

Simply

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free.
Till by turning, turning we come round right.



STEWARDSHIP

October 31, 2021

10:30am

GATHERING

Greeting

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

Prelude

The Gift to Be Simple

arr. Paul Manz

Opening Prayer

Call to Worship – based on hymn 694

Great God of every blessing
faithfully and lovingly you provide for us.
You are a flowing fount of goodness and grace.
Sincerely and completely we offer you our hearts.

Great God of unsearchable wisdom
clearly and completely your word speaks to us.
In giving us Jesus our Christ we see your truth.
Sincerely and completely we offer you our hearts.

Great God of every time and place
surely and steadily your Spirit leads us.
Transform your broken people into your holy church.
Sincerely and completely we offer you our hearts.

*Hymn #694

Great God of Every Blessing

Great God of every blessing, of faithful, loving care, you are the fount of goodness, the daily bread we share.
How can we hope to thank you? Our praise is but a start: sincerely and completely I offer you my heart.

Your Word is our salvation, the source of endless grace, in death and life extending your covenant embrace.
In Christ we are one body; each member has a part: sincerely and completely I offer you my heart.

Your Spirit is our teacher, the light that guides our search, transforming broken people into the holy church.
For feeding us with mercy, for wisdom you impart: sincerely and completely I offer you my heart.

Written for the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth, this hymn text sums up his liturgical theology, ending each stanza with his motto: Cor meum tibi offero, Domine, prompte et sincere, or "Sincerely and completely I offer you my heart." By moving from plural to singular the stanzas show how shared faith becomes personal piety.

CONFESSING

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession – adapted from a prayer by John Calvin (1509-1564)

Almighty God, not only have you adopted us as your children in this life, but you loved us before we were even born. As soon as we came from our mother's womb, you were pleased to mark us with the waters of your holy bath.

We celebrate these truths as gifts obtained through the one beloved Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. We confess today how often by our ingratitude we have renounced so great a blessing. Forgive us for our defection and unfaithfulness, of which we are all guilty. Help us to find true humility and obedience of faith. We want to embrace the grace of your good news now again offered to us, by which you reconcile yourself to us.

Grant that we may steadfastly persevere in pure faith, so as never to turn aside from true faith, but to advance more and more in the knowledge of your mercy. Give us strong and deep roots, firmly grounded in the confidence of sure faith, so we may never fall away from true worship and true love.

Hear our prayers...

Assurance of Forgiveness

*Response to Forgiveness #606 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Affirmation of Faith – from the Presbyterian Brief Statement of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

*Passing of the Peace

LISTENING

Announcements and Invitations

Prayer of Intercession and Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'Tis the gift to come down
 where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right,
 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight. When true sim - plic - i - ty is gained,
 to bow and to bend we shan't be a-shamed, To turn, turn will be our de-light
 Till by turn - ing, turn - ing we come round right.

Prayers for Illumination

Scripture – Acts 2:41-47

Sermon in Music

Jesus Loves Me

arr. Craig Courtney

Scripture – Mark 10:13-16

Sermon in Words

**Simply Stewardship:
Round and Round We Turn toward God**

DEPARTING

*Hymn #693

Though I May Speak

Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire,
and have not love, my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess,
but not be given by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control; our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship, and are freed.

*Benediction

*Sung 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

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 the Shuford family in grateful gratitude to the Northminster family for the love and support this past year of Donna's cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Lectionary Readings

October 31, Reformation Sunday – Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

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; Janet Kelly

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)

Trunk or Treat Tonight!

Our youth are hosting a community trunk-or-treat tonight to help provide a safe and fun environment for children within our community to enjoy candy and costumes. If you are able to help by bringing candy or by parking and handing out treats, please join us!

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 run through November 7th. Registration is \$25per person.

Help with UKirk meals

If you are willing to provide a meal for the UKirk students, either by yourself or by teaming up with others, please contact Emory Whitaker at lewhitaker@cox.net or 478-737-5273

5th Annual Loaves & Fishes Foodie Fundraiser

Loaves & Fishes Ministry invites you to take part in the 5th Annual Foodie Fundraiser Thursday, November 4th (Presented by Alex's PC Solutions and Burgess Pigments). Dine at a participating restaurant on Thursday, November 4th, and that restaurant will donate 5% of your tab to the Loaves and Fishes Ministry of Macon. For a copy of participating restaurants, email the church office or check your October 31st bulletin.

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;

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 - Thursday 8:30-1:00



SAVE THE DATE

FOR OUR

5TH ANNUAL

FOODIE FUNDRAISER!

EAT AT A PARTICIPATING RESTAURANT AND THEY
WILL DONATE 5% OF YOUR MEAL PRICE!

