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NORTHMINSTER *Life*

LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR

"We're all Televangelists, now!"

A colleague of mine recently dropped that remark, and I laughed along with him. Tis' true! (Is this the right time to ask the session for a Learjet? I mean, my commute to the office is really challenging.) Alas, I have enjoyed preparing worship for God and for you each week through a technological medium, inner Geek that I am. But here's my truth: I'd trade a hundred terabytes of memory and all the software in the land to see your faithful faces and hear your Easter singing in our Sunday room. Absence does indeed make the heart grow fonder — this pastor's heart, at least. Even so, we carry on for now via telecommunication. How long? Still not sure. But you will be the first to know.



I do continue to pray that this time is somehow redemptive for us all, that even the seclusion and stay-at-home-ness of this season is not wasted on our souls. To be sure, that most of us can see this time is mostly a mere interruption: that is a great privilege we should not overlook. It goes without saying that, for many on the globe, this virus is not mere interruption. But we have been spared the worst of it so far, and in that light, being stewards of our lives as we have them, I do pray that these weeks have somehow given us space to embrace more roundly the good hope of the resurrection. And not just in our heads, as we think about the Story and marvel at the Mystery. Also in our hearts, as we seek to be brave in love and courageous in compassion and truthful in our speech and generous with our time. And also in our souls, as we choose hope over despair, choosing to look ahead in final victory rather than to be chained to the defeats of the past, or the frustrations and friction of the present.

To that end, here's a lovely prayer from the Presbyterian tradition:

Lord of life, submitting to death, you conquered the grave. By being lifted on a cross, you draw all peoples to you. By being raised from the dead, you restore to humanity all that we had lost through sin. Throughout these fifty days of Easter we proclaim the marvelous mystery of death and resurrection. For all praise is yours, now and throughout eternity. Amen.

May it be so Saints, this week and every week to follow. You are loved. RWH

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 the month of March, Centenary used some of our contributions to assist 4 different families with their utility bills and one family with their meds.** Thank you for your generous support of the needy people in our community!

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MUSIC NOTES



I hope this finds each of you staying safe and healthy! While we are hearing a lot of information about ways to remain healthy and avoid getting sick with the Coronavirus, did you know that singing also delivers benefits which help us to maintain our health and well being. I was given a newsletter article written by friend and fellow organist, Jane Kimbrel, who serves Perry UMC as their Organist and Music Director. She had received an article written by Jaime Babbitt, "Your Brain and Singing: Why Singing in a Choir Makes You Happier" which highlights these benefits:

- Singing helps regulate mood, social behaviors and appetite
- Singing heals and helps regulate the immune system
- Singing diminishes pain and triggers an analgesic feeling in the body
- Singers have more connections between the right and left brain
- Singers suffer depression less frequently
- Singers tend to participate in multiple other activities.
- Music uplifts and empowers
- Music regulates the brain's pleasure and reward centers

If you are feeling in need of some extra health benefits, try singing! These are benefits you can experience right in your own home as you shelter in place. And then, once we all come back together again in our worship space, we invite you to continue singing in our choir, as we Sing for joy to the Lord! (Used with permission.)

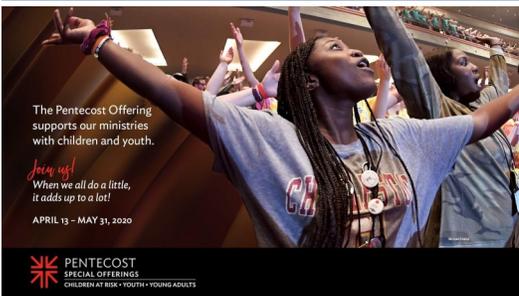
WAYS TO GIVE

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.

PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING



Help youth begin life with a solid foundation of faith. Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life. By receiving the Pentecost Offering, you are nurturing the faith of those who are the church to come - children, youth, and young adults. 25% of offering is kept by the congregation.

