



**Proclaiming God's Grace,  
Creating Community,  
Serving our Neighbors**

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# Northminster News

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October 2017

*Letter from the Pastor*

**Dear Northminster Family,**

Welcome Autumn. Welcome Fall. Welcome the season of the harvest. Welcome October. As children of the Reformation, we also welcome the 500th anniversary of the 95 Theses posted on the doors of the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

It was just another day in the life of the church. After all, very few people in the village of Wittenberg could actually read the theses. Martin Luther posted them, out of his own personal conviction, his study of Scripture, his disillusionment with Rome, and his utter exasperation due to the rampant fiscal irresponsibility of the bishopric. His theses noted specifically where the law of the church was in violation to the law of the gospel. What we don't know, is if he expected the response that erupted. Technology, progress, innovation - whatever we want to call it - were the platforms out of which his ideas began to "go viral." The makers of the printing press needed an electrifying idea to increase their profitability. They found it in Martin Luther, and as the ideas spread, so changed the face of the Western world.

The Reformation had been a long time coming. Luther was in the right place at the right time, but his ideas were not unique. Others had come along before him, as early as the 12th and 13th century, making waves of protest. People like John Wycliffe in England and Jan Hus in Bohemia had created little communities in their respective areas that quietly explored new ideas. But neither of these men, nor did any others, have the luxury of political safety that was afforded Martin Luther. Ultimately, it was the powerful arm of Frederick the Elector of Saxony that allowed Luther the freedom to explore and develop his ideas without fear. Between Frederick, the printing press, and a culture primed for change, the ideas of Martin Luther exploded within Western Europe. There was no going back. There never is.

Time allows us the privilege of reflecting on great moments like these. For those that live through it, they can merely respond to their surroundings the best they can. For us as students of history, we can examine complexities and consequences that were thinly veiled possibilities for the actors of the time. We will be invited to reflect on this history and all of its complexities throughout this month.

However, we would miss the mark to shrink this celebration to a fanciful history lesson. The study of reformation offers us less of a walk through a museum and more of an invitation to a laboratory. It needs participation. It assumes that considering the ideas that both fueled and fragmented the church, will prompt us to observe what is fueling and fragmenting us now. It begs us to resist all forms of ecclesiastical power that establish a ruling class over and above all others. The Reformation is no less than a cartography lesson that might lead us to rewrite the maps for the future church. We would do well to engage in this as fully as we can.

From now until the start of Advent, I invite you to consider the ways that the world of reformation has impacted your life. Perhaps there are both positive and negative reflections in that. This is part of the story. As we weave all of these reflections together, we can offer the future church the gift of permission. We pass the torch on to the future with the full permission for those to take what we have received and appropriate it the best they can. **Reformata semper reformanda!**

**News Editor**  
Stacy Kern

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## What's Happening Around Northminster?

-Thanks to our resident artists, **Lisa Snow Lady and Susan Barron**, who have created our **Visual Art Celebration of the Reformation**. Both Lisa and Susan have studios in Ballard and have worked with local guilds for various installations across the city. We are very grateful that they bring their imagination and skill to the life of Northminster!

-October 1st is **World Communion Sunday**. We join with churches around the world proclaiming unity and hope. On this Sunday, we recognize that even though we are organized locally, we exist as part of a global community.

-October is **Stewardship Month**. Look for upcoming information about how to contribute to the life of the church. Keep in mind the Stewardship Lunch will take place on October 29th after Sunday worship. This is a great opportunity to get a snapshot of the financial life of the church. It's also time for the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

-**Joint choir with Woodland Park Presbyterian Church** is still rehearsing for the Reformation Project. This choir plans to rehearse on Sunday afternoons from 4:30-7:30pm at Woodland Park PC. You are welcome to join rehearsals on October 1st, if you would like. Please contact Jeffery Wilsor, choir director, with questions: [jeffreywilsor@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreywilsor@gmail.com)

-**Breakfast Club and Adult Education Opportunities!!** Join a THREE week series on Reformation: Then and Now. **October 15th, 22nd, and November 5th**. We'll focus broadly on three ideas:

**Reformation and Music and the Arts**

**Reformation and Science and Technology**

**Reformation and The Ethnos, Our Common Life with Attention to the Conversation on Race**

Bring a Friend!!

-**Wednesday Morning Bible Study** meets at 10am. Bring your coffee, and join together in study and prayer.

-**Community Night Kick Off!!** October 5th at 6:00pm. Note the **change to THURSDAY** nights. Come for the food, stay for the music. Youth group meets at 7:00pm and Choir meets at 7:30pm.

