

Northbrook Presbyterian Church Newsletter

Connections at the Cross

Northbrook Lenten Study

As a part of my preparation for spending a year in South India as a Young Adult Volunteer (YAV), I read a book called *A Strange Accent*. It was written by my program coordinator, the Rev. Thomas John, who was born and raised as a Christian in Kerala, the state in which I'd be living. In the mid-1990's, he served at the Presbyterian Church (USA) headquarters in Louisville as Theologian-in-Residence. In addition to speaking at various churches and conferences, he wrote the book as a reflection on American culture from his unique vantage point.

It would prove to be a window into the provocative thinking of the person I'd call Achen (the word for "father" in Malayalam, the language of Kerala). This title, given to pastors in Kerala, would have extra meaning for me as he became my host father during the year I lived there. Not only did he and his wife, Betty, care for me and help me to adjust to a culture that was radically different than mine, he challenged my thinking - and my faith - in so many ways. In addition to being a pastor in the Church of South India, Achen was a psychology professor at Union Christian College, the first Christian college in India established by Indians, rather than foreign missionaries. Achen has always been called to help the church be faithful to its calling, whether in the U.S. or in India. I was stretched and challenged by him... and I learned to love the bible by studying it in a different context with his differing perspective.

Last year, Thomas John published a new book, *At the Foot of the Cross: Meditations on Lent, Passion, and Resurrection*. It was a collection of old sermons that was re-released as videos to encourage Indian Christians during the Lent of 2021 when Covid was disrupting so much of life. The collection was compiled in book form and published for distribution in India last year. Last fall, Achen reached out to me to see if it might have an audience in the U.S. At first, I wasn't sure how the chapters might translate to our context here in the U.S. Would it address the political divisions, ICE activity in our communities, or the hyper self-absorption we have here with our smart phones and social media? How much connection can there be between Southeast Michigan and Southwest India? After further reflection, I realized that his "strange accent" might be exactly what we need to hear during Lent this year. At the cross, Christ Jesus reconciles all things in him. In a time of such polarization here in the U.S., we might just hear a fresh gospel from a brother from a totally different context.

We will study select chapters from Achen's book for our Wednesday Bible Study - *Growing Together* - during Lent, starting Wednesday, February 25. If you are interested in joining the discussion, but the Wednesday 10am or 7pm times don't work for you, please let me know and I will help other groups get established. I am planning a Zoom conversation with Thomas John (time TBD) so we can hear directly from him and share our questions. As we explore what it means to Abide & Thrive this year, may we discover "the power of connection" by connecting with a brother in faith from across the globe and gathering at the foot of the cross together.

May we abide and thrive,
Pastor Ben



"Live the Love of Jesus Christ"



The New Brady's Bunch - Tuesday, February 3 at 5:30pm

Please join us on Tuesday, February 3 at 5:30pm at the Honey Tree Grille (3633 W. Maple Rd, Bloomfield Twp.) for food and fellowship. Sign up in Fellowship Hall. Contact Barb Voight for any questions.

Lifelong Learners: Amazon Fulfillment Center - Wednesday, February 18 at 2pm

We are once again on the move! This time, we'll head to the Amazon Warehouse in Pontiac. This informative one-hour tour will show us how they manage to quickly and efficiently process orders and send them off to customers worldwide. Conveyor belts, orange robots, and drones are all used in this massive operation - one of the buildings is as large as 28 football fields. The tour is fast-paced, and there is a significant amount of walking and stair climbing involved. There is no place to sit down and rest. Please dress in comfortable clothing. Our scheduled tour is on Wednesday, February 18th at 2pm. This free tour is offered during a school break, so students are welcome to attend as well. We have room for 25 on the tour, and all those who attend will need to be pre-registered a week before the tour. We hope to travel by van, or you may drive yourself. More information and registration details to follow. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall, and contact Liz Hurbis with questions.



Welcome Inn Overnight Program Volunteer Opportunities: February 22 - 28

Northbrook is again partnering with Greenfield Church for a hands-on opportunity for the Welcome Inn Overnight program. The guests stay at Starr Church, where the Day Shelter is located. We are volunteering for the Overnight Program only. Volunteers are needed for dinner prep/serve/clean-up, evening hosts, and overnight hosts. To find out more details and to sign up, [RSVP HERE](#). Contact Barb Voight (248-302-3033/barbvoight@icloud.com) with any questions. More important details can be found [HERE](#).

