



Merry Christmas

There's a sadness as we approach this Christmas. It's a sadness born of the pandemic sickness and death that hangs in the air. It's also a sadness of being socially distanced from one another. Since October, it's been good for my soul to see 20-something people gather each week in the sanctuary for Sunday worship. Even with this blessing, it's tough not to see full faces and smiles and especially to get hugs. Elbow bumps are great but I'm a hugger at heart. Christmas is a time for hugs, for family,

and for coming home. This year we seem to be stuck where we do not want to be, with no apparent way home.

Isaiah 40 talks about a situation like this. God's people are stuck in Exile, in a place they would rather not be, with no apparent way home. God's good news is twofold. First, God promises a way home; "Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill made low," and there shall be a super highway in the desert, so the people can get home. And second, "the Lord God comes" to the people and "will feed his flock like a shepherd."

A lot of things are out of control right now, at least in my life. I have a higher level of frustration most of the time. It takes 30% more energy to do just about everything. It seems the harder I try to organize myself and my world, the more chaotic things become and the more lost I feel.

The Good News of Christmas is that it's not about me and what I can or can't do. It's about God and what God has done and will do, even in the face of chaos and lostness. This Christmas, may we encounter the God of love who comes to feed us, and may each of us, wherever we are, find our way home.

Merry Christmas to you and yours. Thank you for the honor of serving the Northwood family.

Blessings and Love, Your Church Staff,

Owen Duggan, Music Director

Deborah Rhine-Bading, Pianist

Rebecca Cranfill, Day School Director

Libby Overholt, Secretary

Dick Kreutzer, Interim Pastor

Northwood Opportunities to Prepare for Christ's Coming

Advent Bible Study



Join us as we prepare our hearts and minds, through song and scripture study, for the coming again of Emmanuel, God with Us.

Wednesday evenings in December

5:00-6:15 pm via Zoom

Dec 2 ~ Waiting With Peace

Dec 9 ~ Waiting with Joy

Dec 16 ~ Waiting with Love

Contact Pastor Dick for the Zoom invitation.

Advent Photo Challenge Runs Now Through Christmas on Facebook

The NPC Advent Photo Challenge 2020 is simple. Each day for 25 days in December, we post photos that match with the word of the day to help us focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

Advent is a time for waiting and renewal. Take photos, create art, and share in the group. Invite friends and family to participate with you.

[#NPCAdvent2020](https://www.facebook.com/NPCAdvent2020)

To join, search Facebook for the group NPCADVENT2020 and start posting.

Dec. 1 Wait	Dec. 8 Holy	Dec. 15 Rejoice	Dec. 22 Neighbor
Dec. 2 Time	Dec. 9 Nourish	Dec. 16 Memory	Dec. 23 Comfort
Dec. 3 Moment	Dec. 10- Hope	Dec. 17 Free	Dec. 24 Joy
Dec. 4 Awake	Dec. 11 Justice	Dec. 18 Mercy	Dec. 25 Love
Dec. 5 Wisdom	Dec. 12 Sparkle	Dec. 19 Peace	
Dec. 6 Ancient	Dec. 13 Water	Dec. 20 Sign	
Dec. 7 Delight	Dec. 14 Gather	Dec. 21 Star	

For Families with Children: Family Fun Friday!

Families of young children at Northwood are invited to join together (socially distanced) to watch a couple of short Christmas classics on the lawn. Please wear a mask as you find the perfect spot for your family to spread out a blanket, or set up camp chairs; during the movie you are welcome to have any snacks you bring with you... popcorn, dinner, a thermos of hot cocoa. We will meet at 6 pm on Friday, Dec 18 for this festive time of fellowship. Contact Vanessa Mueller for more information.



For Youth:

Nativity Escape Room

Youth of Northwood, together at home with their families, are challenged to participate in a Nativity Escape Room. On the evening of Dec. 20, clues will be e-mailed out and the challenge posted to FB so we can track when you have escaped! Enlist the help of a close friend or cousin and see how well you know the story!

Christmas Card Boxes

Our traditional Special Delivery boxes are available for greetings within the NPC family. If you attend worship in person, you are invited to “mail” cards then. If you worship remotely, you may choose to deposit cards on Monday or Thursday afternoon (Libby’s regular office days) or call Anne Detweiler for help.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

The Northwood family will gather on Dec. 24 at 6:30 pm for the traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Whether you are with us in person or by Facebook Live, together we will look to the coming of the Holy Child.



Food Boxes for Agape Ministries

We hope your Advent Food Box for Agape Ministries is filling up as you add an items each day.

