



CELEBRATE EASTER AT THE CROSS

By PASTOR
GREG KENNEDY

Hello Friends,

I am encouraged to hear back from so many of you on this current sermon series: "Connect Every Day." It is inspired by our very own "Connect Day," a day of service the second Saturday every August. On that day, the young and old, with a healthy dose of athletes from Finneytown High School, offer themselves as servants to the needs of the community. It's easy to see God's work with all the people painting, repairing, planting and sprucing up the area.

**Continue with Greg,
last page**

Congregational meeting recap

From the annual meeting: Financial reports, where we've been and where we're going. Page 6



Cross on the Lawn: A Holy Season Invitation

Bring your worries, pains and hopes to the first-ever, giant cross on the church lawn now through Easter, March 31. Everyone is welcome to come and reflect at the illuminated cross, remembering that Jesus died for our sins so we can have eternal life with Him.

During Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday on March 24, you'll be invited to write a word of hope or prayer on a stone at the foot of the cross. Then watch the purple cloth draped on the cross turn to black on Good Friday and white on Easter.

Take a seat at the cross. You're welcome any time, all the time.

Easter at Northminster

Find a full schedule of Easter services and activities planned for March, plus read the inside story of the Cross on the Lawn. Pages 3 and 4



NORTHMINSTER WHO'S WHO

Senior pastor:

Greg Kennedy

Executive Director:

Mike Steel

Director, Congregational Care:

Daniel Meister

Director, Children's Ministry:

Sara Potts

Director, Student Ministries:

Brady Chastain

Director, Traditional Music:

Carolyn Miller

Organist:

Karen Balogh

Director, Modern Worship:

Rachel Steel

Clerk of Session:

Jane Whalen

Production Director:

Tom Haines

Communications Director:

Collin Jung

Facilities Director:

Jason Colemann

Ministry Assistant:

Trudy Teemley

ATTENDANCE REPORT

Average attendance for
the past four Sundays,
including children:

Modern Worship

In person: 132

Online: 79

Traditional Worship

In person: 115

Online: 69

WORSHIP WITH US

Modern

9 a.m. Sundays in the Well

Traditional

11 a.m. Sundays, the Sanctuary

Online and on demand

northminsterchurch.org +

Facebook Live

FINANCE DIRECTOR SOUGHT

Elders have authorized the hiring of a part-time Finance Director. Six volunteers have been helping Session with the books for the past year.

See finance volunteers, page 6

CORPORATE OFFICERS NAMED

Elders also have named corporate officers to act as the church's representatives in any government or legal actions in 2024. They are:

President:

Mike Brooks

Treasurer:

Mark Kremzar

CALL US: (513) 931-0243

**703 Compton Road
Cincinnati, OH 45231**

FINANCIAL REPORT Through January	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Gain or (Loss)	Comment
TOTAL INCOME	\$142,727	\$130,172	\$12,555	
Pledged/unpledged giving	\$140,868	\$128,505	\$12,363	Some pledges already fully paid
Interest, other income	\$1,859	\$1,667	\$192	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$108,512	\$100,935	(\$7,577)	We prepaid some bills for entire year in Jan.
INCOME MINUS EXPENSES	\$34,215	\$29,237	\$4,978	Income exceeded expenses
SAVINGS/FUNDS TAPPED	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$0	From Big Step Fund, as budgeted
NET SURPLUS or (DEFICIT)	\$41,715	\$36,737	\$4,978	A good start to 2024!

Inside story: Cross on the Lawn

The idea for an old rugged cross on the lawn started with a staff meeting in January.

"We wanted to create the same feeling outside that we did with the Christmas lights," facilities director Jason

Colemann said.

"We wanted to make a statement, to welcome the community to come inside, worship with us."

And so the cross was born.

Jason called his buddies.

John Zimmermann found a tree big enough and strong enough at his 10-acre woodsy camp in Brookville, Ind. The oak was perfectly imperfect, just right for Easter and the imperfect humans Jesus saved.

John called more buddies.

