



# NORTHMINSTER

## *Presbyterian Church*

February 7, 2021

10:30am

### GATHERING

Welcome

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prelude

*Aria on "Jewels"*

Dale Wood

Call to Worship — based on Psalm 147

Hallelujah!

It's a good thing to sing praise to our God;  
praise is beautiful, praise is fitting.

**God's the one who rebuilds our lives,  
who regathers any scattered exiles.**

God heals the heartbroken  
and bandages their wounds.

**God counts the stars  
and assigns each a name.**

Our Lord is great, with limitless strength;  
we'll never comprehend what God knows and does.

**Sing to God a thanksgiving hymn,  
play music on your instruments to God.**

It's a good thing to sing praise to our God;  
praise is beautiful, praise is fitting.

**Hallelujah!**

Morning Prayer



A might - y for - tress is our God, a bul - wark nev - er fail - ing.  
 Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv - ing would be los - ing,  
 And though this world, with dev - ils filled, should threat - en to un - do us,  
 That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, no thanks to them, a - bid - eth.



Our help - er he, a - mid the flood of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.  
 were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choos - ing.  
 we will not fear for God hath willed his truth to tri - umph through us.  
 The Spir - it and the gifts are ours through him who with us sid - eth.



For still our an - cient foe doth seek to work us woe.  
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is he.  
 The Prince of Dark - ness grim, we trem - ble not for him.  
 Let goods and kin - dred go, this mor - tal life al - so.



His craft and pwer are great, and armed with cru - el hate,  
 Lord Sab - a - oth his name, from age to age the same,  
 His rage we can en - dure, for lo, his doom is sure.  
 The bod - y thy may kill; God's truth a - bid - eth still.



on earth is not his e - qual.  
 and he must win the bat - tle.  
 One lit - tle word shall fell him.  
 His king - dom is for - ev - er.

Call to Confession — based on Isaiah 30

**In repentance and rest is our salvation,  
 in quietness and trust is our strength.  
 The Lord longs to be gracious to us.  
 The Lord rises to show us compassion.  
 For the Lord is God of justice.  
 Blessed are all who wait for God.**

Prayers of Confession

Eternal and merciful God, you have loved us with a love beyond our understanding,  
 and you have set us on paths of righteousness for your name's sake.

**Yet how often we have strayed from your good way;  
 how often we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
 through what we have done and what we have left undone.  
 As we remember the lavish gift of your grace  
 symbolized in the waters of baptism, O God,  
 we praise you and give you thanks that you forgive us yet again.**

Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin, and to rise daily to new life in Christ,  
 who lives and reigns with you, and in whose strong name we offer our silent prayers ...

Assurance of Forgiveness

Interlude

*Come Thou Fount*  
Rebecca Layfield, soprano

arr. Craig Courtney

\*Signs of Peace

**LISTENING**

Prayers of the People

Scripture

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Hymn #458

*Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet*

Refrain

Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my path. Thy word is a

6 lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my path. *Fine* When I feel a - fraid, and I

10 think I've lost my way, still you're there right be - side me. Noth - ing will I fear as

14 long as you are near. Please be near me to the end. *To Refrain*

Scripture

Isaiah 40:21-31

Sermon

**Diamonds in the Rough:** God Strengthens the Weak

**DEPARTING**

\*Hymn #716

*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and end - less store,  
Skills and time are ours for press - ing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:  
Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through powers your grace con - ferred:

na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's shat - tered door:  
all at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the church made one.  
ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the gos - pel word.

gift - ed by you, we turn to you, of - fer - ing up our - selves in praise;  
Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor, lest we strive for self a - lone.  
O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing, as we heed Christ's age - less call,

thank - ful song shall rise for - ev - er, gra - cious do - nor of our days.  
Born with tal - ents, make us ser - vants fit to an - swer at your throne.  
heal - ing, teach - ing, and re - claim - ing, serv - ing you by lov - ing all.

Question 1. What is God's purpose for your life?

**God wills that I should live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit.**

Question 2. How do you live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?

**I am not my own. I have been bought with a price. The Lord Jesus Christ loved me and gave himself for me. I entrust myself completely to his care, giving thanks each day for his wonderful goodness.**

Question 3. How do you live for the love of God?

