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# NORTHMINSTER *Life*



## WORDS FROM YOUR PASTOR

"Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away."

I've lately been thinking a lot about those great words from Henry Van Dyke's classic hymn "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" — one of my favorites. His image of an unfolding, reopening blossom resonates with me right about now, as we continue to move beyond the long strange season of pandemic isolation and toward a new normal of congregational life.

"Hearts unfold like flowers before thee." Indeed, how good it has felt to come back to some sense of the familiar in our fellowship. How good it has been to see pews, empty for nearly a year, filling again with our members and friends. And as grateful as we may be for technology — live streaming, ZOOM studies, etc. — it has been good to hear our beloved organ with our own ears, hear our music intern leading us in sung prayer, and hear violin and saxophone and harp making music, in person, to God's glory.

As the "clouds of sin and sadness" related to the pandemic continue to evaporate, I'm asking our elders to commit to a time of deep discernment during our July session meeting. We are setting aside our standard meeting docket and instead creating space for reflecting on the 18 months now past. What have we learned from the pandemic season? What went well? What could we have done better? What has been clarified for us about the purpose and passion of this kirk here on Wimbish we all love.

And as the flower of our fellowship continues to "open (again) to the sun above," I'm also asking our elders to discern with me what features from our common life set aside during the pandemic need to be brought back ... and what, if any, need to lay fallow or be retired. Point is: Just as in our personal lives, it is always good to do a little cleaning and sorting — keeping some things and giving away others — after a season of challenge. I hope that if you have spiritual insight about these matters, you will share with an active elder or with me. We welcome any and all communal wisdom.

I'm glad to write here what a few weeks ago I said in worship: It remains an honor to walk with you as your pastor in this season. I could not be more proud of the way Northminster patiently and lovingly navigated the pandemic and all its problems and perils. As other pastor-colleagues have reported the stresses and strains of their flocks, I have quietly given thanks for Northminster's firm resolve and calm wisdom. Not that the year wasn't challenging, but it is an honor to shepherd a flock about which one can hold one's head up high.

Although the post-COVID future still seems unclear, there is no other place I would rather be than right here with you, walking forward in faith, "hearts unfolding before the Son above."

With much love, RWH

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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOOK

With the support of our Northminster family, your Neighborhood Committee continues to reach out to our neighbors. Last month, Carol Holt and Barbara Fatkin, made and delivered 75 goody bags for Rosa Taylor teachers and staff in appreciation for their hard work this past school year. Each month, we continue to deliver 10 goody bags to **Macon Recovers** for their clients who need hygiene items. During the summer, we are collecting gently used men's business casual and work clothes for Macon Recovers clients as well.

Since it's July now, we are excited to bring back our annual **Christmas in July** campaign to raise money for our **Backpack Ministry**. With your support, we plan to provide **20 Rosa Taylor Elementary School students** with a weekly bag of food during the school year, as well as a backpack of school supplies at the beginning of the school year. We also are continuing our **Supply Closet** to provide much-needed items students and teachers need but might not be able to afford. Since our super-shoppers can buy bulk items at low cost, we are asking for **monetary donations** to support our efforts. Each Sunday in July, you can make an online donation or drop your donation into the offering bowl at the back of the sanctuary; please earmark the funds for Backpack Ministry.

Thank you for all your support, Northminster Family!

Love, Your Neighborhood Committee (Abby Aiello, Carol Holt, Barbara Fatkin, Helene Olk, Susanne Smith, and Lynn Denny)



## BIBLE STUDY WITH BRANDON

The book of Jonah is one that is often read to young children, but rarely studied by adults. We tell the story of Jonah being swallowed by the whale but eventually he is spit out to live with God, but the story is so much more complex than that summary. This summer, join Brandon as we explore the fear, pride, fleeing, and pouting of Jonah on Wednesday evenings, 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall, from July 14 through August 4.



## NPC YOUTH

As our youth continue enjoying summers out of school, working, assisting at camps, preparing for college, and more, we maintain a flexible gathering schedule. If you have a child, grandchild, or even a friend in 6th through 12th grades, and would like to be part of the youth email updates for upcoming events and activities, please send a message to elder Melissa McDougald at [juragal@gmail.com](mailto:juragal@gmail.com).