Jason, John and several others gathered in Brookville, eventually dragging the heavy felled oak (half a ton?) onto a flatbed trailer donated by Matt Viola for the 45-mile ride back to Northminster.

Cutting the cross began on the weekend before Ash Wednesday. Originally expected to be 10 feet tall, the cross had grown to 15 feet.

John Z had done the homework: Crossbars on a crucifixion cross were typically half as long as the



From front: Brady Chastain, Jason Colemann, John Zimmermann, John Suer, Becca Colemann and Conner Zimmermann haul the tree out of the woods.

cross was high. The crossbars were affixed one-fourth of the cross' length from the top. Railroad spikes would signify the nails driven into Jesus.

Before it was finished, lots of others offered ideas and muscle: Tony Trotta, Denny Fennema, Kenny Burck, J.T.Harrison, Beth Zimmermann, Becca Colemann, Mike Steel. Production director Tom Haines helped wire and light the cross for safety. Ministry assistant Trudy Teemley scouted for fabric to drape over the cross.

And finally, it was ready.

Ready to welcome anyone to stop and reflect. Ready to offer hope to everyone driving by on Compton. And ready to help all of us remember the wonderful Savior we have.

"Hopefully, we capture that Easter can be two things – something somber that turns into a glorious moment," Jason said. "That's the moment I'm aiming for."



CELEBRATE EASTER

Cross on Lawn Through Easter

Take a few minutes or more to lay your worries down. You're always welcome.

Palm Sunday March 24

Our children will sing and parade in the annual Palm Processional, at both 9 a.m. Modern and 11 a.m. Traditional services.

Good Friday March 29

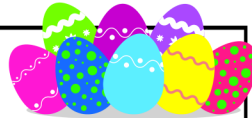
Join us for a service remembering the day our Lord died for us. 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary.

Easter Sunday March 31

- Sunrise service, 7 a.m., Spring Grove Cemetery. Led by Pastor Greg
- 9 a.m. Modern Worship, the Well
- 11 a.m., Traditional, Sanctuary



EASTER WITH THE KIDS



EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 23
10:30 a.m.-noon



Kick off your Easter celebrations with a morning full of fun family activities, and of course, the main event: our Egg Hunt! This event happens rain or shine. If the weather is nice, we will see you on the front lawn. If it's raining, we will take the fun inside. We can't wait to see you there!

LEARNING ABOUT JESUS' MIRACLES

Children in preschool through grade 5 are enjoying another session of KNOT (Kids Night Out Thursday) Club, learning about Jesus' miracles and how they can serve others using the gifts God has given them.

The six-week session will end with a family dinner at 6 p.m. on March 21. Then all the kids will be invited to join in the annual Palm Processional on Palm Sunday, March 24.

KNOT Club
Thursdays through March 21
4:30-6 p.m.
Nursery care also is available.

Reserve your Easter flowers

Reserve your Easter flowers for the Palm Sunday and Easter services in the Sanctuary and Well. Find order forms in the Commons, call (513) 931-0243 or go online at northminsterchurch.org.

Let us know what you'd like printed in the bulletin ("in honor/memory of") and if you will take your plant after the Easter service or let deacons deliver it to members and friends ill or at home. Flowers will include lilies, tulips, hydrangeas, azaleas.

Cost: \$16 each

Let's take a "Journey to the Cross"

Retired pastor Rhoda Brumfield is presenting an overview of the life of Jesus, using the gospels, archeological information confirming life in the first century, pictures taken on location to understand the land Jesus walked, maps tracing His movements, and movie clips to enhance our understanding.

When: Wednesdays
Through March 20, 7-8 p.m.
Disciples Hall, downstairs

Sermon series

"Connect Every Day:" We have a holy purpose every time we walk out the door of our houses, our church, our workplaces. Pastor Greg talks more about this in his column, front page



MODERN SPACE TEAM INVITES YOURS THOUGHTS

An invitation from the Modern Worship Expansion Team:

Your voice matters to us, whether you've recently become part of our congregation or have been walking with us for years. Now, the Modern Worship Expansion team is eager to hear your insights and perspectives as we look for a solution to overcrowding in the Well.

