

## Northbrook Presbyterian Church Newsletter



NORTHBROOK

“Live the Love of Jesus Christ”

### Prioritizing Passion & Cultivating Connection

I’m just going to come out and say it: 2021 was tough. After a confined winter, we were hopeful to have more freedom with vaccinations and warm weather on the way. But, covid came roaring back in the fall. All year long, so many things we take for granted (like gathering, eating, and singing) took such heavy lifting to figure out how - and *if* - *we could do them safely*.

In the midst of the heavy lifting - and with deep thanks to our leaders and volunteers - I’m pretty amazed at all God did through Northbrook in 2021. As we move ahead into 2022, I invite you to join me in focusing on two things: **prioritizing passion & cultivating connection**.

**Prioritizing Passion.** Jesus said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).” What do you love that makes life more abundant? The word passion comes from the Latin: to suffer, allow, endure, permit. When we think of Christ’s passion, we remember all that he suffered (allowed, endured, permitted) in order to offer abundant life. We talk about passion as something we follow, as if it were “out there.” But, it’s actually something that is inside us, a gift from God, that we “allow” or “permit” (maybe even “endure” or “suffer”) to emerge through us.

Jesus’ passion was uniquely God-given, and he embraced it to fulfill God’s purpose. Is there a passion inside you that is a gift from God? Are you making it a priority? When we prioritize passion, we discover we have more energy (and more abundance) than when we simply focus on the grind of life, especially in a pandemic. And, here’s the amazing thing: when we prioritize passion, our energy ripples out to others, inviting them to more abundant life along the way.

**Cultivating Connection.** If there is one thing that people at Northbrook seem to grieve the most in the midst of this pandemic it is the loss of connection. The ways we are accustomed to connecting with one another have become disrupted and more complicated.

Good gardeners know that they don’t force growth. They cultivate it. They have to make sure that the soil has nutrients and that plants have access to the appropriate amount of sunlight and water. Of course, there are also pests to consider. Ultimately, cultivating plants is about tending and paying attention so the growth can happen on its own.

Likewise, cultivating connection is about tending and paying attention to people. Is there someone new in your neighborhood with whom you haven’t (yet) introduced yourself? Is there an old friend you’ve been missing? Is there someone from church you are curious about? With all the heavy-lifting during the pandemic, cultivating connection can sound overwhelming. It may be easier than you think... as simple as picking up the phone and talking with an old friend.

By prioritizing passion and cultivating connection, we acknowledge that we can’t do everything. But, with God, we might be able to do more than we imagine. And it might make the way a little easier in a tough season. These commitments will guide our decisions at Northbrook this year, and I hope they can help you find abundance - and growth - in your life, as well.

Pastor Ben

# Family Sundays

## The First Sunday of the Month starting in February

We're excited to have the families of Northbrook lead worship on the first Sunday of each month. Northbrook member Steve Taylor will help us with music and our LOGOS friends will guide us through other parts of the service. You won't want to miss this special monthly service: led by our young people, *for all God's people.*



### A Look Back at Worship on Sundays in January



Rev. Isaac Chung, a Presbytery Mission Worker, led our service on January 9th.

### Ordination & Installation of Officers and Deacons



On Sunday, January 16, we welcomed Eric Porter, son of the late Rev. Dr. Richard Porter, Sr. who was pastor of the First Union Missionary Baptist Church and NAACP during the 1960's.



## FINANCE MATTERS

Well, here we are in 2022! At this point in our fiscal year, we've assessed the results of our 2021 Stewardship campaign, and we've used the results of that campaign to formulate an operating budget for the 2022 calendar year.

The process of formulating an annual budget is a time-consuming and sometimes tedious one. When the outlook is healthy, the budgeting process can be a little more fun and encouraging. With a less robust outlook, however, the process can be a little less pleasant and can require a good deal of creativity.

Moving into 2022, the results of our Fall 2021 Stewardship campaign were not entirely as we had hoped. We fell short of our goal in both number of pledged households and total amount pledged. The natural consequence of this circumstance is the difficult decisions that must be made for some of our operations in the 2022 budget. We expect some decisions to be "soft" and malleable, and we hope to find ways to compensate for our shortfalls as the year plays out.

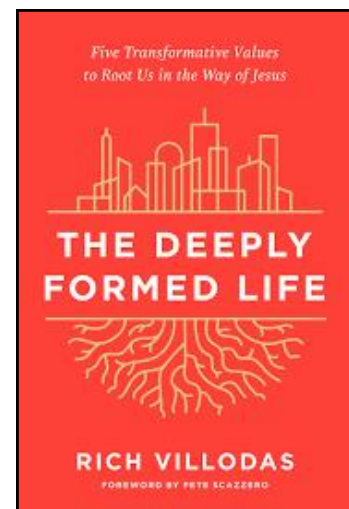
But, even though we lost some pledgers and did not hit our goal, it's not all "doom and gloom;" there are some positive takeaways from our 2022 budget story as well. Of those members who did pledge, nearly all increased their pledged amount this year. Furthermore, Northbrook is blessed to be in a position of having contingency accounts to help in times of need, such as a deficit budget experience. These funds are not bottomless and, of course, this is not something we wish to rely upon year in and year out, at the risk of those accounts running dry. But, we could tap these dollars this year, as a potential option.

