

May 2022

Volume 67, Issue 5

Northminster News

The Northminster News shares information about programs and activities of interest as well as news and milestone events in the lives of our church and larger community.

Northminster's Support for Ukrainians

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- Parent Mental Health Community Forum
- New Peace Pole "Planted"!



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As a Congregation, Northminster collected \$1,948 in funds for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering during Lent. This offering, in part, supports relief to Ukrainian refugees. This is the PCUSA's detail on that mission:



Europe is facing its largest humanitarian crisis since World War II. The United Nations estimates up to 18 million people, both internally displaced and refugees, will eventually be impacted.

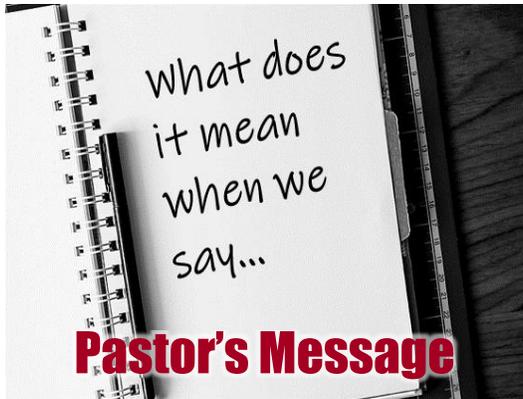
According to reports from Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, Ukrainians are facing reduced or disrupted services in water, heating, electricity, transportation and telecommunications. Health services have deteriorated rapidly due to shortages of medical supplies and personnel.

Refugees, mostly women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly, had to leave their homes and spend days traveling to neighboring countries for safety, with almost nothing with them.

Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing allow for an immediate response from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) when emergencies first occur, often responding to crises that never make it into the news.

In this volatile situation, PDA was able to provide urgent funding to trusted, established partners with the expertise to carry out humanitarian aid. Reformed and Orthodox church partners, like the Community of St. Egidio and Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, are working closely with local churches and organizations to provide food, water, clothing, shelter, psychosocial support and other basic items for survival. They are the "boots on the ground," listening and responding to the needs of those impacted.

To stay informed about the work Presbyterians are doing in and around Ukraine, visit pcusa.org/pda/ukraine. To learn more about One Great Hour of Sharing and the vital ministries it supports, visit pcusa.org/oghs.



Christ has indeed risen and we are now basking in the joys of Eastertide as we look to the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. It is a time when the disciples were both filled with hope and entirely confused; a season when the disciples wrestle with their previous ideas about who Jesus was and who they understood him to be now; and a time when we wrestle with the full impact and meaning of Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection. It is a season of celebration but also confusion. In essence, it is a season of being nonplussed.

Nonplussed is a complicated word. First used around 1600, nonplussed has evolved into a contronym: a word that evokes contradictory or reverse meanings depending on the context. The original usage of the word relates to the Latin phrase *nōn plūs*, "not more," indicating a state in which nothing more can be done. It transformed into a verb meaning "to bring to a standstill" and then "to perplex." Slowly, nonplussed slowly fell out of usage, then suddenly reentered the US lexicon around the 1960's - but its meaning had flipped. To 1960's sensibilities, "non" meant "not" and "plussed" mean "to be bothered." Thus the 1960's "nonplussed" indicated a state where a person was indifferent. Today, both usages are common enough that dictionaries often list both opposite and contradictory definitions.

When I say that Eastertide is a nonplus season, I mean to imply both definitions. The miracle of Easter is a mystery that we are still perplexed by even while it is so common and familiar. It brought the lives of the disciples to a complete standstill. We may desire the same sort of stand-still; but, for us, our obligations are often indifferent to the season. The disciples are still puzzling out the implications to the resurrection, but we aren't bothered because we already know their ultimate conclusions. Eastertide is full of contradictions, but contradictions are not inherently bad. Contradictions create liminal space and we live much of our lives in that liminal space created as our wants, needs, hopes, and beliefs pull against each other. Moreover, that liminal space created by the contradictions in our lives is often where we find the Spirit of God at work. Eastertide is full of contradictions and it is a gift.

