



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

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Northminster News

Volume LVI, No. 1

January, 2015

Letter from the Pastor

When a close friend of mine bought her house, her first plan was to establish a winter garden. But it was July. That time of the year when the flowers of the Northwest never seem to lose their strength. She was determined to create a winter garden, so that when the other flowers faded she would be prepared with berries and wildly shaped leaves that thrived in the cold dark days of January.

It's very rare to prepare for the minimalism of January. The crisp winter can catch us by surprise. In its sometimes gruff and calloused hands we can find the seed of something new. But the gifts of January are often not as generous as the gifts of July and August. It seems we have to work a little harder to find the wonder. Whether we are in the midst of post holiday let down, or returning to a routine that is different than what we had hoped for, or it is just that the long cold days can take a toll that we can't quite explain; January often comes with a silence we are not quite ready for. And yet – paradoxically – as we sit with these things, we find that the hope of January is that even in these stark surroundings, the voice of God speaks.

It's quiet but tenacious, it's bold but robust, it's sharp but delightful and crisp. Surprisingly, there is a message of respite to be found in the bright starkness.

While the Christian year is not bound by the North American seasons, it is still interesting that we find ourselves beginning the year with the Baptism of Jesus. The image of Jesus being plunged (on what I assume was a very sunny and warm day) into the refreshing Jordan is a far cry from polar bearing the icy waters of the Pacific Northwest. But it is still an image of minimalism. For us, winter minimalism. The crowd of the nativity has passed and the journey of Magi has been marked. Now we find ourselves on the shores of Jordan with some of the regular villagers waiting to get clean. The story itself makes no room for excess. It is John, the water, the people of the countryside, of Jesus. That's it. And then, in that minimalism, there's a voice.

You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased. (Mark 1:11b)

In the minimalism of this story, we hear something that is new – so wondrously new that we are still trying to get our minds wrapped around it. This one, this Jesus hears the voice of God out of the silence of heaven. It comes differently than Christmas – not with angels and shepherds, but out of the ordinary places where the villagers went for cleansing. And there in this basic ordinary element of life – the River – they hear something that will change them from the inside out.

What is your invitation in the season of Winter Minimalism? Where is the place you have returned to again to start anew? This is now your place of expectation. Wait here for the clear and singular voice of God. The space has been cleared – and now you can hear the same words that Jesus heard those years ago, **“you are mine, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”**

There are no words that offer a better start than those that offer belonging and delight. Perhaps that is the reminder in the middle of our Winter Minimalism. We belong to God, and nothing can change that. And God takes delight in us. There is deep hope in that.

So, here's to new starts of all kinds. Doug and I could not be more thrilled for this new start with Northminster and all the excitement that it brings. And here's to sitting in our ordinary spaces in the winter quiet while we remind the world of two things: love and delight. Let us do so together with the quiet expectation of discovery to see what God is up to and how we can join the work that is already in place.

Dani

News Editor

Stacy Kern

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www.northminsterpres.org “look for us on facebook!”

NEEDED: COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Almost – almost! – as important as Sunday worship service is the social time that follows at Coffee Hour. It gives us all a chance to visit with each other and to welcome newcomers to our group – as well as loading up on caffeine and cookies, of course! We are constantly in need of volunteers to help set up for Coffee Hour and to

clean up afterward. It's a fairly straightforward job, but if you're new to the role we can easily set you up with a brief walk-through of how it all works. You can find sign-up sheets in the volunteer kiosk in the coffee room. For more information, please contact Jen Oxley or Dawn Thornhill.

FLOWER CORNER

The Sanctuary Flower chart is now clean and ready for new sign ups! If you'd like to bring flowers for the sanctuary in honor or memory of someone or just for fun, please

sign up for an available date on the chart in the reception room. If you have any questions about what to bring contact Shzila Strizgl.

READING GROUP NEWS

The Reading Group will once again meet on the second Wednesday following Community Night dinner; **EXCEPT** for this month when we will meet on the **21st**. The book we will discuss is Cokie Roberts' "Founding Mothers: The Women who Raised our Nation." The book is about the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and friends of the movers and shakers in the formation of our country. About them, George Washington said "Nor would I rob the fairer sex of their share in the glory of a revolution so honorable to human nature, for indeed, I think you ladies are in the number of the best patriots America can boast."

Copies of the book are in the reading group cubby in the hall outside the office.

Our next read will be "The Glass Castle" by Jeanette Walls, an account of growing up nomadic, starry-eyed and dirt poor in the 60's-70's. She also wrote "Half Broke Horses" which we read a year ago.

We also need to consider what books we want to read and you can look at the Seattle Public Library list we choose from.

Join us whether you've read the book or not!!

COMMUNITY NIGHT IS BACK!

We're getting the band (kitchen crew) back together for another season of Community Night, starting on January 21st at 6PM. Come share a meal and socialize with your Northminster family. It's a great way to hang out with friends AND avoid cooking your own supper for a night. We'll have the book club discussion, one night per month and a program from Christian Educa-

tion on the other nights. Families and kitchen volunteers are welcome. Let us know what you'd like to see us do differently this year for meals or programs. (Stan, please start making cookies now.)

Connections Committee



January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC Choir Practice	2 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC	3
4 Sunday morning worship service Sunday school classes	5 A.A. Meeting	6 A.A. Meeting Knitting, Crochet, Needlework group	7 A.A. Meeting	8 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC Choir Practice	9 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC	10
11 Sunday morning worship service Sunday school classes	12 A.A. Meeting	13 A.A. Meeting Session Mtg	14 A.A. Meeting Deacons Mtg	15 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC Choir Practice	16 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC	17
18 Sunday morning worship service Sunday school classes	19 A.A. Meeting	20 A.A. Meeting Knitting, Crochet, Needlework group	21 A.A. Meeting Community Night Suppers	22 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC Choir Practice	23 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC	24
25 Sunday morning worship service Sunday school classes	26 A.A. Meeting	27 A.A. Meeting	28 A.A. Meeting Community Night Suppers	29 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC Choir Practice	30 A.A. Meeting BEM overnight at NPC	31

LECTIONARY FOR SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

January 11

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

January 18

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

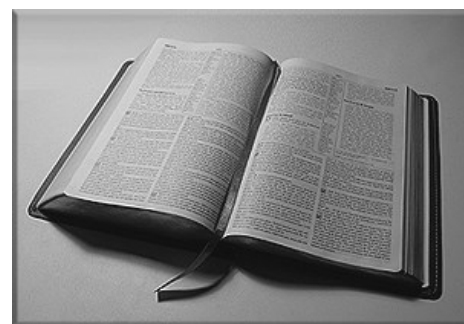
January 25

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20



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