The 2022 budget was discussed at the Congregational meeting on January 30, but the Finance Committee is committed to ongoing transparency in our numbers, and we welcome any questions or concerns you may have at any time. We are dedicated to moving Northbrook forward in a positive direction, with optimism and with God's grace in our corner.

With endless gratitude for the ways you show that Finance Matters,  
Dan Gross on behalf of your Finance Committee: Mark Best, Tim Boese, Dan Gross (Chair) and Pastor Ben Larson-Wolbrink

### Dig Deep with Northbrook During Lent

Grab a copy of *The Deeply Formed Life* to dig deep in these chaotic times. In his book, New York City pastor Rich Villodas will help you discover five values that can spark internal growth and help reconcile Christian faith with the complexities of race, sexuality, and social justice. Lent kicks off in March and we'll be spending the season exploring this text - winner of the Christianity Today book award - during our Tuesday Men's Connections and the Wednesday Pastor's Bible Studies. Whether reading the book as a solo adventure or with a group (one of ours or a group of your own), *The Deeply Formed Life* is a great roadmap to live in the richly rooted place we all yearn for: a place of communion with God, a place where we find our purpose.





## **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. The bank's cupboards are bare when it comes to the current supply of **NEW bed linens, everything from mattress pads, sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and comforters**. It will feel wonderful knowing we are helping others whose lives are filled with challenges by giving them an attractive place to rest their heads. A child's night may be brightened by a fun set of bedding. Please share this info with anyone you think may be interested in participating in our collection.

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, we will be collecting items on Sundays, February 6th and 13th. You may also drop off items at the church during the week, 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](mailto:winsomeann@aol.com).

## **Northbrook's Mission Tithes 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 the end of 2021 and the corresponding tithe for mission, we sent out the following mission support in January:

- ◆ \$1750 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for U.S. disaster relief, and
- ◆ \$1000 to support the Sadat family in their process of settling into their new life in the U.S. (Mr. Sadat was an Afghan interpreter who worked with U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. He and his family were assisted by the U.S. Government as they fled Afghanistan when our forces withdrew in late August and early September.)

Shopping for Fair Trade food and gift items using Northbrook's own website link via SERRV.org (SERRV International) gives you a way to contribute more to Northbrook's Mission Fund while also helping the planet and people of the world who need our support of their Fair Trade enterprises.

Purchases made by anyone, including friends, relatives, and colleagues via Northbrook's custom link will allow Northbrook's Mission Fund to earn 20% of the total sales. Here is our link, which you need to use in order for Northbrook Mission to earn the extra funds: <http://serrv.org/?a=Northbrook>. Sign in as a guest or create your own log-in. For help, contact Winnie Davies-Hancock at [winsomeann@aol.com](mailto:winsomeann@aol.com) or 248-593-8035. *Give a gift that shows your love and blesses others!*

Here are some websites for other Fair Trade organizations in need of our support:

- ◆ Equal Exchange (coffees – including organic, teas, chocolates, food and gifts)
- ◆ Mayan Hands (fashion, household, and gift items) [mayanhands.org](http://mayanhands.org)
- ◆ MayaWorks (fashion, household, and gift items) [mayaworks.org](http://mayaworks.org)
- ◆ UPAVIM (fashion, household, and gift items) [upavimcrafts.org](http://upavimcrafts.org)



## 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](mailto:stetson.kenny@gmail.com).

## Men's Connection—Tuesday Mornings at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

### Men's Connection – Tuesdays at 8am via Zoom and 10am In-Person and via Zoom

Men's Connection is discussing *Words of Life* by Adam Hamilton. We have added another option to join in Men's Connection with an 8am Zoom only gathering. At 10am, we will be both LIVE in the church library and on ZOOM. Please contact Walt Young at [walt2701@earthlink.net](mailto:walt2701@earthlink.net) for details.

## 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](mailto: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.

## Mid-Winter Soul Stroll - Saturday, March 5 at 9am

Shake off the winter blahs and step outside. Dress for the weather and join Pastor Ben for a prayerful stroll around the church grounds and neighborhood. Our monthly Soul Stroll series dedicates the first Saturday of the month to observing - and pondering - what God is doing in this place.

### Systemic Racism and Housing Equity

Matthew 25 Speaker Series:  
*Dismantling Structural Racism*

First Presbyterian Church – Birmingham  
Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

This presentation will feature Regina Cannon, Chief Equity & Impact Officer and Vice President - Housing Solutions at C4 Innovations and Kimber Bishop-Kanke, founder of Kids Empowered/Kids Empowered On the Move and Chair of the Oakland County Task Force on Poverty and Homelessness. This in-person and online event is hosted by the Matthew 25 Workgroup of First Presbyterian Church-Birmingham. Please register in advance for this free event at the [fpcbirmingham.org](http://fpcbirmingham.org) under the Matthew 25 "button."



Pastor Ben took some time this month to read to the preschool students.