But we're not just interested in your views on that challenge. Our team has quickly learned that any solution to overcrowding also depends on your answers to much larger questions: What kind of church do we want that feeds our soul and sends us outward? What changes do we need to make so our children and grandchildren want to worship here for years to come? What are we doing well? Where can we improve?

In April, our team will distribute a church-wide survey to invite each of you to share your ideas about all these things.

Then later in the summer, we will host "listening groups" for open and honest dialogue about our collective aspirations. Your input from these efforts will guide not only our work, but that of the Vision Committee considering long-range plans and the Session as a whole.

During Pastor Greg's upcoming sabbatical, themed "Pause and Pivot," from April 14 to July 23, our church also will pause and reflect. During that time, our team will gather your input and explore potential solutions to capacity concerns. After Greg returns, the team anticipates presenting a proposal to the Session for their final decision.

Your participation and feedback are invaluable. Together, let us dream and envision Northminster's future.

Modern Worship Expansion Team	
Chad Engleman	Teri Spindler
Lee Ann Hamilton	Mike Steel
Laurie Laning	Harry Stone
Sean McCabe	



135 kids from the church and surrounding community attended VBS last year.

Vacation Bible School Registration



It's almost time to sign up the kids for a summer week they won't forget. Registration will open on Palm Sunday, March 24, for Vacation Bible School 2024. Watch for this year's theme to be announced on Palm Sunday, too.

VBS June 17-21

9:30 a.m.-noon each day

Ages 3 through 6th grade

Register at

northminsterchurch.org/vbs

Check the Lost & Found

Are you missing a travel mug, reading glasses or an earring? Please check the Lost & Found box in the Commons, behind the receptionist desk. Unclaimed items at the end of the month will be donated or disposed of.



2023 was deemed an excellent financial year, helped by a rebounding stock and bond market, strong stewardship and a generous congregation supporting growth. A recap of the Jan. 28 meeting:

THE BOTTOM LINES	2024 (projected)	2023 (actual)
INCOME TOTAL	\$1,206,600	\$1,257,067
Pledges, other contributions	\$1,079,000	\$1,088,930
Loose offerings	\$6,000	\$3,831
Interest, estate gifts, other	\$14,000	\$50,406
Transfers from funds, savings	\$107,600	\$113,900
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$1,263,140	\$1,163,985
Staff, facilities, administration	\$1,059,032	\$1,014,769
Children's, youth, other ministries	\$48,118	\$38,981
Worship and music	\$22,950	\$13,662
Missions	\$93,040	\$96,573
Transfer to capital reserve	\$0	\$40,000
SURPLUS (LOSS)	(\$56,540)	\$93,082

A 12-page detailed accounting ("2023 Annual Report - Summary") is available in the Commons or by calling (513) 931-0243.

Thank you, finance team

Northminster's volunteer finance team redesigned the budgeting process in 2023, taking input from Session, so the elders could approve the 2024 budget in a more timely fashion, by year's end. Thanks to the team for all the hard work!



Denny Fennema
(chair)



David Addison



Don Bahr



Mel Hensey



Beth Mizelle



Marianne Lord
(secretary)

Highlights

- Total income last year came in at 19% over budget, while expenses were held at 4% under budget.
- Last year ended with a \$93,082 budget surplus, after starting with a \$35,906 budget deficit.
- The \$56,540 deficit shown in the 2024 budget is not concerning because we have underspent the budget by \$50,000-\$70,000 for the past 18 years. The trend is expected to continue.
- Healthy financial reserves are available to fund programs that fuel ministries, membership and attendance growth.
- Northminster does not have any debt.
- Total assets including cash and investments stood at \$2.71 million at the end of 2023. Church land and buildings are currently valued at \$3 million.

