

Northbrook Presbyterian Church Newsletter



“Live the Love of Jesus Christ”

Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

If you are of a certain age, you'll remember the song from *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*. A couple years ago, there was a resurgence of appreciation for Fred Rogers and all that unique Presbyterian pastor offered the world. What a kind, faithful soul. Such care for young people! As the tune runs through my head today, I'm also grateful for the question: "who are the people in your neighborhood?"

In the Gospel of Luke (10:29), a religious scholar asks a similar question of Jesus: "who is my neighbor?"

This year, I want to learn how to answer these questions.

Throughout last fall, I've been working with a pastor and scholar from Canada named Alan Roxburgh. I have been inspired by his conviction that - in the midst of all the disruptions of our world - God is at work and doing a new thing. Alan is also pretty convinced that God's doing the new thing beyond the walls of our churches...out in the neighborhood.

If Alan is right, we have a tremendous opportunity to get out into our neighborhood, meet our neighbors, and discover what God is doing among them. And, here's the best part: we get to join what God is doing! And, it all starts by getting to know our neighbors.

I'm grateful that a team of people from Northbrook has agreed to help me in this task of getting to know our neighbors and discern what God might be doing in the neighborhood. When I was interviewing with the PNC back in 2020, I was inspired by their openness to what God might be doing in calling me here. I decided to "get the band back together" and am excited to be working with Kathy Bauhof, Kim Bowden-Adair, Matt Broadwell, Ken Stetson, David Vander Weide, and Penny Willey again. And, I'm glad to add Tricia LaSota into the mix, who has been able to get a sense of what God has been doing in bringing an Afghan family to our neighborhood (see next page). This crew will be commissioned for this task during the same service when we ordain and install our new class of elders and deacons on January 9.

What will this team be doing? We'll be spending time in prayer and reading scripture. We'll be reflecting deeply about our neighbors and pondering how we might know them better. We'll also be coming up with an "experiment" for Northbrook to try in April or May. What will it look like? I'm not sure exactly, but it will be a way to stretch us into a new way of being with our neighbors.

In June, the team will wrap up with an evaluation. How will we succeed? How will we fail? And, most importantly, what will we learn - from the success *or the failure* of the experiment - that can lead us to the next one?

When the team finishes in June, that's when the rest of us take over. After learning from the Spring experiment, we get to come up with the next experiment. What will take us another step closer to our neighbors and how God is calling us to be among them?

Blessings,
Pastor Ben

New Year's Soul Stroll - Saturday, January 1 at 9am

Start the year off right! Dress for the weather and join Pastor Ben for a prayerful stroll around the church grounds and neighborhood. This is the second of our monthly Soul Stroll series, with the first Saturday of the month dedicated to observing - and pondering - what God is doing in this place.

Mission Connection at Work

After seeing chaos as the US withdrew American troops from Afghanistan and refugees were frantically evacuated last August, the Mission Connection committee questioned ways in which Northbrook might be called to help with the influx of refugees that were slated to arrive in Michigan. In November, the answer came as we discovered that a refugee family had arrived from Fort McCoy Wisconsin and was temporarily staying with a family in the neighborhood next to the church.

This refugee family's story is both tragic and amazing. The father Sayed worked as an interpreter for the US Marines and Army for many years. Sayed was invaluable as he fought alongside US soldiers. As the Taliban retook control of the country, Sayed, his wife, and two young sons were forced to flee for their lives. They were fortunate to have left from the Kabul airport just a day before the suicide bombing that killed many. After a few weeks of travel, the family arrived in the US and was housed on several military bases before coming to Michigan. When we were first introduced to the family, we discovered that their needs were great as they work to establish their lives here.

Northbrook immediately began to help by allowing their youngest son Ekram to attend our preschool tuition-free while his older brother Baset attends an ESL program through Birmingham Public Schools. As news of the family's needs spread through the Mission Connection Committee, others offered help.



One Northbrook member began tutoring the mother Firoza, who spoke no English, to help her become proficient enough to qualify for English classes. In Afghanistan, Firoza was never allowed to go to school, so she is not even able to read or write in her own language. Another member connected the family with a person who donated a car to them. We also provided the family with clothes and shoes from donations received in one of our Care and Share collections. In December, the family moved into their own fully furnished apartment complete with a new mattress and box springs Northbrook purchased for them using donated mission funds.

Many friends, neighbors, and others in the community including the school district have also given support through donations of clothing, furniture, and other household items, as well as monetary gifts. Sayed and his family are appreciative of the help that Northbrook and others have given them. The family was excited to move into their apartment, and Sayed is eager to start work. In the new year, we pray for this family and continue to look for ways in which we can support them as they settle into life here.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 30 following worship

Join us on Sunday, January 30th following worship for our annual meeting.

