



Desert Disciplines- A Journey through Lentfrom Dick's Desk

Once again we approach the season of Lent. Lent is the season when we remember Jesus' time of discernment and deepening faith in the desert that followed his baptism. Lent has traditionally been a time, forty days (not including Sundays or Holy Week) for Christians to deepen their faith. This has been done by giving something up for Lent or for many protestants by taking on a certain discipline during Lent.

Early forms of Christian discipline and spiritual growth were characterized by three steps: purgation (letting something go or risking something), illumination (opening to a new spiritual truth or understanding), and union (being more fully in God's presence). Many of the early Christians traveled or lived in the desert so that they like Jesus could find this closeness or intimacy with God. The desert is a place of vulnerability, where we are forced to let go of our control and trust in God's presence and providence. Some people never returned from the desert.

I have been reflecting on what I will do for Lent and for deepening my spiritual journey. This year my focus will be on solitude. One author writes for pastors, *a primary hazard of ministry is attending to the needs of others and neglecting our need to be alone to "recharge our inner lives."* So this Lent I commit to carving out at least four hours a week for solitude. Some of that time will be in my own back yard and some of that will be on a trip to Big Bend. Big Bend is one of those spiritual places for me. It always renews my spirit and draws me closer to God.

This year for Lent I will be preaching a series of sermons entitled Desert Disciplines. Weekly sermons will include Overcoming Temptation, Conquering Fear, and Finding Forgiveness. In addition, we will have three special services to assist you in your spiritual discipline: Ash Wednesday (March 6 at 6:00 pm) - a light supper together followed by a service of music, communion, and imposition of ashes (for those who find this meaningful); Maunday Thursday (April 18 at 6:30 pm) - a service of music and communion and darkness; Good Friday (April 19 at 12 noon) - an hour long service of music and reflection during the traditional hours that Jesus hung on the cross for us.

Whatever you decided to do for Lent, I pray that God's Holy Spirit will lead us, comfort us, and give us spiritual growth. And I hope you will join us on this journey through Lent.



PW Circles in March

Our three Presbyterian Women circles continue their studies in March. The Wednesday and Saturday Circles are using the Horizons Bible Study *God's Promise, I Am With You* and studying Lesson 7. Our circle leaders have copies. Anyone is welcome to join any of our three Circles.

Our Day Circle will meet Wednesday March 13 at 10:00 am in the Visions Room at the Church. The Saturday Circle will meet in the Church Parlor on Saturday March 9 at 9:30 am. The Evening Circle will meet for dinner and study on Monday March 11 at 6:30 pm at Anne Detweiler's home. The Evening Circle are studying *Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes* by E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien. They will study Chapter 7.

Questions? Call Judy Harris, 210-602-7992.

Good News from our Mission Co-Worker!

Northwood continues to support mission co-workers Charles and Melissa Johnson in many ways. Recently we were able to help in a small way when our PW provided a required letter in support of Melissa's grant request to the PW Thank Offering. She hoped to begin a new project that will provide screenings for cervical cancer. Melissa's vision and planning were recognized by the granting board which awarded her \$40,000!

The Thank Offering is a special offering that is received each fall. It gives women a tangible way to express gratitude for the special blessings in their lives; hence, "Thank Offering." The grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and at least 40 percent of the offering funds go to health ministries.

Melissa's excitement showed in an email after she got the good news. In her email Melissa wrote: "I have exciting news!!! We were awarded \$40,000 for our cervical cancer program!! Thank you so much for supporting us in this application! Continued prayers are requested so that we can manage this smoothly and so that many women here will have improved health!"

You can send congratulations and encouragement to Melissa at melissa.johnson@pcusa.org.

Lemonade & Laughter and an Easter Treat

Helen Smith

The Membership Committee hosted a Laughter and Lemonade after worship after the wonderful service for Scout Sunday. There was a lot of laughter as the cookies were enjoyed, and we'll hold another Laughter and Lemonade event in April.

An Easter treat is in store for you from the Membership Committee. The committee has purchased car magnets with the NPC logo, the statement "All are welcome," and the NPC website on them. NPC families can display the magnets on their cars. You'll be able to pick one up on Easter Sunday from the Membership Easter Basket!

Finance and Stewardship Looks Back at 2018

Patty Clark

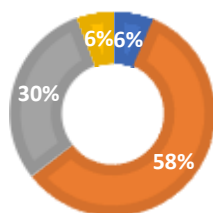
We have been working on Budgets for 2019, but you may be wondering: Where did we spend our money in 2018? Here is an overview:



Giving & Offerings - 63%	\$187,920.96
Building Usage - 13%	\$39,090.50
Endowment & Interest - 24%	\$70,962.37
TOTAL 2018 Income	\$297,973.83
Mission & Service - 6%	\$19,735.14
Building & Grounds - 30%	\$90,647.30
Personnel & Admin - 58%	\$177,039.43
Worship & Programs - 6%	\$17,637.25
TOTAL 2018 Expenses	\$305,059.12
Difference	-\$7,085.29

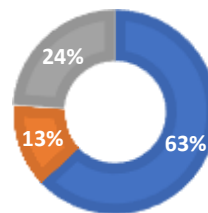
NPC EXPENSES 2018 (ACTUALS) \$305,059.12

■ Mission & Service - 6% ■ Personnel & Admin - 58%
■ Building & Grounds - 30% ■ Worship & Programs - 6%



NPC INCOME 2018 (ACTUALS) \$297,973.83

■ Giving & Offerings - 63% ■ Building Usage - 13%
■ Endowment & Interest - 24%



A quick reminder

If you haven't filled out and returned a Time & Talent survey, you still can! Pick one up in the Narthex and turn it in to an usher or to the office. There's something for everyone to do at Northwood – let your gifts be shared!