Pastor's terms of call

The congregation unanimously approved terms of call totaling \$157,779 for Pastor Greg Kennedy. It includes:

- \$69,216 in salary
- \$42,000 for housing
- \$42,563 in benefits (pension; death & disability; medical/dental/eyeware insurance)
- \$4,000 for continuing education, books, professional expenses
- 4 weeks vacation
- 2 weeks study leave
- Sabbatical leave

1,300 prayers knitted in love

Shawl Ministry marks 21 years

Chances are that many, if not most, of us share this treasure: A prayer shawl knitted with love and prayer by women in the Northminster Knitting Ministry. The group has knitted more than 1,300 shawls since the first one was blessed and presented to someone – 21 years ago on March 5, 2003.

The shawls are presented to people grieving the loss of a loved one or dream shattered, suffering illness or financial or social misfortune – any circumstance that calls for a circle of grace to surround them.

Shawls have gone with church mission groups to the Dominican Republic and Guatemala; more are expected to make the journey back to Guatemala this year.

This prayer is said over every shawl

I knit a mantle of caring,
I knit a mantle of protection.
I knit a mantle of wholeness,
I knit a mantle of strength.
I knit a mantle of healing,
I knit a mantle of patience.
I knit a mantle to enfold you,
I knit a mantle to encircle you.

As I knit, I ask for these blessings in the name of God: the Creator, the Giver of life, the Holder of time.
In the name of Jesus: the Savior, the Healer and the Lifter of pain.
And in the name of the Holy Spirit: the Comforter, the Consoler, the Sustainer of life. Amen.

Know someone who would be comforted with a shawl? Please call the church office at (513) 931-0243 to arrange a delivery. The Knitting Ministry has provided an average 33 shawls a year for the past six.



Gay Volz, Sandy Holzman, Patti Kellett, Debbie Brandt and Alice Lee invite you to join them. You don't even have to know how to knit -- they'll teach you! Email Alice Lee at aklee@zoomtown.com.

A ledger at church lists every person who's ever been presented with a shawl (except those sent abroad). Sandy Holzman, who's been with the group since the start, also shares an accounting that once figured it takes 17 hours to knit one shawl made up of 16,800 stitches! (Those are garter and stockinette stitches, btw.)

HOOT'S OUR LINK TO MARCH MADNESS!



March Madness has a special meaning every year for John "Hoot" Gibson, a Northminster member for 59 years. Hoot was a 6-foot-2 senior on the Kansas State Wildcats team in 1951 when they played the Kentucky Wildcats in the final game for the national college basketball championship. (Kentucky won 68-58.)

These days, Hoot, 93, is a resident in the memory care unit at Maple Knoll. The former guard and forward doesn't shoot baskets anymore, but he still keeps physically fit and plays ping pong three times a week.

And about that name? Hoot refers to that other Hoot Gibson, American rodeo champion and silent film actor in the 1920s through '40s. Our Hoot's son Brian said most Gibson boys of that day were called Hoot.

Best wishes, Hoot!
We're rooting for you.



BRAVO!



Arts Fair Welcome Wagon



Answer Lady Rhoda Fahr welcomed the crowd.



Gary Tyler worked the raffle.



Gay Volz helped at Fair Trade Mkt.



Cooking in the kitchen: Diane Siegel, Carol Gates, Ted Barrett and Laurie Barrett.



In the command center: Volunteer coordinator Karen Friedhoff and Marianne Lord.

Organizers of the 18th annual Fine Arts Fair knew that 80-100 volunteers would be needed to pull off a successful show on Feb. 3. So how many church people signed up for the job? One-hundred thirty-seven (137)!

Karen Friedhoff, who has volunteered her own time for nearly every year the fair has been held, coordinated the volunteer effort. Her count: 20 snack bakers, 20 at the café, 20 on the leadership team, 10 at the Welcome Center, 10 for set-up, 10 for clean-up, 8 tending the snack bar, 8 helping artists, 8 with kids' art, 6 with the raffle, 2 at artist check-out and 15 "all-important 'Work Anywhere' folks."

