



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

Pastor

Rev. Dani Forbess

Organist

Eric Johnson

Christian Ed Lead

Ally Pexa

Choir Director

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Northminster News

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Letter from the Pastor

Dear Northminster Family,

If you've entered the church building through the South Doors lately, you've seen the newly laid mulch on the grass. Our gardeners have a growing vision about how to beautify the grounds of the church. I continue to be both thankful and amazed at the work they offer so willingly. Early in December, they were out there mulching the new area. Why? To prepare for new growth in the spring.

While the days were dark and cold, and every blossoming plant had gone dormant, these master gardeners knew this was the time to prepare for growth. It seems counter-intuitive. Why not wait until the days warm and the light lengthens? But the gardener knows that preparation happens best when growth has gone dormant. So December is the best time for to mulch.

Ash Wednesday is coming this month. It can seem dim, dismal even. Here still in the heart of winter, we come together not for a raucous celebration - but to remember our . . . death. Ugh. No wonder Ash Wednesday is not the strongest attended service of the year. It's a hard pill to swallow.

And yet.

Built into this one little day is one of the strongest elements of our Christian theology. Our hopes and our desires, they become ordered only when they situate themselves around the one holy God who loves us. Our dreams and our fears, they come into better focus when we remember that our very presence here on earth is sheer grace. We do not deserve to be here, in the sense that we have earned this right. It has been given to us, each and every one. Ash Wednesday offers us the chance to notice that and remember it once more.

In this time of spiritual quietness, in this time of rest from celebration, Ash Wednesday invites us to prepare for growth. From dust you have come, and to dust you will return. Built within that sentence there is a choice - is it random meaninglessness? Or is it grace?

The season of Lent charts the course to explore that question.

Sometimes before the growth comes, you have to stare at the bare ground for a while. The emptiness itself can be a teacher for us. But we have to listen.

I invite you into this season of Lent together as a community, heralded by the understated and almost muted Ash Wednesday service. Let us come together, open to the bare ground. We come to Ash Wednesday in full dependency. We are bare before our community and before God.

From this dark and empty space, what growth will come? What growth will God bring? We sit and wait, in hope.

News Editor

Ally Pexa

Northminster Presbyterian Church • 7706 25th Ave. NW • Seattle, WA 98117 •

206-783-3402

www.northminsterpres.org

“look for us on facebook!”

Community Parent Discussion

February 6th at 7pm

How can parents have frank and honest conversations with their children about the state of the world? In a world of climate change, serious global tension, school lock-downs, immigration control, police brutality, and sexual misconduct—how does this affect our youngest generation? Join us for a conversation hosted by Dani Forbess and Jeny Carlson as we consider the way forward.

Childcare will be provided.

Wednesday Bible Study Continues

The Parables of Jesus: A Small Group Bible Study

Wednesdays at 10 am

Come to the Library on Wednesday morning for an opportunity to consider the parables of Jesus. This is a small group format where all perspectives are welcome. Facilitated by Pastor Dani, this conversation is a great way to start the day. End time is 11 am. Bring your Bible or use one from the Library.

New Children and Youth Opportunity:

Gather for Friday Night Fun

On the 2nd Friday of the month, Northminster will be open from 6-8pm for children and youth to come and hang out! **Gather for games, art, movies, or simply to just hang out. All are welcome.**

Adults: If you would like to help by leading a game, art project, etc. you would like to lead, contact Ally

The Method of Centering Prayer:

A Guided Class Taught by Charlotte Thompson of Contemplative Outreach

Saturday, February 10th 9am-1pm

The gift of contemplative prayer offers a counter cultural point of resistance to a fast paced world. Contemplative prayer focuses on the process, not the destination. There are no experts in this field, only participants. Based on the books *Open Mind, Open Heart* by Thomas Keating and *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton, this class provides a way to enter into the Lenten Season with spiritual acuity.

Follow up sessions:

March 24th 10am-12pm

April 21st 10am-12pm

Ash Wednesday Service, February 14th from 7-8pm

Join us for a simple soup supper beforehand at 6pm

Confirmation: Faithful Questions 2018

Confirmation is offered for 7th grade and up , including adults! If you are wanting to engage in a deeper exploration of your faith, then perhaps this is the year to consider joining in a Confirmation Track.

The class will cover the essential tenets of the Christian faith, as well as some exposure to other faith communities for the sake of dialogue. This seven week class culminates with the opportunity for confirmands to craft their personal statement of faith, as well as enter into membership on Confirmation Sunday, April 29th!

Two tracks will be offered: A youth track and an adult class. Youth are expected to attend 5 out of the 7 class session, as well as the mid-week field trips. Adults are expected to attend 3 out of the 7 classes, and are welcome to come on any of the field trips.

Date	Class	Field Trip
Sunday, 2/18	9:15-10am: Trinity	
Sunday, 2/25	9:15-10am: God	
Friday, 3/2		Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue
Sunday, 3/4	9:15-10am: Jesus and the	
Sunday, 3/11	9:15-10am: Holy Spirit	St. James
Sunday, 3/18	9:15-10am: Sin	12pm: Wing Luke Museum
Sunday, 3/25	9:15-10am: Church	12pm: Idris Mosque
Tuesday, 3/27		7pm: Meet with NPC session
Sunday, 4/22	9:15-10am: Bible	12pm: UW
Tuesday, 4/24		7pm: Meet with NPC session

If interested, grab an intake form from the narthex and return it to the office once it has been filled out.

Wednesday Night Open Sanctuary

The sanctuary will be open on Wednesday nights from 7-8pm for reflection, prayer, and silence during the season of Lent.

LECTIONARY FOR SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25
Mark 1:40-45	Mark 9:2-13	Mark 2:13-22	Mark 9:14-29

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

a village church in the city

7706 25th Avenue NW

Seattle WA 98117

206.783.3402

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Please notify us with corrections if needed, or if you wish to stop receiving the Northminster News.

About the Organ: The Original Praise Band

During the Reformation Luther, trained as a musician, included the organ in worship (spawning the first inclusion of prelude, postlude, and choral anthem); Calvin and Zwingli banned it from use, feeling congregations should sing the psalms in unison, unaccompanied, to achieve a purer spirituality. Some churches melted down organ pipes to make plates for the poor while some covered them up “just in case”. Calvin, forced from Geneva, set in motion the creation of the fabled Genevan Psalter (1551), the first hymnal for congregational singing. This idea, a fine one, was plagued by the fact that the texts had been translated into French, not Dutch or German, and had tricky melodies, thus making them difficult to sing. Congregations instituted the use of *precentors*, a person who sang each line of the hymn followed by the congregation. Problems ensued: some precentors made their singing so florid the congregation could not catch the tune, in some churches the congregation sang in ornate harmonies (forbidden by the Reformers as too unspiritual)

Enter our old friend the organ; within 100 years it was once again generally in use (including large, new organ installations throughout the Netherlands and Switzerland) expressly to accompany congregational singing.

And, 500 years later, it continues to do so. The invention of new instruments and genres has, wonderfully, expanded the use of piano, drums and electrified guitars in worship. Nonetheless, our original praise band, the organ, parent of all congregational accompaniment, continues to stir our hearts: its inspiring range of sounds, its ability to make clear a tricky new hymn melody, and to fill the room with its awesome sound still has a place in church, our hearts and our worship. Alongside its newer counterparts it still inspires us as we “sing unto the Lord”

Eric Johnson, organist