In the same way that "nonplussed" has multiple contradictory meanings, many words we use in church have many definitions and people use them in contradictory ways. What it means *to pray*, *to believe*, and *to be called* varies from person to person and from church to church. We use these words in Sunday service and talk about them in Bible Studies but what do we actually mean? Are we all actually talking about the same thing or just using the same word? In the spirit of the nonplus nature of Eastertide, our next sermon series will be called, "*What do we mean when we say _____?*" I don't intend to provide you all with a sheet of definitions that you can walk away with. Rather, I hope to create discussion around what we actually mean when we use the words so common to our Christian faith. We are going to dive into both the complexity and variation of the words that are so commonplace and familiar in our tradition.

While contradictions may give us pause (and yes, they may frustrate us too), contradictions are not inherently evil. I truly believe God often works through contradictions. Case in point: we profess faith in a God that is familiar enough to bring us a level of comfort and understanding but that same God remains mysterious enough to continue to puzzle and intrigue us with the same story for over 2000 years.

Blessings to you all this Eastertide,
Pastor Chris



Troy-area Interfaith Group

International Day of Prayer – May 5

For a variety of reasons, TIG will not be hosting an in-person event as previously planned. Instead, we are offering to our members and supporters a collection of prayers in many diverse faith traditions. These prayers and their explanations or traditions will be sent out to the TIG email list the early morning of May 5, and people can pray one each hour throughout the day, or read them all at once, or print them off to enjoy that day and more. If you would like to receive the prayers, contact Ruth Turner at troy.interfaith@gmail.com.

The InterFaith Leadership Council (IFLC) is offering a **“Celebrating the Spirit of Spring” program on Sunday, May 22 from 3:00-5:00p.m.** It will focus on Spring Holidays of a few seldom-explored faiths: Zoroastrian, Jain, and Baha’i. It is a hybrid event and if you’re attending in person, there will be tour of the Jain Temple, 29278 W. W. 12 Mile Rd in Farmington Hills at 2:30. To register either for the Zoom webinar or to attend personally, register at <https://forms.gle/Dz7mkFqPV5g>.

Baby Basics Book Drive

Baby Basics Board will be again be giving out “summer kick-off” buckets to our babies and their siblings under 12 years of age. We decided this year we’ll purchase the older siblings books (Clay gets coupons from a used book store from her donations there). But we could use help in securing books for the babies. We’d appreciate getting new small books (to fit in a sand bucket) for children 1 month – 3 years. They can be left in the lounge May 16 and we’ll give them out at the first distribution on June 1.



Church, Society & Mission

Donation Collection for Refugees

Northminster is collecting items for **Humble Design**, which decorates and furnishes the homes found for people coming out of homeless situations and refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The drive will continue through **May 8**, when we will dedicate the items brought in. There is a basket on a table for the collection, and duplicate items are fine! Those things Humble Design is most in need of include:

- Washcloths
- Towels
- Standard Pillows
- Sheet sets (twin, full, queen)
- Mattress covers (twin, full, queen)
- Hygiene items (toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo etc.)
- Kitchen utensils
- Cutting boards
- Kitchen trash cans
- Toasters





Join the peace vigil here:
<https://tinyurl.com/justpeacevigil>

[Presbyterian mission co-worker the Rev. Cathy Chang red-tagged in the Philippines |](#)

[Presbyterian Mission Agency](#) (click to read article on incident)

On April 11 when she found stickers and a tarpaulin with her photo affixed to the front gate of her home with accusations that she is a “Supporter of Terrorist CPP-NPA-NDFI” and threatening her to “get out of our country.” In order to promote a campaign of fear and distrust, red-tagging is a process of blacklisting individuals or organizations not fully supportive of the policies of the sitting government, such as the Anti-Terrorism Act, the War on Drugs, and Covid response, that violate the human rights and civil liberties of the Filipino people.

Letter from Northminster’s Mission Co-Partners:

These past few weeks were tense, but thankfully we have received support from our partner church, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. After that April 11 incident, nothing else has happened.