Abide and Thrive Question of the Month:

Roots collect water and nutrients and anchor the plant to the soil.

What helps you stay grounded?

Connect with someone new this month and share your answers with each other.



Northbrook Church

SAVE THE DATE

Vacation Bible School

JUNE 22-26

Northbrook Presbyterian Church

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Interactive Bible Stories
- Exciting Games & Activities
- Creative Crafts
- Music & Singing
- Friendship & Fun

**STAY TUNED
FOR
MORE INFO SOON!**



Ages 3 through 5th grade

Let's Send a Warm Valentine Hug to Oakland County Neighbors Northbrook Bedding Drive: Now through February 9

Let's send some Northbrook warmth to those less fortunate who receive beds and bedding from area non-profits. While all sizes of NEW bedding items are accepted, there is a greater need for **twin** sizes, especially for children and youth; bedding sets are appreciated, though not necessary. The Bedding Collection will continue through Monday, February 9.

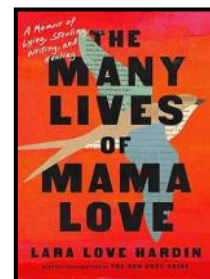
Please place your contributions in the manger area in the main hallway.



Northbrook Book Club—March 9 at 7pm

Everybody is welcome to attend the next Northbrook Book Club discussion of *Fellowship Point* by Alice Elliott Dark on Monday, March 9 at 7pm in Fellowship Hall. Mary D. is hosting this discussion. Please let Nancy Best know if you would like a Zoom invitation.

Book Summary: *The Many Lives of Mama Love* is a heartbreaking and tender journey from shame to redemption. It's *New York Times* bestselling author Lara Love Hardin's memoir about her transformation from a suburban housewife funding a heroin addiction through credit card theft to a successful ghostwriter, detailing her time as a convicted felon in jail and her journey toward redemption, self-acceptance, and healing. It was chosen as an Oprah's Book Club pick for its themes of hope and reinvention. The book chronicles her life as inmate S32179, where she became a leader among inmates, and her subsequent life as a felon navigating a new identity while confronting her past.



"Once you start reading, be prepared, because you won't want to stop." — Oprah Winfrey

Please mark your calendar with these upcoming discussion dates and books:

- ♦ April 20—*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros - Jan hosts
- ♦ June 1—*The Separation of Church and Hate* by John Fugelsang - Yvonne hosts
- ♦ July 13—Book TBD-Shirley hosts
- ♦ August 24—August 24, 2026- *Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant* by Curtis Chin (Great Michigan Read) - Nancy hosts
- ♦ October 5—*The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans -Barb hosts
- ♦ November 16 and January 11, 2027- Book TBD

Service Opportunity: Little Dresses for Africa

I invite you to participate in an upcoming service project supporting *Little Dresses for Africa*, a charity that provides simple dresses to girls in need (<https://littledressesforafrica.org>). This project has been approved by our Mission Connection Committee, and I am grateful for their support in making this outreach possible.

I am looking for **volunteers with basic sewing skills** who are willing to commit a few hours. All fabric, materials, and instructions will be provided. Volunteers will need access to a sewing machine.

If you enjoy sewing and would like to use your talents in service to others, this is a wonderful opportunity to help. Thank you for considering being part of this compassionate project! Date and location TBD. There may be the option to work together as a group or take materials home and work independently. Please contact me if you're interested in participating and would like more details.

~ Mary DeCarteret (248-302-7709)

Trivia Night - Friday, March 13 at 7pm

Join us for Trivia Night on Friday, March 13 at 7pm. This event is open to all those who bid on it during The Main Event auction, as well as anyone who wants to enjoy a fun evening of trivia and light refreshments. Walk-ins are welcome. The fee is \$20 a person at the door. Our trivia host for the night is our own Mike Wicker. All the funds we raise that night will go directly to the church, as the auction funds did. We hope to see you there, and please bring a friend! For more information, contact Stephanie Wicker.