**I love because God first loved me. God loves me in Christ with a love that never ends. Amazed by grace, I no longer live for myself. I live for the Lord who died and rose again, triumphant over death, for my sake. Therefore, I take those around me to heart, especially those in particular need, knowing that Christ died for them no less than for me.**

\*Benediction

\*Response

Northumbria Community

**May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever he may send you. May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm. May he bring you home rejoicing at the wonders he has shown you. May he bring you home rejoicing, once again into our doors.**

Postlude

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## Information & Announcements

### Welcome to our guests!

Whether you are sharing in the worship of God with us for the first time, visiting with family or friends, or returning for a visit to your home church, we welcome you today in the name of Jesus. Please share some contact information with us so we can follow up with you and make a place for you in our weekly fellowship. You may email our church office at [admin@northminstermacon.org](mailto:admin@northminstermacon.org).

### Pastoral Care

Pastor Ralph welcomes and encourages opportunities to share in fellowship, pastoral conversation, and spiritual discernment. He keeps office hours most mornings at the church, but is always available by appointment. You are always welcome to call or text at 478-250-3355 or to reach out by email: [pastorhawkins@northminstermacon.org](mailto:pastorhawkins@northminstermacon.org)

### Lectionary Readings

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39  
Transfiguration of the Lord – 2 Kings 2:12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

### PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have a need or a request for prayer, please contact the church office.

Current Member Concerns: Ann R. Smith; Karen Jones; Jewel James; Ann Hall; Jane Ebey; John Hurst; Jon Geerlings; Mary Ann Ellis; Kathy Wheeler; Shelby Duffy; Fran Mayhew; Betty Barlow; Suzann Smith; Jack Gleaton; Donna Shuford; Frank Clark

Current Friends and Family Concerns: Margaret Yawn; Donna Carole Kitchens; Nelda Crow; Kirk Knox; Chrissy and Ronnie Hill

Military Personnel Prayer List: Austin Riley; T. Wright Goodwin, IV; James C Watwood; Joshua Sulkers

## NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our calling at Northminster is to make disciples, to grow in faith together, and to serve others in Christ.

CONGREGATION: Ministers of the Good News

SESSION of Ruling Elders: Kari Alderman; Emily Brown; Lynn Denny; Roland Hill; Jan Hirsh; Beau Kitchens; Melissa McDougald; Charlotte Nolan; Sandra Ridgeway; Minor Vernon

RALPH HAWKINS, Pastor and Teaching Elder PAUL EVANS, Parish Associate

SANDRA SMITH, Music Director KAREN JONES, Clerk of Session

BENJAMIN GAIL, Sexton JENNIFER WHITEHEAD, Ministry Assistant

**Office hours this week:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00-1:00; the office will be closed Wednesday, Feb. 10





**Jesus Mural of Faith, Hope, Love, and Peace**  
located in Chicago, Illinois  
from Art in the Christian Tradition  
a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

## Monday Morning

Do you not know?  
Were you not told long ago?  
Have you not heard how the world began?  
It was made by the one who sits on his throne  
above the earth and beyond the sky;  
the people below look as tiny as ants.  
He stretched out the sky like a curtain,  
like a tent in which to live.  
He brings down powerful rulers  
and reduces them to nothing.  
They are like young plants,  
just set out and barely rooted.  
When the Lord sends a wind,  
they dry up and blow away like straw.  
To whom can the holy God be compared?  
Is there anyone else like him?  
Look up at the sky!  
Who created the stars you see?  
The one who leads them out like an army,  
he knows how many there are  
and calls each one by name!  
His power is so great—  
not one of them is ever missing!  
Israel, why then do you complain  
that the Lord doesn't know your troubles  
or care if you suffer injustice?  
Don't you know? Haven't you heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God;  
he created all the world.  
He never grows tired or weary.  
No one understands his thoughts.  
He strengthens those who are weak and tired.  
Even those who are young grow weak;  
young people can fall exhausted.  
But those who trust in the Lord for help  
will find their strength renewed.  
They will rise on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not get weary;  
they will walk and not grow weak.