## ALL ABOARD NORTHMINSTER!



Save this date: Saturday, October 9. Join Pastor Ralph, Ella Hawkins, and Charlotte Nolan (active elder) as we head south to Nashville, Georgia, to ride the Azalea Sprinter tourist train. A bus will leave Northminster in the morning and return us late afternoon. It will be a great day of fun and fellowship to celebrate our arrival on the other side of COVID. See <http://hawkinsrails.net/preservation/azalea/azalea.html> for pictures of the Sprinter. More details this summer!

## GOOD SAMARITAN



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. **We are continuing to assist members of our community through regular giving to Centenary Community Ministries.** Thank you for your generous support of the needy people in our community!

## VISITING THOSE WHO ARE HOMEBOUND

As more assisted living facilities begin allowing visitors, our Congregational Care committee asks that our members who are able consider visiting with some of our members who are homebound or have been more isolated this year. Covid has been especially difficult on those who have not been allowed in-person contact with friends or family. One example is Ann Smith, who always loves to see her church family. Consider making a trip out to John Wesley located at 5471 Thomaston Road. She would welcome any visitors. Other members (living at Carlyle Place) include Kay Allen, Emily Bredeson, Jane Ebey, Jon Geerling, John Hurst, Jewel James, Jane Prentice, Doris Vann, and Gail Rabai. If you would like more detail about visiting, including directions and visitor policies, please contact the church office.

## MUSIC NOTES

It is hard to believe this year is halfway over, but we have certainly been blessed with some powerful and inspiring music. July promises to be no exception. The Colony IV Brass Quintet will be back to play for us on July 4th Sunday, to celebrate the birth of our great nation. They will play a mix of festive and patriotic music, and you will not want to miss. Invite someone to join you that day, either in person or via livestream. Then at the end of the month, Pat has put together a string trio, and we will be blessed by their beautiful music.

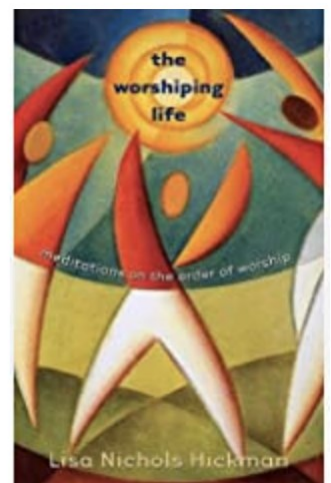
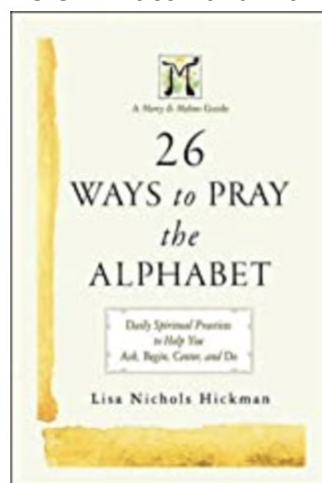
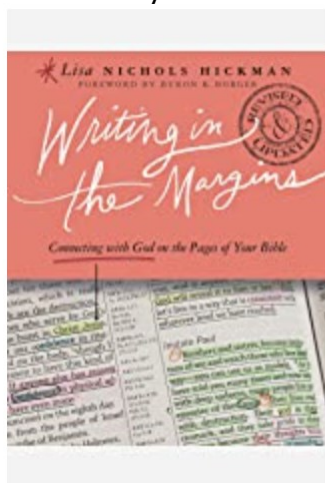
Thank you to everyone who presented music for our June services: Edward Clark and Rebecca Layfield blessed us with their musical gifts, and we were inspired by the voices of Bonnie Diboll's granddaughter, Sarah Elizabeth and her friend Dante, as they sang a lovely duet for us. Our choir will take the month of July off, and then be back with Sunday choir, beginning in August...more details on what choir will look like post-COVID, coming up in future newsletters.