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021

FOODIEFUNDRAISER.ORG

PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS

- Back Burner
- Bear's Den
- Barberitos
- Bianca's Grill
- Brasserie Circa
- Dawson's Kitchen
- De'Lani Delights
- El Sombrero
- Famous Mikes
- Fatty's Pizza
- Greek Corner Pizza
- Grey Goose Player's Club
- Grits Cafe (Forsyth)
- Ingleside Pizza
- Jags Pizzeria & Pub
- Jim Shaw's Seafood Grill
- Jonah's on Johnston (Forsyth)
- Kudzu Seafood
- LBV Italian Kitchen
- Longhorn Steakhouse
- Marble Slab Creamery
- Miramar
- Northside Cheers
- Ocmulgee Brewpub
- Parish Louisiana Grille
- Roly Poly
- S&S Cafeteria
- Sid's Sandwich Shop
- Southern Vegan Soul Cafe
- Texas Border Grill
- Tropical Smoothie Cafe
- Your Pie

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A single gentle rain makes the grass many shades greener. So our prospects brighten on the influx of better thoughts. We should be blessed if we lived in the present always, and took advantage of every accident that befell us. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time.

Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail.

"Simplicity" by Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*



"You need to simplify your life.
Start with a smaller bag."

Monday Morning

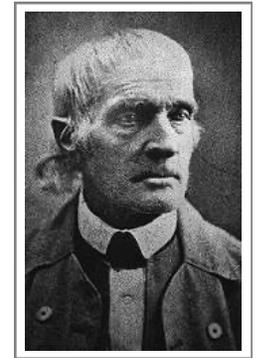
"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 10, New Revised Standard Version

"Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them.

Mark 10, The Message

Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down
where I ought to be;
And when we find ourselves
in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed;
to turn, turn, will be my delight.
Till by turning, turning we come round right.



Joseph Brackett Jr. (1797-1882)
American songwriter, author, and elder in
The United Society of Believers in Christ
better known as the Shakers

Will you put up with a little foolish aside from me? Please, just for a moment. The thing that has me so upset is that I care about you so much—this is the passion of God burning inside me! I promised your hand in marriage to Christ, presented you as a pure virgin to her husband. And now I'm afraid that exactly as the Snake seduced Eve with his smooth tongue, you are being lured away from the simple purity of your love for Christ.

O God, guide of my youth, light of the blind, teacher of the ignorant: thou enlightenest the simple, leadest wanderers back into the right path and drawest praise from the mouths of children. Teach me thy ways and draw me away from the paths of the world. Tarry not, so that I may make haste; leave me no longer in the world and in sin. O my Savior and my God, by pouring thy grace into my soul, make my heart desire Thee, and in desiring seek thee, and in seeking find thee, and in finding love thee.

Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713)
French Protestant leader

Simplicity is found in the unfettered joy of a pilgrim who forsakes an obsession with her or his own progress or backsliding in order to fix one's gaze on the light of Christ.

The Taizé Rule
from the Taizé community in France

We are all complicit in and benefitting from what Dorothy Day called “the dirty rotten system.” That’s not condemning anybody; it’s condemning everybody because we are all complicit in and enjoying the fruits of domination and injustice. (Where were your shirts and underwear made? What wars allow us to have cheap food and gas?) Usually the only way to be really non-complicit in the system is to choose to live a very simple life. That’s the only way out of the system!

Thus most of the great wisdom teachers like Gandhi, Saints Francis and Clare, Simone Weil, Dorothy Day, and Jesus—lived voluntarily simple lives. That’s almost the only way to stop bending the knee before the system. This is a truly transfigured life in cultures which today are almost always based on climbing, consumption, and competition (1 John 2:15-17).

Once we idealize social climbing, domination of others, status symbols, power, prestige, and possessions, we are part of a never-ending game that is almost impossible to escape. It has its own inner logic that is self-maintaining, self-perpetuating, and self-congratulating, as well as elitist and exclusionary. It will never create a just or happy world, yet most Christians never call it into question.

Jesus came to free us from this lie, which will never make us happy anyway, because it’s never enough, and we never completely win.

Richard Rohr, from *Spiral of Violence*

There’s clearly some process of discovery here. Early in life you choose your identity by getting things. But later in an affluent life you discover or update your identity by throwing away what is no longer useful, true and beautiful. One simplicity expert advised people to take all their books off their shelves and throw them on the floor. Only put back the books that you truly value.

That’s an exercise in identity discovery, an exercise in realizing and then prioritizing your current tastes and beliefs. People who do that may instinctively be seeking higher forms of pruning: being impeccable with your words, parsimonious but strong with your commitments, disciplined about your time, selective about your friendships, moving generally from fragmentation toward unity of purpose. There’s an enviable emotional tranquillity at the end of that road.

In a world of rampant materialism and manifold opportunities, many people these days are apparently learning who they are by choosing what they can do without.

David Brooks, from “The Evolution of Simplicity” - Nov 2015

God, if we carry excess baggage on life's journey, teach us to travel more simply. If our possessions own us, free us to trust you and share with others. If our need for control keeps us anxious and demanding, help us to relax. If we carry loads of guilt, may we hand them over to you, trusting you to forgive. God, make us simple: simple in trust, simple in life, simple in commitment to you. Prepare us for your mission. Allow us to join your labor to heal the hurting, feed the hungry, and bring good news to the poor. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, in whose name we are baptized and sent on mission. Amen.

Ruth C. Duck

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