One thing that we didn’t publicize in that article – and ask you not to publicize or ask us on social media, is that we have temporarily relocated to a “safe haven.” Not far from our current home, we have chosen to relocate and lay low under the radar until the fever related to elections has passed. Cathy and Juan will continue to work only online, and Aurelie will continue her 4th grade classes online. Aurelie’s school still hasn’t yet resumed face-to-face classes, and will most likely prepare to do so starting in August/September. For our safety and security, especially if we are Facebook friends, and

you write comments or posts: do not include Juan and Aurelie’s names.

Looking forward to the next few weeks, we are still facing uncertainty with our missionary visa renewals. In late May/early June, we will need to renew our visas with the Philippine Bureau of Immigration. This red-tagging could negatively affect these visas, which means we would not be able to continue serving in the Philippines. A lot of this depends directly on who is elected as the next president. Please pray for us about this situation.

Starting this May, our original plan was to make ‘virtual’ visits with supporting churches. Presbyterian World Mission still hasn’t given permission for us to make face-to-face visits. We still plan to make these online visits, so if you’re interested and especially have more questions about our current situation, please reach out. We can make plans for online visits via Zoom.

In late June, I (Cathy) plan to travel to Louisville, to serve as a Missionary Advisory Delegate with the upcoming 225th PC(USA) General Assembly. I have been assigned to the Immigration committee. After that, I will move up to Michigan where Juan and Aurelie will join me. We will be there for a few weeks before heading to California for a Chang family reunion.

Yesterday, May 1 was our daughter Aurelie’s 10th birthday. We celebrated with family Zoom calls and her first face-to-face party after 2 years. Thank you for sending your birthday wishes. Feel free to send belated wishes too!

Your prayers and support have provided much comfort during this stressful time. We are grateful that the God who called me and my family into mission service, is still caring and providing for us and sustaining us, with Christ’s resurrection hope,

Cathy, Juan and Aurelie

Directory Update

Bobbie Maki
Email: ramaki29@att.net



Session

Session met on May 7, 2022, and passed the following motions:

1. To utilize the following funds to assist in paying off the roof loan: Reserved from 2011 Klepinger Bequest 2015, William Lewis Memorial Fund, and the Curtis Lundy Memorial Fund.
2. To holds drive to collect linens (bedroom and bathroom) and kitchen utensils to donate to Humble Design to use in furnishing houses or apartments for Afghan refugees and others coming out of homelessness. A complete list of needed items is posted at the entrance to the sanctuary and in the Northminster newsletter and bulletins.
3. To donate \$500 each from Benevolences to: Lighthouse (formerly South Oakland Shelter); Freedom House; Hope Against Trafficking, and Mission Co-Partners in the Philippines.

Session will meet next on May 12 at 7:00p.m.

Building & Grounds

The Peace Pole is Planted!

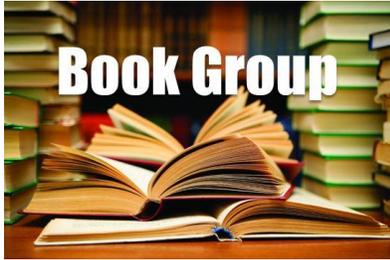
As part of the Spring Clean-up, we planted our new Peace Pole. The original was a gift from Shir Tikvah in the 1980's after they shared our space, symbolizing how we shared our common goals of world peace.

The new pole was purchased from a non-profit organization, Peace Pole Project, dedicated to bringing the internationally recognized symbol of peace on earth, to countries all over the world.

Our customized pole includes the phrase 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' in English, Hebrew, Hindi, Arabic, Ojibway, Sign Language, Spanish and Korean.

Next time you are at Northminster, take a moment to consider how we can all contribute to world peace – and see how many languages you can recognize!





The afternoon Book Group has had a year of reading thought-provoking, sometimes entertaining, informative books, and having good conversations as we shared our thoughts about each book. Early members of this group were Hilka Brown, Bev Leese, Pat Case, and Ruth Taylor, which tells you that we have been a book reading group for a long time! Everyone is welcome to read the books and join these discussions on the second Thursdays of the month beginning in the fall at 2:00p.m. via Zoom.

Below is the reading list for the coming 2022-2023 season. The list is also available on our [website](#).