Be Blessed, Sandy



## WOMEN'S RETREAT WITH DR. LISA NICHOLS HICKMAN

Our Adult Discipleship elder Charlotte Nolan and Ella Cole Alderman invite all women of all ages to mark November 12-13 on your calendars for Northminster's fall women's event. Lisa Hickman is a Presbyterian pastor in Charlotte, NC, a referent retreat speaker, and the author of several books on the Christian life. She is also a dear friend of Ralph and Ella Hawkins. She will be with us Friday evening and Saturday to lead our women's retreat at the church. Meals will be provided. Women: plan to bring your daughters and granddaughters, or your moms and grandmothers, and friends. We will also be inviting women from our sister Presbyterian churches here in Macon and Warner Robbins. More information this summer!



## THANK YOU, CHURCH FAMILY

Thank  
you



Dear Friends at Northminster,  
Thank you so much for your thoughts, prayers, food, phone calls, and cards since Frank's strokes. We have felt the prayers of our church family.  
In love and appreciation, Evelyn & Frank Clark

Thank you so very much, Church Family, for your care, concern, calls, cards and especially your prayers for my brother and his family.  
Love in Christ, Nita Mitchell

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

As our newsletters included pre-covid, we have begun including our member's and friend's birthday in our monthly editions once again. Please let Jennifer, in the church office, know if you have a birthday this month that is not listed.

July 2 - Molly Brown  
July 9 - Nita McCord  
July 21 - Catherine Woody

July 6 - Genny Whitaker  
July 11 - Frank Clark  
July 25 - Jinny McDuffie

July 7 - Donna Lambert  
July 13 - Karen Jones  
July 26 - Lala Scales

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

### Personnel (Elder Roland Hill)

Benjamin is at home and doing well. In his absence, church office hours will be flexible. Normal hours will remain 8:00-1:00 Monday through Friday, but we ask that you please call prior to coming by to ensure Jennifer is in the building.

### Finance (Elder Minor Vernon)

Endowment balance is in good shape. The church has access to some money from the Endowment interest.

### Neighborhood (Elder Lynn Denny)

Macon Recovers received monthly gift bags. A few copies of "These Days" and "USA Devotionals based on Psalms" has been donated to their Library. Donations for men's business and work clothes are needed for Macon Recovery's clients. Isabel Davis has stepped down from helping with Backpack activities. NPC will continue to provide 20 backpacks filled with school supplies and 20 food bags per week for student in need of food.

### Outreach (Elder Kari Alderman)

Plans are being put into motion to assist L&F with developing their outside space for their clients. Jake Ferro has accepted our offer to help with this plan. The cost of this project is estimated to be about \$60,000. L&F have already raised \$35,000 to help pay for the plan. NPC will plan to host a 3- 5 week Capital Campaign between August – September to help raise funds to support this effort. NPC will determine how to raise the approximately \$25,000 needed to pay for the project. Kari will be asking for volunteers to provide muscles and hands-on assistance with this project. In addition, she will be asking for a small group to help her with the logistics.

### Youth Discipleship (Elder Melissa McDougald)

Our youth and adults (Ralph, Kari and Karen) had an excellent trip to Montreat and our youths made everyone proud of their leadership and interactions with the other youth in attendance. More youth activities are being planned.

### Membership Engagement (Elder Emily Brown)

Exploring how and when the church will resume our regular social gatherings (lunches, meals, etc.)

### Adult Discipleship (Elder Charlotte Nolan)

A road trip is planned for October 9, 2021 to Azalea Sprinter in Nashville, GA. The cost per person is to be determined. Ella Cole Alderman is assisting Charlotte with the advertisement. Stay tuned for more details. Save the dates (11/13/21- 11/14/21) NPC will host a Women Daughter Retreat including our sister cluster of churches.

### Worship (Elder Jan Hirsh)

A new sign-up board to donate flowers has been placed in the narthex. Please sign-up. Monthly Communion has resumed (except for July). Jan needs 3 active elder volunteers to assist with serving communion.

### Congregational Care (Elder Sandra Ridgeway)

Updates on some of our members with on-going health challenges.