

Northbrook Presbyterian Church Newsletter

From Fear to Favor

Do not be afraid! We hear these words often around the birth of Jesus. You might remember hearing Gabriel speak them in the visit to Mary. Or, you might recognize them when the heavenly host of angels appeared before the terrified shepherds. But, the words come even earlier in the story.

If we start at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, we discover that there is another birth we need to prepare for (even before Jesus): that of John the baptizer, the one who prepares the way. Normally in Advent, we hear from the adult John, confronting the “brood of vipers” in the wilderness, wearing his camel hair and inviting the crowd to repent and be baptized. This year during Advent, we are going to hear the story of John’s conception and birth. As we’ll discover, John’s birth is mysteriously and miraculously connected with the birth of Jesus.

It all happens in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and as we work our way through it this Advent, we will discover a common refrain: fear. How is fear a part of your life as we gear up for round-two of Christmas in a pandemic? Is it mostly assuaged now that vaccines are widely available? Is it stuffed deep down in your subconscious, or is it simmering just below the surface?

We often don’t want to acknowledge the reality of fear in our lives. When it comes to Christmas, I just want to head straight to the joy and good cheer of the season. But, I’m grateful that Advent names the truth of fear in our lives. We are not the first to feel this way, trying to celebrate as forces out of our control have their way with us. Like today, the time of Jesus’ birth was rife with fear. The good news of the birth of Jesus is that God comes to us in the midst of our fear. But, that’s not all.

Do not be afraid, for you have found “*favor with God*,” Gabriel says to Mary. Again and again in the Gospel of Luke, we hear this amazing realization. The characters in the story acknowledge that, not only is God with them, they have been chosen to be a part of this amazing adventure of God being born. Their fear won’t stop God from using them. Their fear won’t stop God from favoring them.

However fear is present with you this season, I invite you to trust the amazing truth of the gospel story: God will find you. And, God will find you with favor.

Blessings,
Pastor Ben

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

Starting on December 1, 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 the Advent journey to the next level.



“Live the Love of Jesus Christ”

Advent & Christmas at Northbrook

Saturday, November 27 at 10am: ADVENTure

Intergenerational crafts, decorating and Advent learning

Saturday, December 4 at 9am: Advent Soul Stroll

A slow stroll around the church grounds & neighborhood to observe and ponder God's invitation in this place

Sunday, December 5 at 11am: Christmas Chili Cook-Off

Rescheduled date for our youth fundraiser. Sign up to bring a pot of your favorite chili to share or just come for delicious chili and fellowship.

Saturday, December 11 at 3pm: Christmas Caroling

Gathering at the church and heading out in teams to spread Christmas cheer to our homebound members and neighborhood

Sunday, December 12 at 10am - Christmas Care & Share

Offerings for Baldwin Center dedicated during worship

Sunday, December 19 at 5pm: Blue Christmas Service

Finding light in the darkness: A service for those dealing with grief, depression or other holiday blues

Friday, December 24: Christmas Eve Services

- 5pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the Sanctuary
- 6:30pm - Outdoor Candlelight Carol Service in the parking lot

Sunday, December 26 at 10am: Christmas Carol Service



PCUSA Christmas Joy Offering

November 28 – December 20

This is the final special offering of 2021. Contributions support current and retired church workers in their time of need and provide support for developing our leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

FINANCE MATTERS

Another successful Stewardship campaign is now behind us, and we wish to extend a sincere *THANK YOU* to all who made pledges for the coming year! This year's theme of *Gather, Grow, Give* urged us each to be intentional in setting aside time to contemplate the financial contributions we can make to our church, and appreciate how Northbrook fills our own spiritual cups. We endeavored for a 7% increase over 2021 in both the pledged amount and the number of new pledgers and, though we haven't quite reached our goals, we've made great progress thus far, and are inching closer by the day.

Our goals for this campaign were 90 total pledged households and \$325,000 in the total pledged amount. At the time of this writing, we've received 64 pledges for \$273,640. If you have yet to make your financial commitment to the Church for the 2022 calendar year, it's not too late. We will continue to accept pledges over the next several weeks. Your commitment helps the Finance Committee plan the annual budget for the following year.

Though it's been another eccentric and unpredictable year, we'd like to remind you of just some of the ways your stewardship has enabled Northbrook's continued support our members and the greater community so far in 2021...

Book Clubs • Bible Studies • Men's Connection • AA Meetings • LOGOS • Summer Camp • Bingo • Northbrook family Reunion • Annual Golf Outing • Trunk or Treat • Northbrook Preschool • Care & Share Donations • Fair Trade support at SERRV.org • Various Building & Grounds improvements • Presbytery of Detroit Hunger Ministries • Lighthouse • South Oakland Shelter • Freedom House, Detroit • The Open Door Ministries • Furniture Bank of SE Michigan • Samaritan Counseling Center • Care House of Oakland County • South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless (S.O.C.H) • Second Mile Center, Detroit • Southwest Detroit & Pontiac Immigrant and Refugee Center • The Baldwin Center in Pontiac • Baby Basics of Troy • American Indian Health & Family Services • Open Book Theatre Company • Oakland Family Services • World Medical Relief • PCUSA General Assembly Shared Mission • A Place of Refuge • Presbyterian Disaster Assistance • Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care • International House Ann Arbor • and many more...