FINANCE MATTERS

As we close the books on 2021 and plan for 2022, here are a few reminders:

- ◆ Please ensure your contributions arrive at the church by Friday, December 31 if you wish them to be credited as 2021 giving.
- ◆ It's not too late to pledge for 2022! Here's how:
 - ◆ Drop a pledge card in the offering box on the table outside the office
 - ◆ Contact Mike Krug at (248)642-0200, mike@northbrookpc.org or by mail
 - ◆ Pledge on-line at: <https://bit.ly/nbpcpledge22>
 - ◆ If you've never tried electronic giving, it's convenient, safe, and reliable. Most banks allow you to make automatic payments to Northbrook free of charge. You may also give via our website or by text after setting up a Faithstreet account. Contact Mike Krug or a member of the Finance Committee if you'd like help getting started.
- ◆ If you already give electronically, don't forget that you might need to update the amount or frequency of your gifts for 2022.
- ◆ Staff or committee members should submit 2021 expense reports, invoices, or reimbursement requests by Friday, January 7.
- ◆ Financial results for 2021 and the 2022 budget will be presented at the annual meeting of the congregation on Sunday, January 30th.

As my time on the Finance Committee ends, I want to thank you for the privilege of serving over these past eight years. I've truly been inspired by the generosity and compassion you so often show in meeting the needs of our church and the wider community. Thank you, and may God bless this congregation in its call to Live the Love of Jesus Christ.

Amy Annett on behalf of the 2021 Finance Committee:

Dan Gross, Chair; Amy Annett, Mark Best, and Rev. Ben Larson-Wolbrink

Northbrook's Mission Tithe Dollars at Work as we *Share the Love of Jesus Christ*

Thank you for continuing to make your contributions to Northbrook so we can share our blessings with others. Based on Northbrook's offering collections through November and the corresponding tithe for mission, we sent out the following mission support in December: \$825 in support of Open Door Outreach Center in Waterford, \$400 to the Howell Nature Center for Camperships, and \$950 to The Word literacy program of Calvin East Presbyterian Church in Detroit.

Thank you for your contributions to the PCUSA Christmas Joy Offering. Your generosity supports current and retired church workers in their times of need and provides support for developing our leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Care & Share Donation Collection

Saturday, February 12

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (Rain, Snow, or Shine)

Watch for Those White Sales!

Be a *Care & Share* hero to those less fortunate who receive beds and bedding from the Furniture Bank of Southeastern Michigan. For our February *Care & Share* we will partner with the Furniture Bank to help provide the bedding part of these basic necessities; the Bank is currently without any linens to distribute. The January white sales would be a great way to maximize your donations of **NEW** bed linens.

Located in Pontiac, the Furniture Bank picks up gently used items and delivers them to clients needing essential home furniture. In 2020, through the *Furniture for Families* Program, 6,981 individuals (2,183 families) were served. More than 55% were children under 18. The families served are usually coming out of a crisis situation –fire, eviction, homelessness. Thanks to the Furniture Bank, more children remain healthy by sleeping in a warm bed, more families can share a meal at a dining table, and more people can live in a home with stability and dignity. Imagine the smile of a child who receives your Superman comforter!

We will collect these items in the Northbrook parking lot along the curb by the center doors. Please enter at the Lahser Road entrance and exit on 14 Mile Road. If unable to make that time, you may drop off items at the church, but please call first to make sure the church will be open when you plan to arrive.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the donation drive or if you have any questions, please contact Winnie Davies-Hancock at (248)931-0821 or winsomeann@aol.com.

Thanks for your outpouring of love and compassion shown by the large collection we had for our December *Cans for Communion/ Care & Share*. The Baldwin Center staff and the community members who received holiday baskets prior to Christmas really appreciated your generosity!



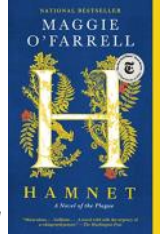
Thank you to all who participated and donated to the Chili Cook-Off and Cornhole fundraiser for our youth programs. Congratulations to Jim Hothem (Best Chili Winner) and to Grace Daniels and Nathan Larson-Wolbrink (Cornhole champs)!

Ordination & Installation of Officers—Sunday, January 9

We will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord by installing and ordaining our new class of officers on Sunday, January 9th. We will also commission our Neighborhood Project team (more news to come on this unique project for 2022). To give us a broader perspective, we have invited Misty and Isaac Chung to preach. They are Presbyterian Mission Workers who are being sent by a program called The Antioch Partners to serve Christ in Central Asia.

Northbrook Book Club—Monday, January 10 at 7 p.m. via Zoom

Everybody is welcome to the Northbrook Book Club discussion of Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell on Monday, January 10 at 7pm. The discussion will take place **via Zoom**. If you are not a regular book club attendee and need Zoom information, email nancyibest@gmail.com.



Hamnet is an exploration of marriage and grief. In Hamnet, Shakespeare's marriage is complicated and troubled, yet brimming with love and passion. This novel is at once about the transfiguration of life into art, it is O'Farrell's extended speculation on how Hamnet's death might have fueled the creation of one of his father's greatest plays, and at the same time, it is a master class in how she, herself does it. As the book unfolds, it brings its story to a tender and ultimately hopeful conclusion: that even the greatest grief, the most damaged marriage, and most shattered heart might find some solace, some healing.