Men's Connection - Tuesdays at 8am and 10am

Men's Connection meets weekly on Tuesday mornings at 8am via Zoom and 10am in-person in the library and via Zoom. We will conclude our exploration of *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis on February 10 and begin our study of N. T. Wright's book, *Romans for Everyone, Part 1, Chapters 1-8 (20th Anniversary Edition with Study Guide)* on February 17. Please contact Walter Young at (248) 877-5411 to be included on Zoom. We welcome new men to this fellowship circle. Hope to see you there and then.

Growing Together - Wednesdays at 10am & 7pm

Join Pastor Ben for the *Growing Together* gatherings on Wednesdays at either 10am or 7pm (in-person and via Zoom). Now through Ash Wednesday, we are going to do a simple bible study where we revisit the scripture from the previous Sunday and then look forward to the text for the upcoming Sunday.

Yoga with Lis - Wednesdays at 11am

Join us for Yoga with Lis classes on Wednesdays at 11am. No fee required, but donations are welcome.

LOGOS - Wednesdays, 5-7pm

LOGOS is our weekly gathering for kids of all ages with games, songs, devotions, crafts, and dinner. Contact Youth Director, Ken Stetson, for more information. **Note: LOGOS will not meet on February 18.*

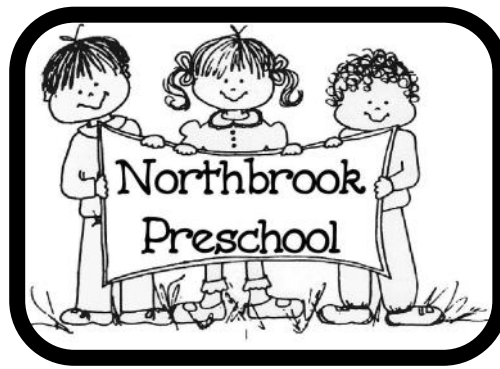
Senior Lunch - 2nd & 4th Thursday of the Month at 1pm

Please join us in the Library at 1pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month for a delicious lunch and good conversation. In February, we will meet on February 12th and 26th. *Please consider volunteering to help with this important program.* See the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

One Great Hour of Sharing February 18 – April 6

During the season of Lent, we will collect this PCUSA Special Offering to share our blessings with others who struggle due to disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, or immigration/migration/refugee status. Worldwide humanitarian work supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) funds provides people and communities with safety, sustenance, and hope through sustainable food resources, clean water, sanitation, education, disaster recovery, and economic opportunity. If you have a packet of offering envelopes, you will find an OGHS envelope in your packet. Whether you use an envelope or not, and whether you give at church or online, please indicate that your payment is for OGHS so your contribution is handled accordingly. Thank you so much for your gifts to help support vulnerable people around the world.





Northbrook Preschoolers are having a great time learning and playing. Our Dads came in for Donuts with Dads and we had such a wonderful time!! We have been learning about going on a Safari. We are NOW registering for the 2026-2027 school year, so please tell everyone you know with young children about our wonderful school.

Northbrook Mission Tithe Dollars at Work as We Share the Love of Jesus Christ

Due to generous contributions totals going through the end of 2025, we were joyfully able to send out the following amounts to the following organizations:

- ◆ \$2,110 Baldwin Center
- ◆ \$252 Southwest Detroit Immigrant & Refugee Center
- ◆ \$500 Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- ◆ \$1,344 CAME/Centro de Atención al Migrante “Exodus”, Frontera de Cristo partner
- ◆ \$379 Calvin East P.C. WORD Literacy Program
- ◆ \$632 Presbytery of Detroit Hunger Ministries
- ◆ \$2,861 Fort Street P.C. Open Door
- ◆ \$2,861 South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless/Welcome Inn
- ◆ \$632 Freedom House Detroit
- ◆ \$1,517 Frontera de Cristo
- ◆ \$1,344 Safe Tonight Shelter Fund

Northbrook, thank you for continuing to share your resources so we can address our mission of working to Live the Love of Jesus Christ out into the world.

