated folders with pockets/prongs
- Package of cap erasers
- Index cards (3 x 5 or 5 x 8)
- Multiplication flash cards

BACKPACK FOOD ITEMS

(all items are to be individually packaged)

- **PROTEIN ITEMS** (such as Ramen noodles, mac-n-cheese cups, Chef Boyardee noodle cups)
- **MILK** (Horizon organic boxes)
- **BREAKFAST ITEMS** (such as packs of grits/oatmeal/cereal, granola/cereal bars)
- **SNACKS** (such as Nutri-grain bars, cheese crackers, peanut butter crackers, pudding cups)
- **FRUIT** (applesauce cups, fruit cups)
- **JUICES** (fruit juice in boxes or pouches)

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MUSIC NOTES

"Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, Abide with me."

"Lo! The hosts of evil round us scorn thy Christ, assail His ways! Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days."

"Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; Thou my soul's shelter and Thou my high tower; Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power."

We may not be singing together during this time, but hymns are great resources to find words of comfort and strength when facing uncertain and difficult times. Former choir member, Susan Simpson, emailed me a link to "The Irish Blessing" recently, and I have been so blessed by viewing it several times. I wanted to pass along the link to you so that you may also be blessed and take a moment to bathe in the beauty of the music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TascsWZPj8U&t=9s>

Be Blessed! Stay Safe!

LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR



Paradoxically, I believe, the more Divine an encounter, the less able you are to talk about it. The degree to which one finds it difficult to describe with any comprehensiveness a spiritual moment — much less to explain it or defend its veracity — that inertia in reporting it is often the very measure of its holiness.

Several conversations of late have me thinking again about remarkable divine encounters.

The small ones that cross our paths any given day, yes; but also the occasional, unprecedented, even once-in-a-lifetime disruptions that so alter our experience of living that we are left without enough words to make any sense of it to those around us. "Go and tell what you've seen and heard," Jesus tells his disciples. But that reporting of the remarkable is often the riskiest part. One is reluctant to share what can so easily be misunderstood; yet one also comes to realize that one cannot keep quiet about never going back to the way things were.

The pricked conscience. The course-altering summons. The voice in the ear or across the room. The timely but illusive stranger. The inexplicable peace right in the middle of calamity. When your breath has been taken away, spiritually speaking, you'll likely later find it hard to make words in your windpipe that anyone can really understand. They will try to comprehend, because they love you. But they will also softly suggest a dozen other explanations for the round peg of your beatific vision in this world of endless square holes.

So be it. If you are the steward of such a moment, simply choose to carry it forward in your life and — for God's sake (truly) — don't overthink it. Trust it first, verify it later. In fact, the verification will only come as you step out into the unknown, knowing only what you now know in your bones. Our educated brains are hard-wired to analyze and analyze until a moment is dismantled and you've talked yourself out of just about everything, even your own existence.

"Don't cast your pearls before swine," Jesus teaches us. That seems harsh, perhaps, when talking about others. It is not so much that he is calling all the persons in your life pigs; rather, it is his exaggerating reminder that often the custom necklace of a divine visitation simply doesn't fit as well around someone else's neck. Not everyone has the ears to hear what you yourself would not have heard before you heard it. Maybe the moment was just for you; probably it was just what you needed, when you needed it. It is a pearl of great price. It is very likely irredeemable for the currency of widespread understanding. Carry it forward in your life the way of mother carries a child, the way a boy clutches a coin. Honor it, protect it, cherish it. It will go with you for the balance of your days.

Finally, do not fret if, unlike John Wesley, your heart has never been "strangely warmed." God's bumps go bump in the nights of those who need them. Nothing out of the ordinary may just mean that no bumps are yet needed in your "long obedience in the same direction." Carry on. Follow Jesus. Love the Lord. Love those around you. Those are often all the encounters any of us need, until we need something more.

Besides, there is a real sense that, as his Church, we are, all of us, stewards of the strangest of stories, that biggest of bumps, that glow of history. Jesus himself is the strange and sacred story we steward as his society. We likely know we are on the right path when, more often not, we get deferential but strange looks from our neighbors. After all, he has a funny way of casting his singing swine before the pearls of hungry hearts.

RWH

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Thanks to the efforts of sponsor, Riley Brown, and elder, Sandra Ridgeway, Northminster saints were able to have a wonderful time of fellowship at the June 28th cake & ice cream social. Thanks also goes to the youth for helping to serve. We hope to continue efforts to hold safe social gatherings for our church family in the coming months.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

From June 15, 2020 Meeting

Your Session rejoiced at meeting in person once again! While we were socially distanced and using common sense, we were blessed to be together.

After the service on **August 16**, Northminster will hold a **congregational meeting** to elect a Nominating Committee for the purpose of choosing a slate of elders for 2021-2022.

Neighborhood Committee (Elder Lynn Denny)

- The annual **'Christmas in July' fundraiser** is underway! Donations will assist with nourishment for children living with food insecurity. Also, needed school supplies and sanitary items will be provided.
- Chick-Fil-A gift cards will be distributed to the entire staff at Rosa Taylor Elementary to show our appreciation for service, particularly during difficult times.

Outreach (Elder Judy Hill)

- **Loaves and Fishes Ministry**, with the help of many Northminster volunteers and our ongoing monetary support, continues to provide groceries and meals, GA identification and birth certificate assistance, prescription assistance, and expanded hygiene facilities for people experiencing difficult times.
- **Habitat for Humanity's** 'Faith Build' house is well underway in Macon. NPC is blessed to be a part of this ministry.
- The **Good Samaritan** ministry continues to witness to those in need of assistance by supporting Centenary Community Ministry. Member Bonnie Diboll oversees this mission.

