



NORTHMINSTER

Presbyterian Church

September 12, 2021

10:30am

GATHERING

Greeting

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

Prelude

Fairest Lord Jesus
Pat McCall, violin

arr. Kurt Kaiser

Opening Prayer

Call to Worship — based on Psalm 115

People of God, trust in the Lord!

God is our help and our shield.

O house of God's saints, trust in the Lord!

God is our help and our shield.

You who worship the Lord, trust in the Lord!

God is our help and our shield.

The Lord has been mindful of us; God will bless us;

God will bless God's saints today

just as God blessed the company of saints of old.

God will bless those who worship the Lord,

both small and great, noticed and unnoticed.

May you be blessed by the Lord,

who made heaven and earth.

The heavens are the Lord's heavens,

but the earth he has given to human beings.

We will bless the Lord

from this time on and forevermore!

*Hymn #612

We Praise You, O God

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator; in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you; we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.

We worship you, God of our fathers and mothers; through trial and tempest our guide you have been.

When perils o'er-take us, you will not forsake us, and with your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.

With voices united our praises we offer and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.

With you, Lord, beside us, your strong arm will guide us. To you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

CONFESSING

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**Generous God,
out of an abundance of love you created this world so well
and created us in your holy image, and gave us Jesus, a brother and friend.**

**In his name, as his people,
we confess how often we choose
silence over truth, doubt over trusting, cynicism over worship.**

**Free us from ourselves
and point us again in Jesus' direction
that our lives will shine again with the generosity of your love.**

Hear our prayers ...

Assurance of Forgiveness

Response to Forgiveness #627

I Love You, Lord

I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice to worship you; O my soul, rejoice.

Take joy, my King, in what you hear; may it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear.

*Passing of the Peace

LISTENING

Announcements and Invitations

Mission Challenges:

- Flint River Presbytery Campus Ministry Sunday
- Raise the Roof for Loaves & Fishes

Hymn #726

Will You Come and Follow Me

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Prayer for Intercession and Illumination

Scripture – Various verses (see insert)

Sermon in Words

“The generous will themselves be blessed”

DEPARTING

*Hymn #733

We All Are One in Mission

We all are one in mission; we all are one in call, our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.
A single, great commission compels us from above to plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.

We all are called for service to witness in God's name. Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:
to touch the lives of others by God's surprising grace, so every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.

Now let us be united and let our song be heard. Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word.
We all are one in mission; we all are one in call, our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.

Affirmation of Faith — from the 1998 Presbyterian Study Catechism

Question 63. What is the mission of the church?

The mission of the church is to bear witness to God's love for the world in Jesus Christ.

Question 64. What forms does this mission take?

The forms are as various as the forms of God's love, yet the center is always Jesus Christ. The church is faithful to its mission when it extends mercy and forgiveness to the needy in ways that point finally to him. For in the end it is always by Christ's mercy that the needs of the needy are met.

Question 65. Who are the needy?

The hungry need bread, the homeless need a roof, the oppressed need justice, and the lonely need fellowship. At the same time — on another and deeper level -- the hopeless need hope, sinners need forgiveness, and the world needs the gospel.

On this level no one is excluded, and all the needy are one. Our mission as the church is to bring hope to a desperate world by declaring God's undying love — as one beggar tells another where to find bread.

*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

All Rights Reserved, License # 1244003



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 or by scanning the QR code to the right.



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

Sanctuary Flowers

Flowers this week have been given to the glory of God by Sam & Jinny McDuffie in honor of Beau & Gwen Kitchens.

Lectionary Readings

September 12, 16th Sunday after Pentecost – Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38

September 19, 17th Sunday after Pentecost – Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 1; James 3:13-4:3; Mark 9:30-37

PRAYER CONCERNS

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

Current Member Concerns: Ann R. Smith; Jewel James; Ann Hall; Jane Ebey; Jon Geerlings; Kathy Wheeler; Betty Barlow; Donna Shuford; Frank Clark; Beau Kitchens;

Current Friends and Family Concerns: Margaret Yawn; Donna Carole Kitchens; Nelda Crow; Joel Jones

Military Personnel Prayer List: Austin Riley; Joshua Sulkers; Isaac Falkenstine (Bonnie Diboll's grandson)

Raise the Roof – Loaves & Fishes

Thank you so much to those who have already given generously to this project. We have already reached the \$10,000 goal! Your gifts to this project will help provide shelter to those receiving help through the Loaves & Fishes Ministry.

Rise Against Hunger – Sunday, October 3rd at 2pm at Forsyth Presbyterian

If you would like to participate in the annual Rise Against Hunger food packing event, mark your calendar for October 3rd. You may also donate online at flitriverpresbytery.org

Train Day – October 9th

There's still room on the train tour in Nashville, GA! Registration deadline is Sept 30th. Cost is \$25 for 1 person \$45 for 2, \$60 for 3, or \$80 for 4. You may register via your Realm account, or by signing up on the enclosed response sheet. Payments may be turned in at the church or mailed in.