JOURNEY TO HOPE SETS LEADERSHIP CHANGE



Diane Kinsella, CEO at Journey to Hope for 16 years, is retiring effective June 1.

"Diane has been an extraordinary leader," board chair Dale Elliott said. "She has built the program to include a

broad range of coaching groups reflecting the needs of the community. Her commitment to this organization and the people it serves has sprung from her own deep faith and belief that every single person can find a path to their best self."

Diane intends to continue to provide support after her retirement, helping the mission's new hub at Sycamore Presbyterian Church, leading some groups and training facilitators.

"I have loved the work here," Diane said. "I want to ensure a smooth transition towards our new vision, and I am grateful for the many opportunities I have had. I am also looking forward to slowing down a little bit and enjoying my retirement with John and our family!"

Journey to Hope has been a 501(c)(3) nonprofit since 2015, when it was born from the former Family Life Center, where Diane also was CEO. Located in the Woodview home at the western edge of the church parking lot, Journey to Hope is a Christ-centered mission helping people cope with some of the most difficult times in life. Northminster has been its biggest backer.

The Board of Directors is recruiting a new CEO. If you or someone you know is interested to learn more, please go to the group's website at jth.org.



Chef Joy puts the food into 50+ fellowship

Ask people who attend the 50+ gatherings why they keep coming back, and the answer may well be – the food! Joy Dreyer has been the group's chef for three years, preparing gourmet lunch cuisine for 40-80 attendees six times a year. Among the many dishes: succulent roast pork loin and green beans, spaghetti and meatballs with homemade marina sauce, and the crowd-pleasing meatloaf and mashed potatoes from scratch. (Joy actually considers herself more a baker than chef, and once did a carrot cake bake-off with Pastor Greg. Don't ask him; she won.)

Joy plans the 50+ meals a month in advance, shops for food and arrives in the church kitchen at 8 a.m. on Thursday to finish the feast by noon. Her sous chefs are Janet Byers and Kenny Burck.

"The 50+ group would not be meeting if we did not have a volunteer chef," says Carolyn Miller, group chair. "Joy has been great to work with, and her meals are delicious. I hope she stays with us for a long time."

A graduate of the



Joy Dreyer: "I just like cooking for people, especially large crowds."

March 50+: See where Harriet Beecher Stowe lived

Discover the Walnut Hills home of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin. We'll take a virtual tour of the house that was one of few places in Cincinnati listed in the 1940 Green Motorist Book as safe for African-Americans. Reserve your lunch spot by signing up in the Commons or calling the church office at (513) 931-0243.

When: Thursday, March 21

Where: Disciples Hall

Lunch at noon, before the program: \$10

Joy's menu: Beef stew with buttered egg noodles, salad, rolls, desserts

University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Joy taught music for 17 years at Monford Heights and Landmark Christian elementary schools. She also taught piano, accompanied the choir at Wyoming High School and was children's ministry

director at Vineyard Northwest.

An avid gardener, Joy has attended Northminster since 2013. She and husband Gus live in Springfield Township and have two grown children and a 1-year-old granddaughter.

Middle School lock-in set

Middle-school kids will find games, food, fun and fellowship – and match wits with each other to figure the exit from a challenging "escape room" – during an overnight lock-in. High school volunteers will help Brady run the fun.



