



NORTHMINSTER *Life*

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Holy Week



Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2nd, we will gather at 6PM in the sanctuary for our spiritual entrance into the "Great Three Days" of the Christian yearly pilgrimage. This gentle service full of prayer and music will culminate in the Lord's Supper.



Good Friday

New this year, we are offering a three-hour window of time in the sanctuary, from Noon to 3pm, during which gentle organ music will be playing continuously. You are welcome to come at any time during that window, stay for as short or as long a time as you desire, and sit in prayer to contemplate the crucifixion and all its meaning for our lives. Our thanks to David Kenney, Sr. for providing this new offering in our common life.



Easter Sunday

Our celebration of the resurrection will begin at 10:30AM, and also include a joyous sacrament of communion. No Sunday School for adults or children this Sunday, but worship itself will include a time for our youngest disciples.

WELCOME, INTERN MARK MONTGOMERY!

Last fall, our session was asked to host a 10-week pastoral internship for Mark Montgomery, a retired public school music teacher who went back to seminary in retirement to become a Presbyterian pastor. Mark is no stranger to us; He and his wife Rita are members of First Presbyterian in Columbus and are active in our presbytery. As such, Mark already knows several members of our congregation. Starting April 13, he will be with us full time for 10 weeks: shadowing pastor Ralph, preaching, teaching, visiting, leading session, community outreach ... all the work that encompasses pastoral ministry in our tradition. Here is Mark's recent biographical statement written for Flint River Presbytery:

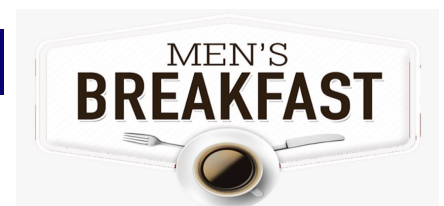
Church has always been a significant part of my life. My earliest memories revolve around church activities. Through the teachings of the church and my family's example, I came to realize I am a beloved child of God. In high school, I regularly participated in my church's activities, especially the youth group and music programs. It was during the summers of my college years, while working as a camp counselor, that my faith grew stronger and truly became my own. My camp experiences were incredibly influential in my understanding and relationship with God. After earning a degree in music education and beginning a 30-year career teaching elementary music, I started attending Columbus' First Presbyterian Church, where I quickly found a spiritual home and family. After several years participating in various church programs, including the music and Christian education ministries, I started to consider attending seminary. After visiting several Presbyterian seminaries and praying about it, I decided that the timing wasn't right for professional ministry. At that point, I felt called to continue teaching while remaining very active in the church. During this time, I married a wonderful woman named Rita, who shared my passion for volunteering at church. Her support and encouragement were truly inspiring! She would sometimes say to me, "You're going to go to seminary when you retire." My usual reply was, "We'll see." I have worked with middle and high school students, taught adult classes, and helped with students in the Abbey campus ministry at Columbus State University. I have also participated in mission trips to Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Russia (twice!). I have also volunteered at Montreat Youth Conferences as a chaperone, cooked for FRP youth, and served as a small-group leader. I have taken on several roles in various churches, including deacon, elder, clerk of session, and choir director. Additionally, I have been active in the presbytery, serving on both the Minutes and Records Committee and the Finance Committee. After my retirement, enjoying no morning alarms, ample afternoon naps, and hours of Netflix, God opened the door for me to attend seminary at the most unexpected place - at my son's wedding. I was seated next to my son's college professor, now a professor at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte. Within two months, the door had been opened, and I was on my way to seminary! Seminary has been everything I hoped for and more! It has given me the opportunity to gain knowledge and develop many skills necessary for professional ministry, to challenge myself and broaden my understanding, and to grow closer to God. My internship as a chaplain intern at the retirement community, Presbyterian Village in Austell, has reaffirmed my desire to serve God's people. All of this is preparing me to serve wherever God calls, and I believe that, like my call to attend seminary, God will reveal where that will be in due time. — Mark Montgomery

WELCOME, MEMBER STEVE DAVIS

Sunday, March 29th, we had the exciting privilege to welcome former member, Steve Davis, back onto our membership roll. We are so thankful for our members, old and new, and our friends and regular visitors who make Northminster the special family that it is.

MEN'S BREAKFAST - APRIL 8TH

All men are invited to breakfast at H&H Restaurant, 807 Forsyth Street, at 7AM Wednesday, April 8th. This is a dutch treat event.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Spring Sunday School for youth and adults:

Our own Pastor Ralph Hawkins will be teaching the Adult Sunday School starting April 12th and going through the end of May. Ralph's classes are always thought-provoking and very popular. We meet in the Community Room at 9:00 on Sunday morning. Topics to be announced.

Children's "Kidventures" Sunday School continues through the end of May with lessons on sharing, caring, helping others!



WOMEN'S SPRING BIBLE STUDY

Please join us for our spring Bible study led by Mark Montgomery, our pastoral intern. Mark is someone we are so fortunate to have join us for the next 10 weeks. Our first study begins Wednesday, April 22nd and will continue through May 27th in the community room downstairs. We will have our usual two sessions each Wednesday, one at 10:00AM and the other at 6:00PM.