Meet Date	Title	Author	Chosen by
Sept. 8	<i>The Lincoln Highway</i>	Amor Towles	Julie Sigler
Oct. 13	<i>How Beautiful We Were</i>	Imbola Mbue	Chris Riddering
Nov. 10	<i>The Sentence</i>	Louise Erdrich	Bobbie Maki
Dec. 8	<i>West With Giraffes</i>	Lynda Rutledge	Bea Smits
Jan. 12	<i>Less</i>	Andrew Sean Greer	Debbie Cizmas
Feb. 9	<i>Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare</i>	Stephen Greenblatt	Sue Fish
Mar. 9	<i>French Braid</i>	Ann Tyler	Jennifer Browne
Apr. 14	<i>Everything I Never Told You</i>	Celeste Ng	Group

Parent Mental Health Community Forum



An informative session connecting parents and guardians to:

- Resources for understanding mental health conditions
- Advice from mental health professionals
- Support services for crisis situations
- Insurance for families
- Trauma support for students
- Assistance for parents / guardians

**May 16, 2022,
5 - 8 p.m.**

Bowen Center
52 Bagley Street
Pontiac, MI 48341

Crisis services are available 24/7 at the OCHN Resource and Crisis Center by calling 800-231-1127.

Non-crisis services are available by calling OCHN's Access Team at 248-464- 6363. Walk-ins are always welcome!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30am - Bells rehearsal 10:30am - Worship 12:15pm - CS&M Mission	2	3	4 10am - Matthew 25 Book 6pm - Baby Basics 7pm - Choir rehearsal 7:30pm - Tai Chi @ Ark	5	6	7
8 9:30am - Bells rehearsal 10:30am - Worship	9 7pm - Deacons' Mtg	10 10am - Bible Study - Zoom 7pm - Bldg & Grounds Mtg	11 10am - Matthew 25 Book 7pm - Choir rehearsal 7:30pm - Tai Chi @ Ark	12 7pm - Session Mtg @ Zoom	13	14 10:30am - Marilyn Amann Memorial
15 Newsletter Info Due S&F Midyear Check-In 9:30am - Bells rehearsal 10:30am - Worship	16 6:30pm - Baby Basics	17 10am - Bible Study - Zoom	18 10am - Matthew 25 Book 6pm - Baby Basics 7pm - Choir rehearsal 7:30pm - Tai Chi @ Ark	19 7pm - Grace in Aging	20 Connie Upton's Memorial	21
22 9:30am - Bells rehearsal 10:30am - Worship	23 12pm - Women's lunch	24 10am - Bible Study - Zoom	25 10am - Matthew 25 Book 7pm - Choir rehearsal 7:30pm - Tai Chi @ Ark	26	27	28
29 9:30am - Bells rehearsal 10:30am - Worship	30	31	1 Pride Month begins 10am - Matthew 25 Book 6pm - Baby Basics 7pm - Choir rehearsal 7:30pm - Tai Chi @ Ark	2 7pm - Session Mtg @ Zoom	3	4 10am - Building Rental

**Northminster
Presbyterian Church**

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office@troynorthminster.com

Our Facebook page is
*Northminster Presbyterian
Church – Troy*

and our private friends group is
Northminster Troy

PASTOR:
Rev. Chris Hallam

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR:
Suzanne Joy

MUSIC DIRECTOR:
Dr. Brandon Ulrich

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers

IFC coordinates volunteers to help seniors and disabled people remain in their homes.

They are seeking drivers to take people to appointments as well as housekeepers and handymen for simple repairs. You can volunteer once or routinely! Just call 586-757-5551 for more information or to donate your time. See more at ivcinfo.org



About Our Church...

Our core purpose is to love God and our neighbors as we seek to understand, respect and celebrate our differences.

In recognizing Christ's calling to treat others as

we desire to be treated, Northminster Presbyterian Church welcomes all people, regardless of sexual orientation, color, gender, religion, age, politics, social or economic class, ethnicity, nationality or disability.

We value all members of the community. We consciously strive to create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth in which none are strangers and all truly flourish.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3633 W. Big Beaver Rd
Troy, MI 48084

Newsletter for May 2022