Youth Ministry (Elder Ann Weaver)

- Plans are being made for youth activities for the remainder of the year.
- During the summer, the youth have enjoyed virtual meetings and an outing to AmStar for a private screening of 'Wonder Woman'.

Adult Ministry (Elder Charlotte Nolan)

- Sunday School and Bible Study are on 'hold' until the Session feels it is wise to resume.
- Likewise, trips to the monastery in Conyers and to the Antiquities Center in LaGrange will be rescheduled.

Congregational Care (Elder Sandra Ridgeway)

- Sympathy is extended to Sharon Sulkers and to Andy and Shelby Duffy for their recent losses.
- We rejoice that several members are feeling better after surgery or illness.
- Riley Brown feels so blessed that he sponsored an 'Ice Cream Social' on the church lawn in June. **Thank you, Riley!**

• The **Church Picnic** is scheduled for October 18. If you can offer suggestions for this annual event that consider social distancing, hygiene, and fellowship, please contact Emily.

Property Committee (Elder Beau Kitchens) has been hard at work keeping our "house" in order.

- New pew cushions have been ordered and should arrive in early fall.
- A new video camera and equipment have been purchased to assist with recording church services.
- LED lights are scheduled to be installed in the Activity Room.
- The church library has been reorganized! Check it out.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEGE GRADUATES

We want to wish our following 2020 college graduates the best as they pursue their careers.

Hamilton Hirsh

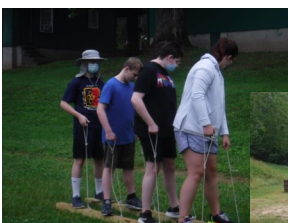
Georgia Institute of Technology graduate, Class of 2020 with a BBA in Finance and Real Estate Development. He is living in Atlanta and is looking forward to a career with a major real estate development company.

William "Billy" Maley

UGA graduate- Class of 2020 with a degree in Biology, with dreams of attending Medical School. He has applied to Medical College of Georgia and has been placed on the waiting list. Billy will take a gap year off and is currently interviewing for positions in medical offices. He will apply to more medical schools for the 2021 acceptance.

RYAN WHITEHEAD AT TALISMAN SUMMER CAMP

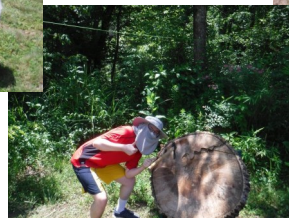
Ryan is having a wonderful time at camp in the North Carolina mountains! I can't wait to pick him up Thursday, July 2nd. I've missed his stinky-teen-boy bear hugs. Prior to leaving for camp, I purchased a sun hat for Ryan that would not only keep his adorably pale complexion safe from burns, but has optional front and back guards to help keep the bugs away from his ears (something he's very sensitive to). Apparently, he LOVES his hat. If you're not sure which child is him, simply look for the grey sun hat. His dad and I have decided we're going to make a memory album for him called: Summer Adventures of Ryan and Hat. I hope these photos show you not only that Ryan is having a wonderful time doing everything from team-building activities, art, archery, axe throwing, hiking, canoeing, and more, but that they also give you an image of his amazing personality. We cannot thank you enough, Northminster family, for giving him this opportunity. Love, Jennifer



Learning teamwork



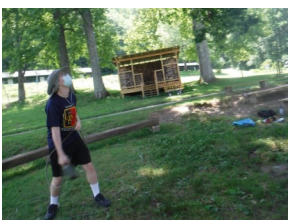
Perhaps growing up in the country is working to his advantage.



Yes, he's happier cleaning than touching "icky" things. (They were tie-dying)



Art & fun with friends (he wrote home to say he led a game of Dungeons and Dragons).



Learning new skills



This is his, "I'm working really hard to enjoy the 'out-of-doors'" face.



Here, he didn't have to try so hard to enjoy it... and yes, the hat still got to enjoy this adventure, even over the helmet..



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!

PUTTING THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE

It's all about Attitude

(Author Unknown)

I woke up early today, excited over all I get to do before the clock strikes midnight. I have responsibilities to fulfill today. I am important. My job is to choose what kind of day I am going to have. Today, I can complain because the weather is rainy or...

I can be thankful the grass is getting watered for free.

Today, I can feel sad that I don't have more money or...

I can be glad my finances encourage me to plan my purchases wisely and guide me away from waste.

Today, I can grumble about my health or...

I can rejoice that I am alive.

Today, I can lament over all my parents didn't give me when I was growing up or...

I can feel grateful they allowed me to be born.

Today, I can cry because roses have thorns or...

I can celebrate that thorns have roses.

Today, I can mourn my lack of friends or...

I can excitedly embark upon a quest to discover new relationships.

Today, I can whine because I have to go to work or...

I can shout for joy because I have a job to do.

Today, I can complain because I have to go to school or...

I can eagerly open my mind and fill it with rich new tidbits of knowledge.

Today, I can murmur dejectedly because I have to do housework or...

I can feel honored because God has provided shelter for my mind, body and soul.

I get to play a big part into what kind of day I will have!

-excerpt from "The GoodNews Weekly" year 16, week 39

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 trails! Blessings upon you.