March 15 in the Youth Room, Cost: \$10
Sign up at northminsterchurch.org/events



BIRTHS

**Madeline Anne
and
Maximilian Arthur
McCabe**

Born Jan. 25, 2024
Parents are Sean and
Emily McCabe

DEATHS

**Ken Saunders
Feb. 2, 2024**

Former member
A service was on
Feb. 18

*

**Barbara Ebrite
Feb. 3, 2024**

A service was on
Feb. 23

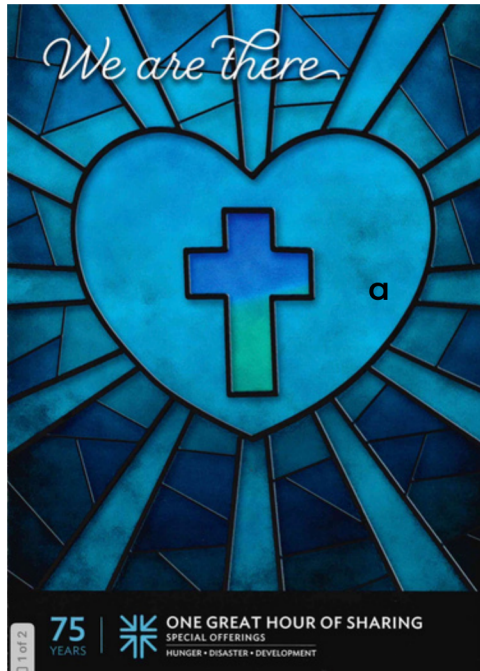
Election Day voting here

Voters in the March
19 presidential
primary will be
casting ballots in
the Well from 6:30
a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

New church directories

An updated
directory of church
members is out.
Get your 2024
edition in the
Commons and
around the
church. Thank you,
Trudy Teemley!

One Great Hour of Sharing



Second-Mile Offering

For 75 years during Lent, this special offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has shared God's love around the world. Programs help people recovering from natural and human-caused disasters, refugees fleeing war and others fighting poverty and/or injustice.

To contribute, go to northminsterchurch.org/give or drop a check to Northminster with "One Great Hour of Sharing" on the memo line into the collection plate.

SECOND-MILE COLLECTION IN JANUARY:

Northminster raised \$599 for Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center, which provides food, clothing and other help for neighbors in need.



Preschool flower fundraiser starts soon

Purchase a basket of gorgeous spring flowers from March 4-22 and help support Northminster Preschool. To view the selections, visit jocogrowers.com/bloom-spring-flowers/ and click on "view catalog" or stop by the Preschool Office door (Room 4) in the Children's wing. Then just sign the order sheet and place your check in the mailbox on the door. Checks must be made out to JOCO Growers.

Orders can be picked up at the Preschool playground between 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on April 28. Or, schedule a specific time by calling (513) 964-2323.

Tax prep team available to help file returns

Northminster volunteers are offering free help in preparing and filing individual income tax returns. The team will be in the Well every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. through April 10, and on Monday, April 15. Tuesday dates also have been added on March 12 and 26 and April 9. To make an appointment, call the United Way at 211 or go online at uwgc-freetaxprep.as.me

Want to help prepare the taxes? Email David Addison at addifam@fuse.net.



PASTOR GREG, from front page

The annual Connect Day is a blast, but like Christmas, it only comes once a year. Which is a bit of a bummer.

"Connect Every Day" the sermon series is an effort to magnify the effects of our once-a-year experience. More importantly, it is a call to faithfulness. "Connect Every Day" assumes:

The mission of God is alive and well, closer than ever.

You don't need a passport; you may not even have to leave your house. It can happen across the world or just a few feet from where you are right now.

Mission can be so very many things.

It can be a mission of forgiveness, creating community, sharing resources, challenging injustice, bringing encouragement or proclaiming hope and life in Jesus Christ.

Small is good.

Lots of small mission tends to be far more impactful than big mission.

The mission engine is powered by the spirit of God.

It isn't a committee structure, a bountiful budget, a shared Christian interest.

Mission is what we are created for.

How do we know? Because we are created in the image of God. If God is missional, then so are we.

John 20:21 – As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.

So, what is your mission today? If you're not sure – or even if you are – come join us this Sunday and consider anew your incredible purpose.

CHRIST CENTERED
CALLED INTO COMMUNITY
MAKING RIPPLES



You heard it through the grapevine

Thanks for reading this issue of the Northminster Newsletter. Have comments, questions, suggestions?

We'd also love to share your milestone birthdays, anniversaries, honors, new jobs, the moments that matter to you and your family. Email Lee Ann Hamilton at hamilton@cinci.rr.com. Have a great month!