-**Looking to serve?** Our shelter starts up in October! We need overnights at BEM!! Ballard Ecumenical Shelter is a 501c3 that is housed within Northminster. We are an interfaith shelter that sleeps 7-10 men over the age of 50 on Thursday and Saturday nights, referred by St Martin de Porres of Catholic Social Services. You do not need to be a church member to volunteer! Tell your neighbors and your friends. This is a specific way to meet a very dire need in the city. Hours are from 9:00pm-7:00am. Email Stacy at [info@northminsterpres.org](mailto:info@northminsterpres.org) for more information.

Dani Forbess

## Reflections on My Vacation in England Part II

As I mentioned in the September newsletter, Peter and I took a walking trip with friends in the English countryside. First we visited Oxford. Then we walked 32 miles through the Cotswolds (a rural area of south central England). Finally we toured the cities of Bath and Salisbury. During our trip we saw beautiful countryside and villages along with old buildings and ruins.

Today I want to let you know about interesting things that two area churches are doing to serve the world today.

**The Broadway United Reformed Church** caught my eye as we walked through the village of Broadway. The church had colorful welcoming signs to attract the eyes of wandering visitors. The United Reform Church (URC) was formed by the coming together of Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in 1972. Churches of Christ joined later.

According to their display "We are part of the worldwide tradition of Reformed Churches. Members worship and serve God who has shown his love by sending his son Jesus to live and die for us. The church has been providing this love and care to the community since its origin in 1792....

We continue to be committed to the unity of the whole Church and work with other Christians in the area....We have been awarded Child Friendly Church status because of our work with young people."

As I mentioned in September, I was particularly drawn to **Bath Abbey**, which currently is an Anglican church housed in a medieval building. It was originally established as a Saxon Church and convent in 676. It evolved into a Benedictine monastery in 781. Edgar, the first King of all England was crowned in the Saxon Abbey in 973.

Bath Abbey is a popular tourist destination. The volunteers, parishioners and clergy do a nice job of welcoming and orienting visitors and encourage them to engage in sacred reflections without forcing it upon them. For example, the welcoming brochures provide historical information which they connect to "A People and a Place Fully Alive." It notes that "In the 8<sup>th</sup> century after Christ, Bath Abbey was founded as a Benedictine monastery. Its community was committed to worshipping God, Justice for the poor and hospitality to all people. The Abbey is now a parish church, still guided by the same values."

I was especially interested in two ways that Bath Abbey is engaging with the world in 2017.

**The Abbey is working to reduce its carbon footprint** by installing an eco-friendly heating system using energy from Bath's natural hot springs and installing energy-efficient lighting. This is part of a larger capital program to improve its footprint

The Abbey engages interesting and innovative art displays for visitors to enjoy and reflect on. It is addressing the issue of **diversity and immigration** through a beautiful exhibit called **Imigration 2** by artist Anthony Head. It is an astoundingly beautiful group of butterflies that are suspending from the high ceiling in a side chamber of the Abbey. I was deeply moved by the beauty of the exhibit and by Mr. Head's description of his work:

*"Imigration 2 explores the themes of migration, diversity and individuality. In the swarm each butterfly is unique, created with a variety of technologies and featuring colour and patterns designed using computer coding, influenced by the mathematics of nature. The butterflies move gently in the air currents that fill the Abbey as if traveling on a migration. In today's world of human migration and its reporting, it is easy to forget how unique each person is, to reduce people to anonymous groups, stereotypes or just numbers. My hope is that once the viewer has enjoyed looking at the swarm of butterflies as a whole, they will be drawn to consider each one as unique."*

This is followed by a statement that "The Abbey is passionate about seeking justice for all, including those affected by mass migration. We invite you to be still beneath the slowly moving swarm, and, if you wish, to light a candle as a prayer for those individuals and families caught up in migration."

Mr. Head has kindly allowed me to use a couple of his photos of the exhibit. I wish you could see them in color. I will be happy to show you my hard copy photos if you want to see them. You can also find them on line: <http://www.bathabbey.org/imigration2>.

Liz Tennant

## The Civil Rights Committee at NPC

In response to many of the challenges that we face as a nation and community, our Session created a committee in the spring of 2017 called the Civil Rights Committee. The members of this committee are Jeny Carlson, Antonio Rufin, Liz Tennant and Trisha Wirta, and we have been meeting over these last several months in order to discern how our church's Vision and Mission Statement and our denominational Confessions call for us to live in and serve our immediate community and the wider world. As a result of this work, we have drafted a statement of how we will respond to God's call in our times, as a church reformed and reforming.