None of these ministries are possible without the generous contributions of Northbrook's members. As your Finance Committee, we are continuously inclined to thank you for your contributions. And though our appreciation is certainly sincere, the most profound gratefulness comes from those you may never see – the ones who are able to feed their families, or keep warm when it's cold outside, or experience the joy on a child's face after opening a present on Christmas morning (a present your contributions furnished). So, from everyone whose lives you've touched: thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!

As you navigate this holiday season with friends and loved ones, take some time to give thanks to God not only for all that you may have, but also for all that you may have to offer.

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

GATHER ~ GROW ~ GIVE

Cans for Communion/Care & Share Donation Collection
November 28—December 12

Please consider sharing God’s bounty by purchasing the following items needed by Baldwin Center in Pontiac for its holiday food and gift basket distribution:

- ◆ Cornbread and stuffing mixes
- ◆ Brownie & cake mixes/frostings
- ◆ Gravy mix
- ◆ Instant mashed potatoes
- ◆ Macaroni and cheese (Velveeta/Kraft)
- ◆ Canned green beans
- ◆ Canned sweet potatoes
- ◆ Boxed Cereal

We will be collecting these items at church now through Sunday, December 12th. If you wish to drop off items on a weekday, please make sure someone will be at the church when you plan to stop by. Items can be placed in or near the manger and basket in the main hallway. **Thank you! Let’s share God’s bounty and the love of Jesus with the Baldwin Center community!**

Would you like to participate in a mission project once monthly for about 3 hours? If you would like to **volunteer** to help with future Saturday *Care & Share Drive-Ins*, please contact Winnie Davies-Hancock at (248)931-0821 or winsomeann@aol.com.

Why is shopping Fair Trade important this holiday season and all year long?



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.

Visit the SERRV website featuring over 1000 wonderful items. Purchases made by anyone including friends and relatives via Northbrook’s custom link will allow Northbrook’s Mission Fund to earn 20% of the total sales. This means you will be bringing joy to your gift recipient, providing economic support, relief and empowerment to those in need in the U.S. and around the world and contributing to the mission work done by our congregation. **Here is our link: <http://serrv.org/?a=Northbrook>.** Sign in as a guest or create your own log-in. For assistance, contact Winnie Davies-Hancock at winsomeann@aol.com or (248)593-8035.

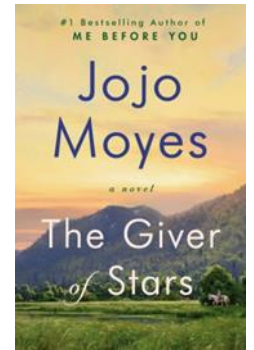
Give a gift that shows your love and blesses others! *Thank you to those of you who have made online purchases. You have added to the funds that the Mission Connection Committee is able to distribute to organizations that do important work in the world!*

If you would like to explore other certified Fair Trade enterprises, visit the World Fair Trade Organization website at wfto.com. You can find enterprises by going to “Source Fair Trade” and then “Supplier Search” on the website.



Northbrook Book Club—Monday, December 6 at 7 p.m.

Everybody is welcome to the Northbrook Book Club discussion of **The Giver of Stars** by JoJo Moyes on Monday, December 6 at 7pm. The discussion will take place in Fellowship Hall or via Zoom. If you would prefer to Zoom into the discussion, please email nancyjibest@gmail.com by December 5th.



Upcoming Books and Discussion Dates:

- ♦ Jan 10: Hamnet, by Maggie O'Farrell Book, (historical fiction, 322 pages), reader obtains the book, PL leads.
- ♦ Feb 21: Book TBD

LOGOS—Wednesdays from 5-7pm

LOGOS (aka Wednesday Mahn-Go) takes place on Wednesdays from 5-7pm for all K-12th grade students through May. LOGOS is often described as being a lot like a mini version of Camp Mahn-Go during the week, including 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.

LOGOS Kitchen Help Needed

Hello Northbrook Members! We are looking for volunteers to help cook In our kitchen on Wednesday evenings for our LOGOS group! Please see the Sign Up Genius and contact Terri Hurbis If you have any questions! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f044badaf2aa4f58-logos>.

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

Men's Connection meets on Tuesdays at 10am. Join in the conversation over the next several weeks through January 11, 2022, but skipping December 28 due to Christmas/New Years, as we explore 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. Please contact Walt Young at walt2701@earthlink.net for ZOOM instructions. Masks are required in the church building. No food is allowed, but you can bring your own coffee to the library. We look forward to greeting returning members and welcoming all new men who would like to join up with this thoughtful and sincere group of Northbrook men.

Northbrook Youth Group

Our mid and seniors highs meet on Sundays from 4-6pm. For more information, please contact Youth Director, Ken Stetson, at stetson.kenny@gmail.com.