On Sunday, Dec. 13, we ask you to bring your box to church between 10:30 and 2:00. Volunteers will be there to accept the filled boxes, and we will deliver them to Agape on Monday, Dec. 14.

Scout Troop 345 has joined with us in collecting food and will be among those taking your filled boxes. If you can't get to us on that Sunday, let us know so we can make other arrangements.

Thank you Northwood for your generosity and love!



Where is Everybody?

The stable in our Sanctuary awaits arrival of other participants in the Christmas story. Mary and Joseph, shepherds with their flock, and wise men move closer each week and will arrive at their appointed times. Until then, look for them around the Sanctuary and in the Narthex, and photos on our Facebook page will let you keep track of their journeys.

A Potpourri Christmas Caroling

Your Fellowship Team invites you to a Potpourri Christmas Caroling, Dec. 20, from 4:00 to 5:30 on the church lawn. We will have individually wrapped cookies and treats and something to wet your whistle to keep your voice in tiptop shape.

We're hoping for a crowd large enough that the whole neighborhood will hear us!!



Day School Teachers Are Learners, Too

Martha Sherrod

The Day School staff was excited to get our learning on in person last month! PreK4SA gave us a day of awesome staff development. The categories of training were Transitions in the Classroom, Communication Strategies, Balancing Your Wellness, Assessment through Observation and Play, Positive Redirection, and Motor Development.

Wow! That's a lot of learning!! Just another example of the training and high qualifications of our Day School teachers and staff!

Our theme for this month is "Seasonal Changes." Isn't that the truth? We are certainly going through seasonal changes in the weather and in our lives. We are all finding new ways of doing things...new ways of working, learning, celebrating. Some things do not change at the Day School...our commitment to high quality teaching, showing the children that they are valued and loved, making sure the parents know their children are safe and well cared for. Even though we cannot welcome visitors or outside enrichment activities at this time, the teachers are providing fun, stimulating activities for our children.

Enrollment continues to be open, so if you know of anyone looking for high-quality faith-based child care, please contact us!! We continue to appreciate your prayers and support of you Day School!! Have a safe and joyful holiday season!



Bookclub Schedule

For the first months of 2021, Bookclub meeting dates are set and books have been chosen:

Jan. 24: *The Kitchen House* by Kathleen Grissom

Feb. 28: *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

March 28: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger

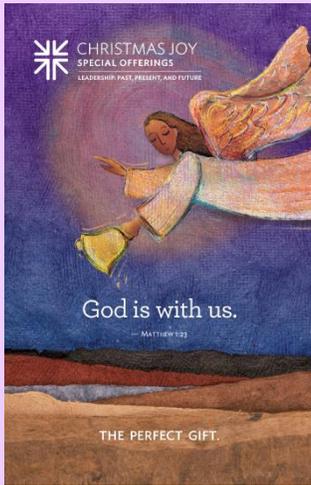
April 25: *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion

May 23: Reading from books; select summer books; select a book for Sept. 26.

The annual Book Exchange is not scheduled, but the Bookclub may meet Dec. 27 in cars in a large parking lot. If you are interested, check with Judy Harris nearer the date.



Members of team Camp Gladiator Northwood Presbies celebrated together after the 2020 Virtual Turkey Trot. They raised more than \$1000 for the SA Food Bank in this year's version of the annual fun-run fund-raiser. Thanks to Sarah Barrientes who organized the team.



Christmas Joy Offering

Elizabeth Hewins, Mission and Outreach chair

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

50% of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Because God is with us, we see church workers who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them.

50% of your gifts provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

Please consider giving your gift to the Joy Offering. You may designate an online gift on our website or use one of the special envelopes that are available in the pews and in the Narthex.



PW Circles in December

Judy Harris

Presbyterian Women Circles will be meeting in December. All women are welcome at any of the circles.

The Evening circle will meet Monday, Dec. 7 via Zoom at 6:00 pm for fellowship followed by the study of Lesson 7 of *Life Lessons From 1 and 2 Thessalonians* by Max Lucado. Sherryl Walsh is the Zoom contact.

The Saturday circle will meet via Zoom at 9:30 am on Dec. 12 for Lesson 4 in the Horizons Bible Study *Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament*. The lesson will be led by Charlotte Canaday and Elizabeth Hewins has Zoom information.

The Wednesday Circle will meet on Dec. 9 at 10:00 am on the lawn at church. They also are studying Lesson 4 of *Into the Light*. Contact Judy Harris for information or questions.

