
NORTHMINSTER NEWS

Renew Your Spirit

Pastor's Letter: Back to the Future!



The Liberal Icelandic Church as it looked in 1930 before Seattle Presbytery purchased it to replace the dilapidated Ballard Presbyterian Church, later renamed Northminster.

This spring, the Session voted to accept the invitation from Seattle Presbytery to become part of the last cohort of their Thriving Congregations Initiative (TCI), which is grant from the Lilly Foundation that has been running for the past four years. The purpose of the grant is to help congregations learn how to be more connected to their own identities and their communities. As a member of this new cohort, we are part of a group of six other churches in the Presbytery learning and supporting one another. We have been given \$7,000 over the next two years to do this work and we have a team made up of staff, elders, and congregants to pursue this learning challenge.

Part of this work includes taking a deep dive into who Northminster was, is, and hopes to be. I've been reading through session minutes as far back as 1973, looking over collected histories, photos, and newspaper articles. Within our story there are moments of joyful exuberance, deep conflict, financial struggle, and the very common reality that our church membership has been in steady and constant decline since 1964. This is not only true of Northminster, but of every church in the Presbytery. What our TCI team discovered was how every few years since 1973, when the church membership had dropped over 250 people in a decade, there were regular calls

for evangelism efforts to “grow the church”, including assigned elders, committees, event planning staff with lofty goals of adding 75 new members in the coming year or increasing worship attendance by 45%...yet numbers continued to fall. These efforts would persist for a few months or years, then fade until another 100 folks had gone and then would start over again. What didn't appear in our research was any recording of what the people had learned from their efforts. What questions were they asking of the people they met? What were they discovering about how the neighborhood, city, and culture were changing? Who were they reaching out to... and who *weren't* they reaching out to?

TCI is teaching us is that when connecting with our community, listening is immensely more important than doing. Churches who have been working on this already have shared moments of self-discovery when they realized that what ***they wanted*** to do for their neighborhood wasn't actually what their neighborhood needed or wanted. When they opened themselves to listening deeply to the needs of their community, they could focus their relationship development and service to those areas, and learned to define their success by *being the church*, instead of solely focusing on numbers.

The TCI team has been excited and energized by their work, which for now is focused on understanding what kind of community is Northminster and how can that identity carry us into the future.

Please pray for and encourage the TCI team (Dana Hammer, Saskia de Vries, Leslie Duke, Szuyu Huang, and Pastor Jeny) in

their work and please reach out to anyone on the team if you have questions or are interested in joining us in our work.

Blessings to you all!

Rev. Jeny Carlson



Northminster as it appeared in 2017

Where We Come Together

This summer we are focusing our faith formation efforts in a few ways. Please contact the office or Pastor Jeny for more information.

Monday Morning Bible Study

Join us this summer as we explore the lectionary texts we will be encountering in worship. Bring coffee, your bible, and together we will unpack the text!

All meetings will be in the Library at 10am

June 5, 19, & 26

July 10 & 31

Aug. 14 & 28

Faith Formation Evenings

Join Pastor Jeny at her home for some deeper exploration into what faith formation means for you and for the church overall. Snacks and beverages provided.

July 12, August 3, & August 22 at 7pm

Pick-up Choir Sundays

Have you been longing to stretch your vocal chords and experience music as spiritual formation? Join Music Director Joseph To on July 16 and August 13 at 9:30am to learn the choral anthem of the day. Email Joseph if you have any questions.

Welcome Dustin!

Northminster welcomes Dustin Wilsor as our new Director of Ministry! Armed with recent Master's degrees in Divinity as well as Art and Worship, he is bringing some fresh talent in the areas of intergenerational worship, community building, and spiritual reflection and formation through art.

Dustin is currently under care (Presbyterian speak for studying to be a pastor) at Woodland Park Presbyterian and just finished an internship at Seattle Mennonite Church. We are so excited to be another step along his journey toward becoming an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church.

Dustin's first Sunday with us will be June 4th.

Your Session At Work

Watch for our new rainwater collection system! NPC will install rainwater collection cisterns with a grant from Seattle Public Utilities. The cisterns prevent overload of drains during heavy rainfall and will also provide water for our church garden. Many thanks to Martin Jimenez, Buildings and Grounds Chair, and the Garden Team, for their work in investigating this.