Women's Retreat – November 12-13

Registration is open online for the November Women's retreat. All women, ages 13 and wiser, are invited to come and bring a friend, mother, daughter, or other female family member to our fall women's retreat. Author and pastor, Lisa Hickman, will be our guest speaker for this event which will be held Friday from 6pm-8:30pm and Saturday from 9am-2pm at Northminster. Registration will begin in August and run through November 7th. Early registration (by Sept. 15) is \$20 per person. Regular registration (until Nov. 7) is \$25 per person. Additional information will be provided soon.

Help for Hurricane Ida Victims

If you would like to help victims of hurricane Ida, please consider donating your gift through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Mission. You can help by giving online, praying for those affected, and visiting pda.pcusa.org to learn about additional ways you can help.

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 JENNIFER WHITEHEAD, Ministry Assistant

Office hours this week: Monday - Friday 8:30-1:00

Generosity

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need.

Proverbs 11:24-25

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord,
and he will reward them for what they have done.

Proverbs 21:13

Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor
will also cry out and not be answered.

Proverbs 22:9

The generous will themselves be blessed,
for they share their food with the poor.

Psalms 37:26

They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be a blessing.

Psalms 112:5

Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.
They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever.

Malachi 3:10

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

Matthew 10:42

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.

Matthew 6:21

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 12:33

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

1 Timothy 6:17-18

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

1 John 3:17

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Hebrews 13:16

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Flint River Presbytery: Campus Ministries

The Abbey @ Columbus State University

1023 1st Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901

www.theabbeyfellowship.org



The Abbey and its ministry partners have worked with our volunteers, board members, and partner churches here in Columbus to help address the food insecurity among our student population as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeing the overwhelming need, we set up a food distribution hub at The Abbey for CSU students. The response and generosity of the community have been overwhelming!

This last Spring, we held the four food distribution drives and provided food and fellowship to over 100 students! We completely ran out of perishable food items (butter, eggs, fresh fruit, and veggies.) Each time, our amazing volunteers made hundreds of frozen casseroles, and the best part is, we were able to do all of this through the generosity of our extended Columbus faith community coming together and pouring out Christ's love to the students. Our plan moving forward is to continue this ministry in the Fall and pair it with our Tuesday lunches.

“On more than one occasion this semester, while talking to the students who came out for the food drives, I was able to have some great conversations. Multiple students expressed their deep gratitude for our help. Two students were overcome with emotion in explaining how impactful this food drive was for them and how it truly saved them. We are blessed and humbled for Christ to use us in this way,” explains John Mock, Abbey Campus Minister.

UKirk @ Mercer University

1250 College Street
Macon, GA 31201
334-202-2004

UKirk meets on Monday evenings each week during the school year to eat together and study the Word or worship. Congregations in the Northeast Cluster of Flint River Presbytery take turns providing the students with a free meal, and the students work with Marilyn Tucker-Marek, the campus minister, to choose meaningful Bible study topics.



Often, worship focuses on an important event in the church calendar and always includes the sacrament of Communion. Along with the weekly Bible study we discuss issues important to the students, such as politics, racism, relationships with parents and other students, mental health struggles, and anxiety around post-graduation plans. In addition to Monday evening gatherings, Marilyn is available to meet with students as needed.

Current UKirk student Amelia says, “For me, UKirk was my landing place for my relationship with Christ. Not only were we studying scripture on a deeper level, but we also formed precious friendships. UKirk is radically inclusive and an extremely welcoming environment. Never once did I feel shame or embarrassment for my ignorance or questions about scripture. UKirk is a place where you are encouraged to ask questions about God, others, and yourself: a relationship trinity.”

The PresHouse @ Georgia Southwestern University



100 William B. King Drive
Americus, GA 31709

gswpreshouse@gmail.com

It's not easy to begin a campus ministry in the middle of a pandemic. So, Mary Runyon is excited about a fresh start with students this fall. "I hope The PresHouse will soon look more like it did pre-pandemic," says Runyon. The PresHouse serves meals to students two days a week and provides support to students and staff in the university setting.

Offering Bible study, movie and game nights, fellowship, and a safe space to students, The PresHouse looks for ways to engage the community, too. "There are always volunteer projects available here: yard work, redecorating, even opportunities to meet the students over a hot meal. As we look to students returning to campus this fall, I'm excited about the mission potential here," says Runyon.

The Center @ Valdosta State University

1510 North Oak Street
Valdosta, GA 31602

Melissa Coleman, Campus Ministry Director at The Center for six years, shares this portion of The Center's Mission Statement, "... We believe that we are called to be a *ministry of presence* and to *provide sacred space*, where students – along with the entire campus community – are *embraced by acts of radical hospitality*, *surrounded by words of encouragement*, and *enfolded by an attitude of generosity*..."



The Center provides programs to students like free Tuesday lunch, free Wednesday supper, meditation and Bible group, Bible studies and special events, and hosts more general "Open Hours" to fellowship, play games, study, watch TV, and take naps.