Knit Wits

The Knit Wits will resume their monthly meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 1-3pm in the Library. For more information, please contact Mary Hendrien.



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

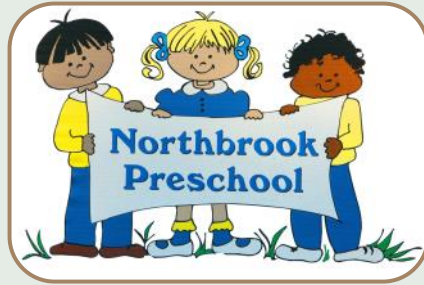
Thank you for continuing to make your contributions to Northbrook so we can share our blessings with others. Based on Northbrook's offering collections through October and the corresponding tithe for mission, we sent out the following mission support in November: \$400 in support of Care House of Oakland County, \$650 to Lighthouse/SOS, \$400 to H.E.L.P. (Heath Emergency Lifeline Programs), and \$1825 Freedom House - Detroit. We also sent our final amount of \$1250 to International House Ann Arbor in honor of Seglinda Kelle-Pritchard. This included \$373 due to direct donations and our Northbrook 25% of the Peace and Global Witness Special Offering, as well as another \$877 of Mission funds.

Northbrook

Northbrook Preschool

Northbrook Preschool is busy with activities as the holidays approach! December brings lots of glitter and glue for Christmas as we make and wrap presents for the parents. We hope Santa will come visit us. We had a wonderful Thanksgiving brunch that was cooked and prepared by the three and four year olds (with some adult help) and enjoyed by all.

If you, a friend, or a neighbor has a child who will be 3 by December 2022, now is the time to be sure he/she is on the enrollment list for the Preschool. Check out our website www.northbrookpreschool.com to see everything we do. Please spread the word about our wonderful Preschool. For more information, please contact Kerry Callaghan, Director, at (248)642-0200, Ext. 16.



Thank you for supporting the 2021 Angel Tree!

Because of your generosity, we provided an abundance of store gift cards for toys, clothing, food and household items to several families from Oakland Family Services. We also provided books that were distributed to local foster children and their families. Thank you for sharing the love of Jesus Christ with those in our community who need it most.



In Memoriam

*Josephine
Colville*

December 29, 1925
November 1, 2021



Iva Voight

August 2, 1926
November 5, 2021



Calendar

Dec. 1	10am 5pm 7pm	Advent Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Advent Pivot Point Bible Study
Dec. 4	9 am 11am	Advent Soul Stroll at Northbrook Iva Voight Memorial Service
Dec. 5	10am 11 am	In-Person & Livestream Worship Communion Sunday Christmas Chili Cook-Off
Dec. 7	10am	Men's Connection
Dec. 8	10am 5pm 7pm	Advent Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Advent Pivot Point Bible Study
Dec. 11	3pm	Christmas Caroling
Dec. 12	10am 11:30am 11:30am 4pm	In-Person & Livestream Worship Christmas Care & Share items due today Deacons' Meeting Session Meeting Youth Group
Dec. 14	10am	Men's Connection
Dec. 15	11am 5pm 7pm	Advent Pivot Point Bible Study LOGOS Advent Pivot Point Bible Study January Newsletter Articles are Due
Dec. 19	10am 5pm	In-Person & Livestream Worship Blue Christmas Service

Dec. 21	10am	Men's Connection
Dec. 22	10am 7pm	Advent Pivot Point Bible Study Advent Pivot Point Bible Study
Dec. 24	5 pm 6:30 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in Sanctuary Outdoor Candlelight Carol Service in Parking Lot OFFICE CLOSED
Dec. 25		<i>Merry Christmas!</i>
Dec. 26	10am	Christmas Carol Service: In-Person & Livestream Worship
Dec. 27	1	OFFICE CLOSED
Dec. 28		NO Men's Connection today

December Birthdays

12/01 Nancy Wind	12/17 Carole Hall
12/06 Mary Sandercock	12/20 Mike Buscaino
12/07 Nathan Higley	12/23 Donna Young
12/08 Bruce Thomas	12/26 Shelly Tengler
12/09 Dorothy Warren	12/28 Todd Dolan
12/12 Lilia Butler	12/28 Lizzie Riggan
12/12 Mary Alice Shrosbree	12/30 Elizabeth Sellers
12/14 Marilyn Dean	

December Anniversaries

Roman & Lois Kafarski – 64 years on December 15
Gary & Linda Voight – 36 years on December 28

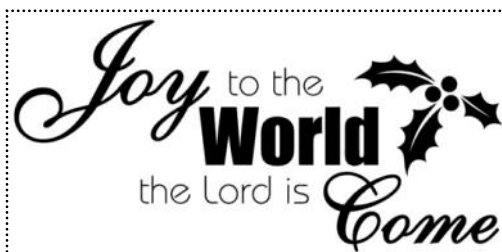
Worship with Us

Sundays at 10am

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

Office Hours

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



Staff Contact Information

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"Live the Love of Jesus Christ"

Northbrook

Presbyterian Church

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