Szuyu Huang has been appointed by Session as Financial Secretary. She brings experience in business and financial management. The Financial Secretary is active during stewardship month, sending requests for and receiving pledges. Year round, she will assist the Treasurer, providing vital backup. We are so appreciative that she stepped up to fill this important role.

NPC received a generous bequest from the estate of Connie Fraser. Connie was Clerk of Session for several years under Pastor Dennis Hughes. She stipulated that a portion of the bequest be used for youth related projects. Ten percent of the undesignated funds will support Missions Beyond Our Walls, in accordance with the policy approved by Session in 2022. We are deeply grateful for those who remember NPC in their estates. Gifts like this allow our church to weather challenging financial times and continue to do the work of Christ.

We are seeking proposals for our church insurance. Our premium has increased dramatically over the past 5 years. At this point, applications are underway with 3 companies specializing in insurance for religious organizations, all recommended by other local Presbyterian Churches. We could use assistance to evaluate proposals. Facility/business insurance expertise, or experience with contracts would be useful. Contact Carol Charles

Earlier this year, Treasurer Becky Rufin and Pastor Jeny applied for a grant from Presbyterian Recovery Fund. This grant was designed to assist churches whose budgets were impacted by the pandemic. We received \$5000 to ease our deficit.

NPC is so grateful for the presence and support of members and friends. Beautiful music and meaningful sermons continue throughout the vacation season. If you're away from home, you are warmly invited to zoom or phone in for 10:30 worship service and the 9:30 - 10 zoom "coffee hour from home". The Outreach Committee has planned many opportunities for fellowship over the summer. Please come! We want to stay connected with you.

Peace and blessings in Christ,
Carol Charles, Clerk of Session

Beyond Our Walls: Your Pentecost Offering

Pentecost celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit to God’s people. In our denomination (PCUSA), we focus on children, youth and young adults especially in this season. In 2023, for Northminster



will give 40% of the Pentecost offering for the educational ministries of the Presbyterian Church of the Democratic Republic of the Congo – or DRC for short. In the DRC only 3% of the population is aged 65+ with 47% ages 0-14, making schools a critical resource. Leaders in the DRC selected education as a priority, inviting global partners (such as PCUSA congregations) to participate in the effort. You may donate to the “Pentecost” offering in-person, online or by mail through June 18.

As we join this partnership, we are aiming to be post-colonial. But like being anti-racist, being post-colonial isn’t something we just declare – it is something we have to grow into. While the United States was not directly involved during Belgium’s colonial rule, issues of reconciliation and justice remain. One positive trend began decades ago (including before DRC’s independence from Belgium) was schooling. Churches’

efforts in education are critical in DRC with 2/3’s of schools being church-related today. This includes the 400 schools under the Presbyterian Church in the DRC.

Education averages about seven years (per adult) in DRC, about half of the 14 years in the USA. Seven years is relatively good for Central Africa (for Sub Saharan Africa) – many neighboring nations average only 2-4 years of education. Church schools make a difference!



There are present-day justice issues that link more to globalization than to colonial specifics: metals, especially cobalt in your cell phone, laptop or tablet may have been mined by children in the DRC. Addressing child labor is complex. See this article. <https://www.treehugger.com/your-cellphone-could-be-made-child-labor-4856451>

There are inequalities of income – gross national income per person is 64 times higher in the USA than in the DRC. Poverty hinders the lives of many in the DRC, but Presbyterians there want to invest in vocational skills that can help teens and young adults have more choices. We want to pray and act, coming alongside the Spirit-energized efforts of brothers and sisters in Christ in the DRC so more children go to school and fewer have to work in mining to provide income for their families.

Deacon's Corner

This year, the Deacons have been reimagining the ways that we can carry out our call as a caring ministry of the church. We have found many ways to do that, including:

-Support of congregational members:

We have supported congregational members with new or ongoing health problems with prayers, phone calls, cards, and meals. We have also sent cards in recognition of members' birthdays.

-Cards for Caregivers:

We mailed handwritten cards to recognize the dedication and important work of many wonderful people in our congregation who are caregivers for family members or whose vocation is providing home care and support for people in the community with special medical needs.

-Support of local community:

The Deacons sponsored a donation drive for Ballard Food Bank during Lent. The congregation generously donated many highly needed items, including baby diapers and personal hygiene items, and \$415 in cash donations. Liz Tennant delivered these things to a grateful Ballard Food Bank.

-Home Communion training:

The Deacons recently received training from Pastor Jeny to take communion to congregation members who are not able to attend worship services on Sunday mornings.