### Northbrook Preschool

Northbrook Preschoolers are having a great time learning and playing. We have been learning about all the animals that live Under The Sea!! We also had popcorn in our pajamas to celebrate the "Letter P,p" week.

We are registering for the 2022-2023 school year, so please tell everyone you know with young children about our wonderful school.

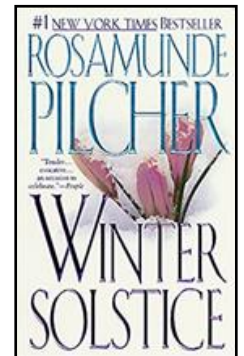
For more information, contact Kerry Callaghan, Director, at (248)642-0200, Ext. 16. or visit our website: at [www.northbrookpreschool.com](http://www.northbrookpreschool.com).



## Northbrook Book Club—Monday, February 21 at 7 p.m. via Zoom

**Everybody is welcome to attend** the Northbrook Book Club discussion of *Winter Solstice* by Rosamunde Pilcher on Monday, February 21 at 7pm. The discussion will take place via Zoom, with the invitation sent by Pastor Ben. If you are not a regular book club attendee and want to join in, please let Ben know you will need the invitation.

*Winter Solstice is a novel of love, loyalty and rebirth. Rosamunde Pilcher's return to the page will warm the hearts of readers both old and new. She brings her readers into the lives of five very different people. It is the strange rippling effects of a tragedy that will bring these five characters together in a large, neglected estate house near the Scottish fishing town of Creagan. It is in this house, on the shortest day of the year, that the lives of five people will come together and be forever changed.*



Please mark your calendars with the upcoming book club dates for 2022:

- ◆ April 4: *I've Never Met an Idiot on the River* by Henry Winkler, humor, biography, 144 pages (Yvonne hosts)
- ◆ May 16: *Untamed* by Glennon Doyle, memoir, 352 pages (Peggie hosts)
- ◆ June 27: *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng, fiction, mystery, 298 pages (Kim hosts)
- ◆ August 8: *Save for Fireflies* by Nathaniel Missildine (Pastor Ben's friend)
- ◆ September 19: *A Place at the Table* by Saadia Faruqi and Laura Shovan, fiction, 336 pages (Winnie hosts)
- ◆ October 24: *The Women of the Copper Country* by Mary Doria Russell, historical fiction, 341 pages. Michigan Great Read book (Barb hosts)
- ◆ December 5: *The Yellow House* by Sarah M. Broom, memoir, 384 pages (Paulette hosts)
- ◆ January 23, 2023: *Have You Seen Luis Velez?* by Catherine Ryan Hyde, fiction, 320 pages (Nancy hosts)

## Calendar

Feb. 1	8am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 2	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Feb. 6	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Family Sunday
Feb. 8	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 9	10am 5pm 7pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study PYCT Meeting
Feb. 11	7pm-9:30am	Mid/Senior High Lock-In
Feb. 12	10am 3pm	Care & Share Donation Drive Neighborhood Project Meeting
Feb. 13	10am 11:30am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Deacons' Meeting
Feb. 15	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 16	10am 5pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Pivot Point Bible Study
Feb. 17	7pm	Dismantling Structural Racism Program/Matthew 25 Series
Feb. 19	3pm	Neighborhood Project Meeting
Feb. 20	10am 11:30am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Session Meeting
Feb. 21	7pm	Book Club Meeting via Zoom
Feb. 22	8am 10am	Men's Connection via Zoom Men's Connection—In-person & Zoom
Feb. 23	10am 1pm 7pm	Pivot Point Bible Study Knit Wits Pivot Point Bible Study
Feb. 27	10am	In-Person & Livestream Worship

Please visit our website:  
[www.northbroopc.org](http://www.northbroopc.org) for the most update  
calendar information.

### February Birthdays

02/02 Janet Evans	02/15 Jim Hothem
02/03 Tom Brown, Jr.	02/16 James Grady
02/03 Cindy Sowle	02/17 Nicholas Riggan
02/04 Tim Boese	02/19 Griffin Taylor
02/05 Kimberly Annett	02/20 Kae'Yanna King
02/05 Lauri Dailey	02/21 Dan Gross
02/07 Betsy Savage	02/23 Natalia McIntyre
02/08 Jeffrey Keoleian	

### February Anniversaries

Todd Dolan & Lauri Dailey—26 years on February 10

We received the following thank-you note from the WORD Community Literacy Program at Calvin East Presbyterian Church in Detroit:



*Happy New Year and thank you, Northbrook, for your kind thoughtfulness. We will use your gift (\$950) to provide Easter dinner baskets for the families. We also plan to gift the children with their own Bibles. Thank you for always thinking of us. I hope one day, soon, you can visit.*



Thank you for contributing to our annual *Mitten Tree*. Hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves were delivered to the Oakland County Jail Outreach Ministry for the community they serve. Your gifts of warmth and love are especially appreciated in these chilly times!

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# *“Live the Love of Jesus Christ”*

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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**

The Rev. Ben Larson-Wolbrink, Pastor	ext. 17
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Dan Gross, Contemporary Music Director	
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