YOUTH CAR WASH - MAY 2ND

Come to the church Saturday, May 2nd between 10AM and 1PM to help our middle and high school youth wash their way to Montreat! Pollen season is long-lasting in Macon, so we know your car will want a refresh and what better way to have it cleaned than by our very own youth! Your donations will go to help cover the cost of both high school and middle school Montreat conferences. This year, we have 4 high schoolers and two middle schoolers who will be attending these summer events. **If the weather does not cooperate, we will have a "rain-out" day the following Saturday, May 9th, also from 10-1.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Apr 6 - Bonnie Diboll
Apr 22 - Lynn Davis
Apr 29 - Horace Stringfellow

Apr 11 - Gwen Kitchens
Apr 22 - Sofie Aiello
Apr 30 - Kendall Emener

Apr 18 - Liz Riley
Apr 24 - Jane Prentice



TRAINED RULING ELDER PROGRAM

Northminster is proud of three of our inactive elders who are enrolled in our presbytery's year-long training program for Ruling Elders, who then can serve in wider capacities such as pulpit supply, chaplaincy, or moderating sessions. Pictured here in Americus with the entire 2026 TRE cohort is our Lynn Denny, Barbara Fatkin, and Mark Brown. Listen out for a student sermon from them later this year!

How Great Thou Art is a favorite hymn of many people. The four stanzas we typically sing "feel about right", we might say. However, did you know that the first two stanzas in our hymnal are the **only** two stanzas that have any basis in the **original** hymn? Yes, that's right: Stuart Hine, a British missionary, added the third and fourth stanzas. Also, interestingly enough, Mr. Hine's version of the hymn is actually an **English** translation of the **Russian** translation, which is based on the **German** translation of the original hymn, written in **Swedish**. The original hymn--by Carl Boberg--had nine stanzas, two of which I have included below. The second of these stanzas is appropriate for the last few days of Lent and Holy Week:

***When I behold the heavens in their vastness,
Where golden ships in azure issue forth,
Where sun and moon keep watch upon the fastness
Of changing seasons and of time on earth.***

***When crushed by guilt of sin before Thee kneeling,
I plead for mercy and for grace and peace,
I feel Thy balm and, all my bruises healing,
My soul is filled, my heart is set at ease.***

The stanzas above were translated **directly from the Swedish** by E. Gustav Johnson, in 1925, nearly 25 years before Stuart Hine's translation and edition were completed. Mr. Hine actually included the stanza below in his 1953 edition, four years before the hymn started to gain popularity in the United States (during and after Billy Graham's crusade in Madison Square Garden in New York in 1957). This stanza also seems appropriate for Lent, with a "forward look" toward Resurrection:

***When burdens press, and seem beyond endurance,
Bowed down with grief, to Him I lift my face;
And then in love He brings me sweet assurance:
"My child! for thee sufficient is My grace."***

Regardless of "which version" of this hymn we sing (and there are several more translations, by the way!), I think we are always brought back to the fact that God is, indeed, great, and we can be thankful that:

1. He has **mercy** on us, according to His steadfast **love** (*Psalm 51:1*),
2. from His fullness, we have received **grace** upon **grace** (*John 1:16*),
3. Jesus is our **peace** (*Ephesians 2:14*), and,
4. as the Father **loves** Jesus, so He **loves** us and tells us to abide in His **love** (*John 15:9*).

As we look toward the Resurrection, may we be bold to proclaim: ***"Then sings my soul,
my Savior God, to Thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art!"*** Do I hear an "Amen"? Until next time... Grace and Peace, and a Blessed Eastertide!



MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE!

Our Music Ministry invites all to ring and (or) sing! Bell rehearsals resume Wednesday, April 1st at 6PM in the library. Vocal choir meets every Wednesday from 7:00-8:15 p.m. Please contact our Music Director, David Kenney, Sr. if you have any questions. (peechedoctor@comcast.net)

WIMBISH WHIRLWIND

Big excitement in March when someone mowing the lot directly across Wimbish Road from our church tipped over his riding mower and leaked fuel set the entire woods on fire. In the end, four fire engines responded and contained the small forest fire. Our church was unscathed, and no one was hurt. Stay safe, Presbyterians!



HAVE BUS, WILL TRAVEL!

The session of First Presbyterian Church in Warner Robins recently gave us their church bus! As we were the only ones using it in recent years — borrowing it for trips to Montreat, etc. — First Church generously offered us the vehicle at no cost. Although 20 years old, the bus only has 13,000 miles on it, so it is in great mechanical shape. This month, we'll be getting it wrapped in our Northminster name and logo. Get ready for lots of road trips later this year!



LARRY SMALLWOOD REMEMBERED



Several church members represented our congregation at the recent funeral for long-time member and ordained elder Larry Smallwood, who retired from a career as Chief Fire Inspector for Macon/Bibb County. The department put on full honors for Larry at the funeral, including transportation of his coffin to the graveside in a vintage



Macon fire truck. We give thanks for Larry's long and easy friendship in our congregation for so many years.