Please contact Pastor Jeny if you are interested in having the Deacons bring communion to your home.

-Deacon mutual support and fellowship:

Pastor Jeny has led thoughtful meditations to open our meetings, and we include a time in meetings to share concerns with each other. We recently had a potluck dinner in combination

with a meeting that was a wonderful fellowship time (and lots of good food!). Lisa Lady will host us for a card-making session next month.

Currently serving on the Northminster Board of Deacons are Liz Tennant, Nancy Ingle, Dawn Thornhill, Lisa Lady, and Beth Schmidt.

Pastor Nominating Committee

Since our last update things have been happening! As reported in the last update, we have evaluated many candidates (nearly 40) since we began meeting in January, 2023. A lot of time, thought and energy has gone into coming up with our finalists and this work (and your prayers!) is paying off.

Although our church polity requires that this work be carried out confidentially, and we can't answer specific questions about candidates or the actual selection process, we assure you we continue to honor the trust and faith you have placed in us. Our work is informed, and respectful of the vision the Northminster community has articulated for its future throughout the discernment process.

That being said, we have narrowed our search down to two really qualified candidates. In the last few weeks we have conducted second round interviews and have completed our process of reference checking. At this time we are rapidly moving toward final consideration.

As we proceed to evaluate and discern the best candidate for Northminster Presbyterian Church, we continue to appreciate being held in your prayers.

Prayerfully,
Antonio Rufin, Bronwen Matthews, Dawn Thornhill, Katie Tynan, Katy Suchland, Trisha Wirta

What's Growing in the Garden?

Some fun updates from your friends who garden and take care of the grounds of the church.

1. Catch-up and more permanent landscape design continue to happen around the Manse. We are excited to catch up on some pandemic-related deferred maintenance, as well as working on the parking strip.

2. Also really exciting is our partnership with Monsoon Rain Gardens and the City of Seattle to install a system of cisterns to catch our roof runoff for slowing the amount of water we send into the sewer (and through our own aging pipes) as well as capturing water for our use in the gardens around the church to lower our water bills and conserve. We have had an inspection (pictured) and will receive an estimated \$14,000 of free work and materials through the city Rain Wise system which is ending soon for "large roofs" (we just made it under the wire apparently). We'll update again when we have work begun or, depending how quickly they work, all done and installed.



3. We planted a tree in front of the Manse in memory of Signa Treat, a long-time member who passed away just before Easter. Signa was a dedicated member of the Garden Team as well as had a great history serving on the Building and Grounds Team. We know she wouldn't want any fuss, but thought a beautiful maple was a fitting tribute to her years of dedication and hard work making the church look beautiful.

-Martín Jiménez, Building and Grounds Chair



SUMMER

2023

Northminster Presbyterian Summer Events!



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|------------------------|---------|-----------|--|-----------------------|----------|
| June | | | | 1 Lisa Lady art show reception @ Harris Harvey Gallery 6-8pm | 2 | 3 |
| | | | | 4 Rainbow coffee hour and celebration after worship | 5 Bible Study 10am | 6 |
| 11 Youth Sunday and Ice cream social! | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 Congregational Meeting Father's Day | 19 Bible Study 10am | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Pride Sunday (worship) Concert @ Ballard Locks 2pm | 26 Bible Study 10am | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |
| | | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|------------------------|---------|--|----------|--------|----------|
| July | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 Bible Study 10am | 11 | 12 Faith Formation Night #1 @ Pastor Jeny's 7pm | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 Pick-up Choir 9:30am Coffee Hour featuring Congolese Food. | 17 Bible Study 10am | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 Concert @ Ballard Locks 2pm | 24 | 25 | 26 Potluck BBQ @ Kurtz's 6pm | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | August | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------|---|--------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 Faith Formation Night #2 @ Pastor Jeny's 7pm | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 Potluck BBQ @ Hammer's 6pm | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 Pick-up Choir 9:30am | 14 Bible Study 10am | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Concert @ Ballard Locks 2pm | 21 | 22 Faith Formation Night #3 @ Pastor Jeny's 7pm | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Ice cream social after worship! | 28 Bible Study 10am | 29 | 30 | 31 | Sept | |
| SEPT 3 Potluck @ Lady's 6pm | SEPT 4 | SEPT 5 | SEPT 6 | SEPT 7 | SEPT 8 | |