

The Spire

Noroton Presbyterian Church ■ www.norotonchurch.org
 2011 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820 ■ 203-655-1451



The New Challenge and the Opportunity on Easter

Ten years ago, one of the first presentations I made to leaders at Noroton was based on some demographic data from a religious survey company. It said that 40% of the people within five miles of our church had no church “home.” I remember one member challenged the veracity of this data since “all of her neighbors went to church.” She was older and I don’t doubt that her generation was more involved than the younger inhabitants of our town. But would she doubt these statistics now? Where are our neighbors on Sundays these days? I’m not asking us to make any judgments here, just make a few observations about what we see.

Sunday morning used to be for family worship at a local church. Time for worship, Sunday school for children, a visit to the relatives, reading the Sunday paper - this was the order of the day in many homes. Not any more. Hockey, soccer, lacrosse, baseball, basketball have crossed over from Saturday morning to all hours of the weekend. There’s only so much time, and families now face so many more

choices about what to be involved in on Sunday mornings. The major long term study of American habits called the General Social Survey (the “gold standard” study of our habits funded by the National Science Foundation) found that in 2014 we reached an all time high of folks never going to church – 34% of us or 1 out of 3. This is a 10% increase in just a few years. Those who claim “no religious preference”, referred to as the “nones”, are now standing at 21% - 1 in 5 Americans. Faith is waning in American life.

Now attending church will not guarantee a personal faith any more than sitting in a garage guarantees that you are an automobile! It takes more than attendance to activate faith. But attending a church does mean that you like to be around people of faith and gives one a chance to deepen their faith. And if you aren’t involved with a church – where will you hear about God’s love, truth, justice, and redemption in Christ? Not in our schools or through our modern media outlets – that’s for sure.

So this Easter, let’s be aware that our friends and neighbors need a loving invitation, perhaps even a “tug”, to join the faithful at church Easter Sun-

Worship Schedule

Chapel - 8:00 a.m.
 Sanctuary - 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.
 Open Doors - 5:00 p.m.

Upcoming Preaching Schedule:

- 4/2/15 - Maundy Thursday**
 8:00 p.m. Communion and Tenebrae Sanctuary service
 Pastor Jimmy McPherson
- 4/4/15 - Easter Unplugged,**
 5:00 p.m. Pastor Brandi
- 4/5/15 - Easter Sunday**
 6:00 a.m. Weed Beach,
 Pastor Jimmy McPherson
 8, 9:30, 11 a.m. Sanctuary services
 Pastor Sam Schreiner
- 4/12/15 - Pastor Sam Schreiner**
- 4/19/15 - Pastor Sam Schreiner**
- 4/26/15 - 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**
 Interim Associate Pastor
 John Seiders
 9 and 10:30 a.m.
JAM Musical - “American Ideal”

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day. This is the one Sunday most sport events will cease. Think about whom you could invite to one of our Easter services. We have 5 different options – including the Saturday night Easter Unplugged, Sunday Sunrise at Weed beach and three beautiful Sunday morning Sanctuary services. We would love to welcome some friends and neighbors who haven't yet found a church home to Noroton and introduce them to the great hope and comfort they can find in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Your Pastor, Partner and Friend,
Sam Schreiner

Foundations for the Future

Happy Anniversary, Foundations for the Future!

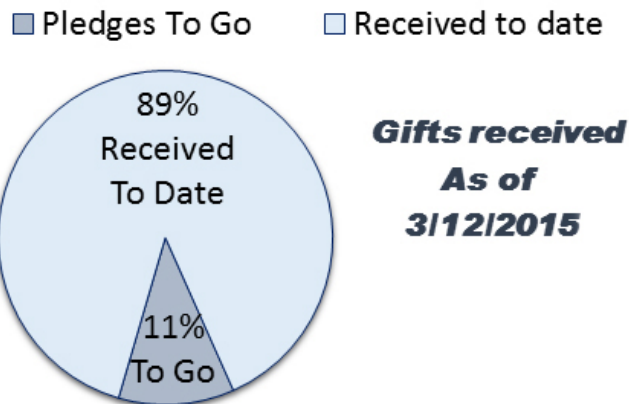


FOUNDATIONS
FOR THE FUTURE

In March, 2012, we came together to celebrate God's blessings and the start of building a new foundation together. On a joyous Sunday, Pastor Sam and the congregation celebrated the commitment of \$11.8 million towards the building of that foundation. Since then, our blessings have been multiplied and we have much to celebrate. Here are some highlights:

+ **Our pledges have grown from the initial \$11.8 million to \$13.6 million.** As we enter our final phase of this journey, we have received \$12.11 million and are very close to our pledge commitment. Praise God for your faithfulness as we wrap up the financial phase of our campaign!

\$13,647,271 Pledged



+ **To date, more than \$1 million in Mission grants have been approved by the Session.** 10% of our pledges were committed to advancing God's kingdom outside of our church via Mission grants. The range of grants is nothing less than astonishing: from building a Pakistani Christian University health center, to expanding the Nambale School in Kenya, to finishing the Cabwaylingo Youth & Community Center in West Virginia, to aiding the Macedonia Church in Norwalk on the acquisition of their own church facility...and many, many more! Please look under the [Mission section of www.norotonchurch.org](http://www.norotonchurch.org) to see the wonders of your gifts through Mission grants.