The progression of this work includes the sharing of this document with Session at our August meeting, a discussion of this statement, including any proposed revisions, at our September Session meeting, and voting on adopting the Statement at our October meeting.

We are truly moved by this work, and we look forward to sharing it with our church family and to inviting you to join with us as we move forward in understanding and acting on God's Call to us.

Trisha Wirta, Member of the Civil Rights Committee

## The Organ: Instrument of Eternal Harmony

For centuries when people thought of churches they also thought of the organ. Sadly, in the US many churchgoers have a neutral, or even negative, perception of the organ, sometimes for very reasonable reasons. In our nation there is no shortage of poor quality instruments and even worse organists who do not know how to bring the beauty and spirituality of this most complex of all instruments into our hearing. In upcoming months I will share bits of writing about the organ, its nature and repertoire, to support you in coming closer to the instrument rightly referred to as the "King of Instruments".

Although organs first appeared in churches in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to accompany large ceremonial occasions another aspect of their nature was by far more important. In that time organs were always hung on the back or side wall of the sanctuary, the organist was never visible; this was entirely purposeful. The organ's task was to fill the room, sometimes a vast cathedral, with the feeling of God-suffused cosmic harmony; this instrument of deep and sustained tone played by an invisible player was an audible symbol of God's dominion over the universe. When one considers, from the 12<sup>th</sup>

century to the present, daily life and its chaos and contrasts that with walking into church and being able to hear and feel the presence of God we begin to get a line on why the organ has remained so central to Christian worship; it helps us truly to feel "the peace of God which passes all understanding."

I hope that when you hear our beautiful organ that you will close your eyes, and allow its beautiful colors to fill and nourish you and your spirit as it has done for so many centuries.

Eric Johnson



## Children and Youth Happenings

**Thursday Night Youth Group**—Middle and High School are invited to stick around after Community Night from 7:15-8pm for youth group.

All ages are welcome to Join us for a few songs at 7:00pm.

**Breakfast Club**—Join us on October 15th or 22nd for one of our favorite NPC traditions. Hope to see you in the Fellowship Hall at 8am!

## What's Up with Sunday School and Youth Group?

Our children and youth programs here at Northminster look a bit different this school year! Sunday School will be held in the Whale Room for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Middle and High School students are invited to stay in worship with their families and volunteer in the nursery! Youth Group will be on Thursday nights for middle and high school students from 7-8pm. All ages are invited to join us for some music from 7:00-7:15. Questions—feel free to reach out to Ally

Ally Pexa

## Trivia Night

**Join the NPC team for fellowship, drinks, and a fun night of trivia at *The Dane* on October 18th. No need to sign up, just come with your \$3 buy in around 7:15 so we are ready to rock and roll at 7:30pm. Feel free to reach out to Ally with any questions. Hope to see you there!**

**Address: 8000 15th Ave NW**

## Garden Corner

Finally some rain for our gardens. The summer is coming to an end and I would like to thank Nancy Ingle, Nicola Forbess and Cora Miller for providing flower arrangements for our sanctuary. Now that summer is over Cora Miller will be returning to her home in Arizona. We will miss her and wish her a safe journey home.



123FreeVectors.com

Cora has provided most of the small arrangements that have been available in the Narthex for you to take to friends or neighbors in need of a little cheer. We will continue to have these small arrangements as part of our outreach until the flowers take their winter nap. Sheila Striegl

## LECTIONARY FOR SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER

October 1	October 8	October 15	October 22	October 29
Matthew 21:23-42	Matthew 21:33-46	Matthew 22:1-14	Matthew 22:15-22	Matthew 22:34-46
Philippians 1:27-30	Philippians 2:1-4	Philippians 2:5-11	Philippians 3:2-11	Philippians 3:12-21

## NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## A FUN TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

A half a dozen of us spent a recent Saturday morning at Healing Reins stables on Fox Island. We participated in an interactive exercise inside a corral with three beautiful horses! By tapping into the intuitive nature of these horses we tried to better understand who we are as a church and community. It was a

fascinating experience! Dee Clark and her team of licensed professionals are trained to help find new avenues of personal growth, healing and relationship enhancement. The goal of our exercise was to move the three horses into a small corral. (The metaphor being our attempts at welcoming our Ballard neighbors into our church). The horses were big, unpredictable and a

bit frightening. We tried many good ideas but none worked. During the debrief we asked Dee which group was the most successful in getting the horses to accomplish the goal, she said it was the 11-year old girls, because they would just run up to the horses, hug and smother them with unconditional love. What a lesson. Amen! - Bret Wirta