[The season of] Epiphany, the disclosure of God in the world, invites the church to reflect upon God, God's goodness and greatness. It takes God not as a means toward something else, but as a wondrous end in God's own person. An epiphany-focused church might well be dazzled by God and intoxicated by God, so that its whole life is an exuberant doxology: "How great thou art!" The Isaiah text and the psalm for today are unfettered praise, contrasting this powerful God with would-be alternatives that are anemic and dysfunctional. Yet the reality of God, in the biblical tradition, never permits doxology that stays remote from lived reality. Paul's self-disclosure offers us a person of faith who is deeply smitten with this new gospel reality. His life is gospel-driven, in compulsion that makes Paul courageous, and in freedom that makes Paul joyous. Folk cannot stay long around the doxology-evoking reality of God without re-deciding about their own future. God's transformative healing power displaces people, and requires redeployment of our selves and our common life, to be deployed now in liberated obedience.

*Text for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary*

It seemed that they had slipped off the divine radar — that the God of Israel had abandoned them. Their despair is challenged by questions the prophet sets before them, such as: "Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'?" It is also challenged by a big-picture perspective on God's majesty, manifest in the creation. The exile was a critical time for reflection on the God of history and creation. A sovereign God at work in sustaining of the cosmos is surely also at work in the course of history, renewing the people's strength and empowering them in the present. Thus, Isaiah speaks powerfully of the God who from the beginning established heaven and earth, and who even now "brings princes to naught" and "strengthens the powerless."

Roger Gench — Looking into the Lectionary — outlook.org

Strengthen me, O God, by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit; grant me to be strengthened with might in the inner man, and to put away from my heart all useless anxiety and distress, and let me never be drawn aside by various longings after anything whatever, whether it be worthless or precious; but may I regard all things as passing away, and myself as passing away with them.

Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)

## Look Beyond

But through the grace of God, contemplation—true contemplation—does not depend on you. You are not the dawn, you are the land that awaits the dawn.

Your God is the dawn, and later he is full daylight, and later still high noon.

You are the land that waits for the light, the blackboard that waits for the white chalk of the draughtsman who walks towards you with that chalk in his hand. Sit down and try to be still; sit still and try to hope. Leave behind you time, space, number, thought, reason, culture, and look ahead.

Look beyond yourself, beyond your helplessness and your limitations, and wait.

Your heart has been tried by suffering and darkness; now allow it to stop relying on the earth it is leaving.

Let your tears flow, to water the arid land of your faith.

Persevere.

Do not think of anything else. God is before you.

God is coming to you.

Contemplation is not a matter of watching, but of being watched, and he is there watching you.

And if he is watching you, he loves you, and in loving you, he gives what you are looking for: himself.

What other gift could there be for one who had searched so hard.

Our heart is so hard to satisfy.

God alone can fill it.

Things never can.

Carlo Carretto, from *In Search of the Beyond*, 1975

Could I have forgotten what are the sources of refreshment? Entrusting cares and opponents to God sets free new energy—enables us to look beyond situations, and beyond persons. It is then, perhaps, that we touch a fragment of eternity?

Brother Roger Schutz, 1973  
from the Taizé Christian community in France



## **Your 2021 Elder Leadership**

\*Please contact the church office (admin@northminstermacon.org or 478-477-6646) for elder contact information.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD – Lynn Denny**

- discerning ministry needs
- developing a presence
- fostering hospitality
- enhancing connections

### **OUTREACH & MISSION – Kari Alderman**

- directing budget giving
- providing ministry opportunities
- planning special mission offerings
- fostering international connections

### **ADULT DISCIPLESHIP – Charlotte Nolan**

- directing adult Sunday School
- planning adult Bible studies
- planning special speakers & events

### **YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP – Melissa McDougald**

- providing for youth group
- directing children and youth Sunday School
- fostering generational fellowship

### **CONGREGATIONAL CARE – Sandra Ridgeway**

- supporting persons and families in times of distress, need or grief

### **MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT – Emily Brown**

- integrating new members
- utilizing time and talents
- directing stewardship emphasis
- fostering communication

### **WORSHIP – Jan Hirsh**

- providing for worship, music, preaching & sacraments

### **FINANCE – Minor Vernon**

- directing annual budget
- planning special capital offerings

### **PROPERTY – Beau Kitchens**

- planning for short and long-term needs
- overseeing buildings, property & furnishings

### **PERSONNEL – Roland Hill**

- directing & supporting paid staff
- facilitating Teaching Elder partnership

### **CLERK OF SESSION – Karen Jones**