THANK YOU, CHURCH FAMILY

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the many acts of kindness and love this church offered me after my sister (Carole Hays Holland) passed away from cancer on April 3rd. Due to this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 virus, and our lack of regular church service, your thoughtfulness has brought me special blessings. There are no adequate words to express the gratitude I have felt for your prayers, cards, e-mails, phone calls, and visitations (with social distancing). I'll never forget the respect you have so lovingly extended. My thank you seems so small, but it comes from my heart.

Lynn Davis

BEING STILL

Although our halls are currently filled with the stillness of restful silence, we will be returning to a schedule of normalcy as soon as we are able. Below is a listing of current cancellations that we plan to resume at a time that is yet to be determined:

Sunday Worship	Bell Choir	Chancel Choir	Communion at Carlyle
Sunday Connections	Lunch Bunch	Men's Lunch	Women's Bible Study
Youth Gatherings	Prayer Group		

We will continue to keep you updated as to the schedule of activities via the monthly newsletter and weekly emails. If you, or anyone you know, would like to be added to our email list, please contact Jennifer at 478-477-6646 or admin@northminstermacon.org.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

We will **continue** to rejoice in the assurance that we can worship together again in the not too distant future! Until then, let's be thankful for our ability to communicate electronically and lift each other up from a "social distance". Your Session conducted its second meeting by teleconference with good humor and reflection on "where our congregation is being led" to do God's work.

- **Good News:** Our dear friend, **Benjamin Gail**, continues to be lifted up in prayer as he regains his strength at home.
- **Worship** – As we are nudged (or pushed) to become 'tech savvy', our online presence is such a blessing. NPC services are reaching beyond our congregation as we continue to minister during these unusual times. 'Amazing' describes our incredible staff and their hearts for service. (Elder Sam Alderman)
- **Neighborhood** – Plans are underway for extending our reach to assist students and faculty at Rosa Taylor Elementary. Because of your generosity, Backpack Ministry is ready to help when school resumes. We hope to assist more with providing needed school and sanitary supplies, tutoring, and unexpected clothing needs. (Elder Lynn Denny)
- **Outreach** – Loaves and Fishes Ministry is working with a consortium of homeless advocacy entities, Emergency Management, and county government to assist the homeless effectively. Lunches and snacks are provided several days each week from the L&F site. Food items for '40 Days of Giving' are being collected for L&F, and many members donated needed sanitary/protective items for medical providers. Thanks to **Donna Shuford!** (Elder Judy Hill)
- **Adult Discipleship** – The day trip to the Biblical History Center in LaGrange is being planned for later this year. Brian Whitfield will teach a Sunday School class this fall. (Elder Charlotte Nolan)
- **Youth Discipleship** – Video conferences with our youth are being planned for Sunday evenings until our youth are able to meet in person again. The mission trip to Thornwell Home is planned for July 26-29. (Elder Ann Weaver)
- **Congregational Care** – **Carol Holt's** face masks are making their mark in keeping us all healthy. Thanks, Carol! The "Helping Hands" volunteers have been busy helping members with home projects, practicing social distancing. (Elder Sandra Ridgeway)
- **Membership** - Several more regular visitors have expressed a desire to join our congregation, when we return to a new normal. (Elder Emily Brown)
- **Property** – New pew cushions will be ordered soon. A video doorbell has been ordered for the security of staff members. Estimates for energy efficient lighting/ceiling tile replacement for the activity room are being gathered for consideration. (Elder Beau Kitchens)

SUMMER CALENDAR & OFFICE SCHEDULE, FROM JENNIFER

Oh, how I would love to include a beautifully organized calendar of NPC events for this May newsletter! But, alas, we must simply wait, living each day as it comes. Perhaps this is one of the purposes God has—forcing us to take time to seek and honor Him within the absence of busy-ness. As Pastor Ralph stated, you will be the first to know when events and gatherings are to resume and in what way they will be held. As for the church office hours, I am maintaining hours as close to our regular 9:00am-1:00pm Monday through Friday as possible. However, due to the current work at hand, these hours will remain flexible. I will sometimes be in the office outside of these hours, and will sometimes be working outside of the office during these hours.