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# NORTHMINSTER NEWS

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Renew Your Spirit

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## The Only Constant is Change

This year we embarked on a new way of being together by worshiping in-person while masked and broadcasting live over Zoom. Each week, we are split about 55% on Zoom and 45% in the sanctuary. On Christmas Eve, we had about 45 people show up in person, another 35 on Zoom and to date, 27 have watched the service on our YouTube Channel. That's on par with our attendance numbers prior to the pandemic!

In January, as the spread of the Omicron variant increased dramatically, Session made the hard decision to return to Zoom-only worship for the time being. **We will hold on-line worship only through the end of February.** Our prayer is that we will be able to hold **Ash Wednesday Service on March 2nd at 7:00pm** using the hybrid model of in-person and Zoom. We plan to do drive-by ashes in the afternoon for those who would prefer to worship over Zoom can still experience the imposition of ashes. More information on that to come.

## Celebration of Baptism!

On January 9th, we welcomed into our family of believers two beautiful young girls, Hazel and Chloe, daughters of Lily and Jonathan Bowdler! We were blessed that their grandfather, the Rev. Charles Bowdler of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, PC(USA) in Mississippi was able to travel to Seattle and perform the sacrament for his granddaughters. It is with great joy that we welcome these two youngsters into the body of Christ!

## Membership Class Coming!

It has been two years since we have held a church membership class, so we are inviting all of you who are regular attenders but haven't taken the membership class before to spend a few hours learning about what it means to be Presbyterian, uncover your own spiritual path and gifts, and lean into what it means to be connected to this community through membership. If you are interested, please email Pastor Jeny

# Formation Corner

Currently, we offer two vital faith formation programs: Theology on Tap and Bible Study.

**Bible Study** We have resumed weekly bible study on Mondays at 10am. Currently we are meeting over Zoom but hope to return to in-person discussions starting in Lent. What is exciting about this bible study is we are following the lectionary, which means everyone gets a "sneak peak" and the scriptures we will be discussing the following Sunday.

**Theology on Tap** meets on the first and third Wednesdays via Zoom at 7:00pm. In February we will be discussing "mindfulness" as a spiritual practice. If you've heard this term used but not fully understood, then be sure to join us!

# Choir Update

We had planned to re-start choir rehearsals in January, but Covid resurgence has meant that we cannot start large-group, indoor singing just yet. Miriam is following the standard practices for choral groups in our area and she is most anxious to resume full choir as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, she is continuing to work with individuals and small ensembles to create beautiful music on Sunday mornings. Thank-you to all of our members who have contributed their incredible talents to making worship joyful and meaningful.

# Caring for our Building

As we re-opened our building this past fall, we have seen an exciting surge in its use! Apollo Basketball has started renting our gym every weeknight, AA Groups are returning to the library, and the Preschool children can be seen not only in their classrooms, but in the garden and portico as they need safe space to remove their masks for lunch and snack times. The SHARE Shelter is also thriving and we have been able to keep the shelter open over the weekends. When the Session recently reviewed the building use calendar, one remarked “I had no idea so much was going on at the church during the week!”

You may have noticed a few changes too. The Garden area along 77th now has a lovely garden bench dedicated to Sheila Striegl, who we lost in 2020. Sheila was dedicated to keeping the garden and grounds around the church building beautiful and we are so happy we could honor her memory in this way. The bench is already a favorite spot for preschools, parents, and passers-by to stop and have a chat or take a rest.



The Preschool asked us if we could build a gate at the top of the steep stairs that head down into the preschool entry area to increase safety for the children. Building and Grounds elder Martín Jiménez designed and build a secure wooden gate in a weekend and we are so lucky to have such talented hands in our leadership!



One fun change Pastor Jeny initiated was to put every week’s sermon title on our front reader board, along with our website address. The hope is both to let the neighborhood know the church is still thriving and perhaps generate some curiosity about the week’s topic.



Additionally, elder Carol Charles ordered some banners for us to hang out front.

Our building is a precious resource, not only for us, but for our whole community and we take its stewardship seriously. If you haven’t had a chance to walk by the church in a while, come by and see how we are doing.

# Sanctuary Art for Advent



Sun, Moon, and Stars by Lisa Lady,  
Advent 1



Mary and Elizabeth by Lisa Lady,  
Advent 4

Throughout Advent, NPC member and artist Lisa Lady created stunning art that corresponded with each Sunday's scripture stories. The pieces were on display in the Sanctuary until Epiphany. You can still see them on our website at <https://www.northminsterpres.org/sanctuaryart>

Lisa has partnered with NPC several times over the years to create visual representation of the the themes and scriptures we cover in sermons or that reflect the season of the church year.

In March, Lisa plans to teach a creative art class using our Lenten theme of "Breaking Down Barriers" and we hope to display the art created form this class through Eastertide.

# A Letter from the Session Discernment Team

Dearly beloved Congregation,

Greetings from the Session Discernment Team and hope and prayers for your mid-winter activities and uplifted spirits.

As we mentioned at the congregational meeting on Jan 30th, the NPC Session is a few months into a year-long discernment process that is for the renewal of our communal spiritual life, preparation for a Pastor Nominating Committee, and a desire to engage the questions of what our post-pandemic existence will look like.

We are inviting you to engage our discernment process by responding to the following prompts that the session has already used to interact with the big question of what God is doing in and around our church.

- What motivates you to be a part of the NPC community? What keeps you here?
- Describe your vision of what NPC will be like in the next few years. What is happening in 2025 that is new/changed/better?
- What is a small change that NPC could make in the next 3 years to realize this vision?
- What is a BIG change that NPC could make in the next 3 years to realize this vision?

In order to get the most feedback and to give folks time to consider prayerfully what they envision Northminster becoming, we will be accepting written feedback via email ([kdhammer@comcast.net](mailto:kdhammer@comcast.net)) or letters to the church office (attention Session Discernment Team) the entire month of February. In addition, we will offer the following elder-facilitated times of listening and discussion:

**Zoom: Feb. 9, March 9, and April 5th, 6:00pm-7:30pm** (Use the same Zoom as for Sunday Worship)

**In-person: March 6th, and April 3rd at 4:00pm in the church library**

Further along in our process, we will convene some community listening sessions to listen to input from our neighbors about what they like about our presence and what they would dream we could be and do in partnership with them. For now we will keep this conversation internal to create some safe space for our church family to discuss both our new and pandemic-deferred dreams for our presence in and outreach to the community. Look forward to more opportunities to engage in the Spring and Summer when we are doing more in-person activities and will share the vision that is forming and celebrate together what the Spirit is communicating.

Discernment Committee Team: Martín Jiménez, Dana Hammer, Jonna Reeder