"Dear Church Family,

My family is very appreciative for all the cards, food and prayers during Larry's recent heart attack and passing. A special "thank you" to Pastor Ralph as we were blessed with his visits and prayers and the beautiful funeral service he led. Please keep us in your prayers as we navigate this new chapter without our precious Larry. God bless, Kathy Smallwood and family"

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATES

From the Finance Committee: Thank you for your continued financial support of our church, its pastor and staff, and its programs in 2026. Please contact Gregg Reed (gareed105@gmail.com) or any member of the finance committee if you have any questions about the budget and its status.

	Feb 2026		2026 YTD	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Pledged & Regular Giving	\$54,440	\$38,683	\$103,246	\$77,366
Carry Forward	\$8,305	\$8,305	\$16,610	\$16,610
Total Income	\$64,697	\$47,988	\$128,332	\$95,976
Total Expenses	\$57,907	\$43,989	\$103,832	\$87,978

MACON SERVICE LEAGUE

Card Salad Luncheon

Where: Vineville United Methodist Church
 Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026
 Time: 10 am - 2 pm

\$15

IN THE COMMUNITY

You are invited to the Macon Service League Annual Fundraiser April 16th at Vineville Methodist. Your donation benefits local non-profits serving our community. You have 3 ways to participate: -Bring friends & a card table to play table games from 10AM-2PM with lunch served around noon.

-Come just for lunch around 11:30 and dine in or take out.
 -Simply make a donation to show that you support these organizations:

Loaves & Fishes Ministry	Macon Volunteer Clinic	Daybreak
Ronald McDonald House	United in Pink	Atrium Health Crescent House
Pine Pointe Hospice	Boys & Girls Clubs	Read United/United Way
Macon Little Theatre	Museum of Arts & Sciences	Theatre Macon

For tickets or information, speak to Judy Hill or Jinny McDuffie.

UKIRK BOARD



Our thanks to Kim Emener for representing Northminster on the board for the Presbyterian UKirk campus ministry at Mercer University. Our congregation has supported this outreach to undergraduates for many years. Thanks Kim for your leadership on our behalf!

CURRENTLY TRAINED RULING ELDERS

In March, our Fellowship Hall hosted a gathering of Ruling Elders from sister churches in our northeast cluster in Flint River Presbytery. Two hours of teaching and training were followed with lunch and fellowship. Nita McCord and Gregg Reed represented



LET'S PLAY PICKLEBALL FOR LOAVES & FISHES MINISTRY



April 18th is Church Fellowship Day at Tattnell Pickleball Center. See the flyer on the following page for details and come out to support our ministry partner! Half Day registration is \$20 and includes lunch and the morning has a free intro call for beginners. All proceeds go to the Loaves & Fishes Ministry of Macon. Interested in being part of the Northminster group? Contact Jeanne Roddenberry at jerodden93@gmail.com.

Pickleball Fellowship Day

Tattnall Pickleball Center

April 18th



9:30AM - 10:00AM

INTRODUCTORY PICKLEBALL CLASS

10:00AM - 12:00PM

UP THE RIVER DOWN THE RIVER MIXER FOR ALL LEVELS

12:00PM - 1:00PM

LUNCH PROVIDED FOR ALL

1:30PM - 3:30PM

PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT



- INTRO TO PICKLEBALL CLASS IS FREE
- THE 10:00AM & 1:30PM EVENTS HAVE SEPARATE REGISTRATIONS
- PLAYERS MAY PARTICIPATE IN BOTH
- ANYONE WHO PARTICIPATES RECEIVES A FREE LUNCH



SCAN QR CODE

Church groups are encouraged to participate. All money raised will benefit the less fortunate in our community. Door prizes will be given to any church employee who registers.



APRIL 2026



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			6pm Bell Choir 7pm Vocal Choir	Veritas <i>Spring Break</i> 6:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	Noon-3pm Good Friday Prayer and Reflection	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Happy Easter 10:30 Worship	Easter Monday - Staff Holiday	Veritas	7am Men's Breakfast 10am Service League 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Vocal Choir	Veritas 6:30pm Girl Scouts	Veritas	1pm Girl Scouts
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9am Adult S.S. 9:30am Kidventures 10:30 Worship 4:00pm Yoga 6:30pm String Recital		Veritas 6pm Girl Scouts	6pm Bell Choir 7pm Vocal Choir	Veritas	Veritas	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9am Adult S.S. 9:30am Kidventures 10:30 Worship	6pm Session Meeting	Veritas	10am Women's Bible Study 10:30am Service League Board 6pm Women's Bible Study 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Vocal Choir	Veritas	Veritas	1pm Girl Scouts
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
9am Adult S.S. 9:30am Kidventures 10:30 Worship		Veritas 6pm Girl Scouts	10am Women's Bible Study 6pm Women's Bible Study 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Vocal Choir	Veritas - Senior Lunch		