What's Happening at the Day School

Martha Sherrod

The kids may have had the day off on Presidents Day, but the Day School teachers were busy getting their learning on! We spent the morning at Inspire Fine Art Center making some beautiful art pieces. Not only was it a time for the teachers to be together and support each other away from school, but we came away with the truth that we need to continue to encourage our kids to try to do things that may be out of their comfort zone. Each child is gifted in some way. In the afternoon we reviewed updates to licensing regulations and lesson planning. We also began working on new on-line staff development that will allow the teachers to continue to gain the staff development hours required each year.

Our own Mr. Owen is going to conduct a training for teachers, Day School parents, and Northwood parents on Saturday, March 23!! He will help us learn the importance of music and singing to/with children (and the proper way to do it!) and YES!! Everyone can sing to a child 😊

Open Enrollment for the summer and the 2019-2020 school year has begun!!! Spaces are filling up so please spread the word to anyone looking for a high-quality faith-based child-centered learning environment for their child.

Thank you, Ms. Rebecca, for working so hard on our PreK-4-SA grant and all the great things we have been able to do with the money: great staff training, curriculum, mentors, outdoor learning environment equipment, and much more.

As always, please come on down anytime and see the great things happening in your Day School!!!



Women's Spring Retreat: Regarding the Journey



On a sunny day in February, these NPC women headed to Canyon Lake PC for the PW spring retreat. Presenter Jan Williams lead them in seeking creative ways to remember and express gratitude through the way that works best for each of them: words, pictures, photographs, or another medium. They also shared favorite photos and told stories about treasured mementos.



This Month at Book Club: Read Aloud

Mary Middleton

Dear Readers,

You're invited to our March 31 meeting (a change from the fourth Sunday to the fifth Sunday!!) which will be a Read Aloud, 5:30 pm at the Middleton home.

What our Read Aloud means is that members are invited to bring a short fiction piece, a poem, a portion of a chapter, or a short story to share by reading it aloud. Or come and enjoy being the ones to whom we are reading.

There are also some changes to our title lineup. The April 28 selection is *House at the Edge of Night* (Catherine Banner) and on May 26 we will discuss *Butterfly's Daughter* (Mary Alice Monroe).

Hope you will be able to make these meetings. Ask me about the locations.

DOFF Update from Personnel and Administration

Cotton Clark

After our unsuccessful attempt to find the first-ever Director of Faith Formation (DOFF) for Northwood last fall, the DOFF committee re-engaged its task in the new year, addressed follow-on questions by Session, and then posted the job offer on public job posting boards. We have now begun to receive official queries and will soon engage a process to vet the candidates, after which we will begin the interview process.

As before, the committee is chaired by Karissa Arnett. We have no set deadline, other than to work as quickly and diligently as we can to fill the position.

A Personal Note of Thanks

WOW! Have I experienced the love, compassion and concern from each of you! Because of you and our Lord, I am doing well.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your prayers, cards, food, visits, calls, and general inquiries during my recent emergency gall bladder surgery. I am not a patient person when it comes to slowing down and that has been the hardest for me, but through prayers and reminders, I have learned. It is very difficult to receive when you are the one who loves to give, but that, too, I have learned.

We are truly a family and we take care of our flock, just as Christ is our Shepherd. Thank you and God bless you one and all.

Love you, Jane Wright



Session Report

Session meetings are scheduled to be held later in the month than previously, and so Session minutes will appear in later issues of the *Breezeway*. We hope to publish minutes for the Feb. 26 Session meeting in the April *Breezeway*.



Slow Mo

Owen Duggan, Music Director and lecturer in Sacred Music at Our Lady of the Lake University

I always like to know the meaning behind terms. While trying to grapple with the origins of the word Lent, I ran into two seemingly different words: the Latin *lentus* which means slow and the Middle English *lente* which means lengthening, specifically of the days during springtime. Which one is it? Then I thought about musical time. *Lento* is used when a composer wishes the music to go slowly. To get the desired effect, one would have to lengthen or broaden the notes or the beats themselves. Simply put, four bars of slow music take more time than four bars of fast music.

So, for the season of Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on March 6, to get in the spirit of things, perhaps we ought to try moving a little slower. Of course, moving quickly allows us to skim over the things that aren't going so great in our lives. Slowing down could mean we might actually have to face that person we find difficult, or finish that helpful project we have been neglecting, or spend a little time with that person we know is lonely.

Doing things in slow mo can mean a lot of things. Like pushing your grocery cart around at a reasonable speed so as not to appear quite so desperate, or not honking at the person who backed out and cut you off in the parking lot because you were driving too fast. Or actually reading a book instead of constantly swiping at a blue screen. Or going to church. Or really listening to music. Or praying. Or actually getting some quality rest. If you are starting to twitch at even the mention of such things, it might be time for you to go slow, Mo. At least for Lent.

Don't worry. Easter's just around the corner. You can pick up right where you left off and show that guy in the parking lot what you really think! 😊

Plan Now to Meet 'n' Greet

Jane Wright

It is a month away, but we want you to mark your calendars now so you won't forget. Your Fellowship Team is hosting another Meet 'n' Greet following worship on Sunday, March 31. Our hope is that you will stay a little longer and meet those whom you've seen but not able to talk with as well as greet others whom you know and take this opportunity to "catch up."

We, here at Northwood, pride ourselves in being a friendly and loving congregation and what better way to share that love with one another than over a few light refreshments, hugs, handshakes, and above all communication.

Please mark your calendars-- March 31!



The Breezeway Needs You

Ever wonder why something you know about isn't in the *Breezeway*? The likely reason is that no one submitted it. Make the *Breezeway* better by emailing photos and information to anne.little@sbcglobal.net. And thanks.