Academy of Early Music Friday Night Concert

The Sebastians—*Over the Alps*

Friday, February 20 at 7:30pm at Northbrook

Join us for the Academy of Early Music concert on Friday, February 20 at 7:30pm at Northbrook featuring the Sebastians. *Over the Alps* traces the remarkable migration and transformation of Italian musical style as it spread northward through Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. This program explores how a distinctly Italian musical voice was echoed, transformed, and refracted across borders—becoming, in the process, the defining sound of the Baroque. The Sebastians are a dynamic musical ensemble specializing in music of the baroque and classical eras. Lauded as “everywhere sharp-edged and engaging” (*The New York Times*), the Sebastians have also been praised for their “well-thought-out articulation and phrasing” and “elegant string playing... immaculate in tuning and balance” (Early Music Today). For ticket information, visit the [Academy of Early Music website](#).



Calendar

Feb. 1	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship ~ Family Sunday & Communion ~
Feb. 3	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 4	10am 11:15am 5pm 7pm	Growing Together Yoga LOGOS Growing Together
Feb. 8	10am 11:15am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Deacons' Meeting
Feb. 9	4:30pm	Worship Comm. Meeting ~ Bedding Supplies Due ~
Feb. 10	8am 9:30am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Finance Comm. Mtg. Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 11	10am 11:15am 5pm 7pm	Growing Together Yoga LOGOS Growing Together
Feb. 12	1pm	Senior Lunch
Feb. 15	10am 11:15am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Session Meeting
Feb. 17	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 18	11:15am 2pm 7pm	Yoga Amazon Warehouse Tour Ash Wednesday Service
Feb. 20	7:30pm	Academy of Early Music Concert
Feb. 22 Feb. 22—28	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Welcome Inn Mission Activities
Feb. 24	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 25	10am 11:15am 5pm 7pm	Growing Together Advent Study Yoga LOGOS Growing Together Advent Study

February Anniversaries

Todd Dolan & Lauri Dailey—30 years on February 10

February Birthdays

02/02	Janet Evans	02/15	Jim Hothem
02/03	Tom Brown, Jr.	02/16	James Grady
02/03	Cindy Sowle	02/18	Melanie Bruske
02/04	Tim Boese	02/19	Griffin Taylor
02/05	Kim Annett	02/20	Kae'Yanna King
02/05	Lauri Dailey	02/21	Dan Gross
02/07	Betsy Savage	02/22	Nathan Willey
02/11	Logan Sylvia		



In Memoriam

Mary Hendrien

August 17, 1943

January 19, 2026



On Sunday, January 18, the congregation enjoyed a conversational sermon with Northbrook member, Jim Hothem. Thank you, Jim, for sharing your story with us!



“Live the Love of Jesus Christ”

Northbrook

Presbyterian Church

22055 West Fourteen Mile Road
Beverly Hills, Michigan 48025
Phone (248) 642-0200
Fax (248) 642-7495
www.northbrookpc.org



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Kids' Connection, our Sunday ministry for young children at Northbrook, is for children in preschool through 5th grade. Children may begin worshipping with their families in the sanctuary and will be dismissed for Kids' Connection after Pastor Ben's children's message. Each Sunday, the children will learn about connecting with God and others by hearing the stories of the Bible in fun and meaningful ways. ***We hope to see your kids on Sundays!***

Staff Contact Information

The Rev. Ben Larson-Wolbrink, Pastor	ext. 17
ben@northbrookpc.org	
Jannah Cole, Worship Team Leader	
Dan Gross, Musician	
Pete Zajicek, Musician	
Sherrill Heinrichs, Congregational Care Coord.	ext. 15
sherrill@northbrookpc.org	
Ken Stetson, Youth Director	
stetson.kenny@gmail.com	
Becky Bachand, Administrative Assistant	ext. 10
becky@northbrookpc.org	
Mike Krug, Finance Administrator	ext. 13
mike@northbrookpc.org	
Kerry Callaghan, Preschool Director	ext. 16
preschool@northbrookpc.org	

Worship with Us:

10am in the sanctuary

The Sunday service is also found:

- Livestream on YouTube—[Northbrookpc](https://www.youtube.com/Northbrookpc)
- Livestream on Facebook—[Northbrookpc](https://www.facebook.com/Northbrookpc)

Office Hours

Mon-Thurs: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Friday: 9am—Noon
22055 W. 14 Mile Road, Beverly Hills, MI 48025
248-642-0200 www.northbrookpc.org