Students from The Center share :

"The Center restored my faith. I had moved away from God in my first couple of years of college & lost my way, but now I'm back where I need to be." (Henry)

"The Center is keeping me alive -- it's my one hot/home-cooked meal of the week. I don't have a meal plan; my parents can't afford it, but I know I can go there & get a good meal." (Jessica)

"The Center is an oasis in the midst of college craziness. There is no chaos here – it's just peaceful & warm & a place where I know I am loved." (Alise)

Question 64. What forms does this mission take?

The forms are as various as the forms of God's love, yet the center is always Jesus Christ. The church is faithful to its mission when it extends mercy and forgiveness to the needy in ways that point finally to him. For in the end it is always by Christ's mercy that the needs of the needy are met.

Question 65. Who are the needy?

The hungry need bread, the homeless need a roof, the oppressed need justice, and the lonely need fellowship. At the same time — on another and deeper level — the hopeless need hope, sinners need forgiveness, and the world needs the gospel. On this level no one is excluded, and all the needy are one. Our mission as the church is to bring hope to a desperate world by declaring God's undying love — as one beggar tells another where to find bread.

1998 Presbyterian Study Catechism



"I'd like to donate my body to comedy."

Monday Morning

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.

Jesus, in Matthew 10

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Paul, in Acts 20:35

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 9

Giving has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship.

Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God's creatures.

Presbyterian *Directory for Worship*

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous;
Teach me to serve thee as thou deservest;
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labour and not to seek reward,
Save that of knowing that I do thy will.

St. Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556)

A man there as, though some did count him mad,
the more he cast away, the more he had.

John Bunyan (1628–1688)

When I was a kid and asked my dad for money, he would reach into his pocket before I could even finish asking. He'd pull out a handful of crumpled bills, separating out a linty tube of Roloids, a half-empty, bright orange packet of Sanka, a carefully-folded cloth handkerchief and often a paper napkin on which he had scribbled his next great idea. "Here," he'd say, handing me whatever he had. "Is that enough?"

I remember, when I was a teenager, getting angry at my parents because I found out the other smart kids were using something called a thesaurus when they did their English homework, and I didn't even know what a thesaurus was. My dad's response was to put me in the car, take me to the bookstore in the South Shore mall (we lived on Long Island) and buy me the fattest thesaurus we could find. "Just tell me what you need," he told me. "Tell me, and we'll get it."

And I remember, when I was working in a church as a seminary student, opening a card from Mildred. It contained a five-dollar bill and a note about how she hoped it would help support my ministry. I mocked the gift. Five dollars? What could I do with that? And my dad came down hard on me. "Never, ever, make light of the gifts people give you. They are a sacred trust, shared with you by people you are called to love."

My dad, the Reverend Charles Sheldon Rigby, died on September 21. He was a multitalented person: a minister, an evangelist, a fundraiser, a singer, a Bible teacher, a painter, a writer. As people gathered for his memorial service in the Community Presbyterian Church in Celebration, Florida, we projected images of my dad's life and played audio of him singing in the rich baritone voice for which he was known. Person after person recalled stories from his ministry. "Remember when Chuck converted that old abandoned home into a haunted house to raise money for Youth for Christ?" "Remember when he built that float for the parade out of flowers made of napkins?" "Remember when he sang 'I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked' by the River Jordan when we went to the Holy Land?" "Remember that Easter when he created a Passion play on Fifth Avenue — there was even a live donkey!" And: "Did you see the sign outside, advertising the church pumpkin sale? Chuck made it, right before he went into the hospital."

My brother, Mark, a filmmaker, prepared the gathering images as well as a video that was played after the service, as worshippers lingered in the sanctuary before heading out to the reception.

There was my father, up on the screen, completely absorbed in painting a picture. Not accomplishing anything of note, really. Not caught up in the work of saving souls (which was his passion). Simply enjoying the gift of this world and finding ways to participate more deeply in it. And everyone stopped for a moment and looked at that screen, eyes full of tears, mutterings things like, "Yep, that was Chuck."

It is a rare enough thing when generosity springs from a person's conviction that everything we have is God's. Even rarer is the perspective modeled by my dad. He walked around in this world really believing that everything God has is ours (see Luke 15:31). And so he was generous without ever thinking of it that way: the dollars from his pocket spilling into my hands; his ideas spilling onto napkins; his appreciation of even the smallest acts of kindness buoying others; his busy hands, mind, voice and heart doing whatever he could do to love this world that God so loves.

I miss you already, Dad.
And I will try to keep loving.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby
Professor of Theology
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
from *The Presbyterian Outlook*

The one who gives what one would would as readily throw away,
gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice.

Sir Henry Talor (1800-1886)

Lord Jesus, poorest of the poor,
born in a borrowed stable and buried in a borrowed tomb,
I bring before you all those who, like you,
have nowhere to lay their head:
the war refugees excited from their homes,
migrants searching for a place to live,
the victims of earthquakes, floods, and disasters,
and the countless, countless homeless in this land.
Help me, living as I am securely and in peace,
to show compassion for my brothers and sisters,
and help them find in their lives,
a new beginning and new hope,
for your name's sake.

Hubert J. Richards (1921 -)