Matthew 25 “Dismantling Structural Racism” Program—January 13

On Thursday, January 13 at 7pm, the Matthew 25 Workgroup at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, is hosting *Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System*. This program will be presented by Katherine A. Blair, Attorney, Habeas Unit, Federal Public Defender, Northern District of Florida. Register in advance for this free in-person and online event by visiting fpcbirmingham.org under the Matthew 25 “button.”

Pastor's Pivot Point Bible Study - Wednesdays at 10am and 7pm

At Bible Study, we will look back at the text from the previous Sunday and do some learning about the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. This is a great way to go deeper with what you learn on Sundays and to take your learning to the next level.

LOGOS—Wednesdays from 5-7pm

LOGOS, our weekly youth program, takes place on Wednesdays from 5-7pm for all K-12th grade students. LOGOS includes evening devotions, music, dinner and group games. The cost is \$70 per semester to cover dinner and supplies. For more information, email Ken Stetson at stetson.kenny@gmail.com.

Men's Connection—Tuesday Mornings at 10 a.m.

Men's Connection meets on Tuesdays at 10am. We are continuing our discussion of Adam Hamilton's book, *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times* with one of us as the leader. We will both be LIVE in the church library and on ZOOM. Instructions for ZOOM will be sent ahead of the meeting by Walt Young at walt2701@earthlink.net. We welcome all new men who would like to join up with this thoughtful and sincere group of Northbrook men. **There will be no meeting on December 28th.*

Northbrook Youth Group

Our mid and seniors highs meet on Sundays from 4-5:30pm. For more information, contact Youth Director, Ken Stetson, at stetson.kenny@gmail.com.

Knit Wits

The Knit Wits meets monthly meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 1-3pm in the Library.

Advent & Christmas at Northbrook



Calendar

Jan. 1	9am	Advent Soul Stroll at Northbrook
Jan. 2	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Communion Sunday
Jan. 4	10am	Men's Connection
Jan. 5	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Jan. 8	4pm	Neighborhood Project Meeting
Jan. 9	10am 11:30am 4pm	In-Person & Livestream Worship ~Ordination/Installation of Officers Deacons' Meeting Youth Group
Jan. 10	7pm	Book Club Mtg. via Zoom
Jan. 11	10am	Men's Connection
Jan. 12	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Jan. 13	7pm	Dismantling Structural Racism Program/Matthew 25 Series
Jan. 16	10am 11:30am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Session Meeting
Jan. 17		OFFICE CLOSED in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 18	10am	Men's Connection
Jan. 19	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Jan. 23	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship
Jan. 25	10am	Men's Connection
Jan. 26	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Jan. 30	10am 11am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Annual Meeting of the Congregation

January Anniversaries

Darwin & Azweni Chungag – 2 years on January 11
Julie & Michael Huddlestun, Sr. – 41 years on January 31



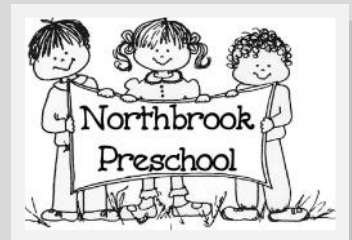
January Birthdays

01/01 Roger Tyslan	01/21 Ron Riggan
01/02 Jennifer Gross	01/24 Joan Gonzales
01/08 Bill Jordan	01/25 Kirsten Annett
01/09 Paulette Lein	01/25 William Clemens
01/14 Bonnie Annett	01/25 Clyde Pritchard
01/14 Kay Ragains	01/28 Frank LaSota
01/16 Roy Annett	01/30 Bonnie Hough
01/17 Jonah Taylor	01/31 Allison Broadwell
01/18 Virginia Thackaberry	01/31 Tricia LaSota



Pastor Ben distributed youth Bibles during worship on Sunday, December 5th

Northbrook Preschool children had a wonderful time preparing for Christmas. We were making surprises, singing songs and making wonderful Christmas decorations. We put hats and gloves on the mitten tree and Santa came to visit.



The Enrollment process for the 2021-2022 school year has begun. Please tell your friends and neighbors about our wonderful preschool. We anticipate having another waitlist this year!! We would be happy to answer questions and have anyone come and visit us. For more information, please contact Kerry Callaghan, Director, at (248)642-0200, Ext. 16. or visit our website: at www.northbrookpreschool.com.

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Northbrook

Presbyterian Church

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Worship with Us

Sundays at 10am

- In-person in the sanctuary (masks required)
- Livestream—[NorthbrookPresCh YouTube Channel](#)
- Livestream on [Facebook](#)—Northbrookpc

Office Hours

Mon-Thurs: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Friday: 9am-noon

Staff Contact Information

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