Foundations for the Future



✦ **Significant improvements have been made to our church facilities.** For example, we have replaced all the windows, restored the Chapel stained glass windows, upgraded our utilities – including converting to natural gas - replaced our phone and intercom systems, modified our Children's Education classrooms and renovated our Chapel with a new digital organ and the restoration of the balcony.

✦ **The new building is underway and expected to be complete by this fall.** Last June the construction began with site grading and the new parking lot. Now the new building has been erected, the roof is almost complete, the masonry and the interior work have begun. Once the ground has thawed and dried out (late spring??) the remainder of the site work can be done. Despite the harsh winter, A. Pappajohn Co., our contractor, has continued to work and push the construction forward. Pray for good weather and for our craftsmen!



So, HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to YOU, the underpinning of the *FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE* project and all its extensive accomplishments. Praise God for our many, many blessings!

In His name,
Jean Ann & Dick Bollman and Tom Taylor
Foundations for the Future Progress Team

Adult Spiritual Formation

Small Group Ministry

Have you been in a small group?

Here at NPC, or elsewhere?

Would you be willing to share your story, or a comment?



(Could be anonymously if you prefer.)

The Adult Spiritual Formation team would like to begin sharing a series of experiences to demonstrate the wide variety of possibilities that evolve during/through participating in a small group community.

Groups are a real example of NOT being 'one size fits all' ... they tend to be as diverse as those participating! And the individual stories vary accordingly as well. So please think about sharing yours.

First, because it's fun to share good stuff. And second, because it could be an encouragement to those who still are 'just not sure' what it might entail.

We would really appreciate hearing from you!

Please get in touch with Valerie Muller or Marlene Moffett to discuss/share.

You can write out thoughts if you'd like, or just have a conversation sharing your experience.

Send thoughts to the main office of the church, or to Valerie Muller at valerie.muller@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5650; or Marlene at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5620.

Taking faith steps together,
Valerie Muller
*Director of Community and
Communication
(Including Small Group Ministry)*
Adult Spiritual Formation Team

Dear Session and NPC Family,

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for sending us off into our new ministry venture with such expressions of love & blessings. From your many cards of encouragement to your generous offering and lovely, thoughtful gifts to your deeply moving expressions of love and appreciation; we could not have felt more loved and emboldened to move forward in faith. Thank you for such deep kindness & care for all of the Dolls. Thank you so very much!

With great fondness & gratitude,
Greg, Kimberly, Eliot, Amelia & Simeon



Maundy Thursday Simple Supper April 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

We will share together as a congregation Maundy Thursday Simple Supper on Thursday, April 2 in Horton Hall (plan to arrive promptly for 7:00 p.m.).

Register online at www.norotonchurch.org or contact Marlene by phone 203-309-5620 or email marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org.

The Simple Supper will be followed by our traditional Maundy Thursday service at 8 p.m. in the Sanctuary. There is no childcare for the supper or the service.

If you have any questions please contact Marlene (info above).

Adult Spiritual Formation

prime timers

Thursday, April 16th at 2:00 p.m.
in Horton Hall

Valerie Muller will share about her
faith journey and NPC service.

For more information, call Marlene Moffett
at 203-309-5620.



Wellness and Worship Together!

Take care of yourself with Christian yoga in a safe, nonjudgmental space at NPC. Please arrive 5-10 minutes early so you have time to settle and begin with a quieting meditation. All ages and abilities are welcome. Suggested donation is \$5-10/class. We meet in Horton Hall on Fridays at 9:30-10:30 am. We will meet Fridays, 4/10, 4/24, 5/1 (not 4/3 and 4/17 due to school break)

Jenny is a former corporate attorney, turned mom of tweens and yogi. She started practicing yoga after getting tennis elbow and low back pain, and realizing that she was not invincible! Eventually her curiosity and appreciation of yoga led her to graduate from teacher training at Elements Yoga & Wellness Center in Darien, CT where she studied with Bernadette Birney. She considers herself a regular person with a regular body, and hopes to show more people how beneficial and accessible yoga can be. She has great respect for props, modifications, and variations, and uses them frequently in her personal practice and classes.

Questions may be directed to certified yoga teacher Jenny Voelker (RYT-200) at mjtvoelker@yahoo.com. Please dress comfortably and bring a yoga mat.

Men's Studies

Men's Bible Study

- **Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. in Horton Hall** with continental breakfast. No study on 4/2, 4/9 and 4/16. Study resumes on 4/23 with a meet and greet with Interim Associate Pastor John Seiders.

Men's Study at the Sugar Bowl:

- **Wednesdays 7:00 a.m.** Led by different men from the group gathering for breakfast, fellowship and reflection on a passage of Scripture.

Women's Studies

Tuesday morning Bible Studies:

- **6:15 a.m. in the Parlor.** Reading 1-2-3 John. Join us early Tuesday mornings for some spiritual nourishment. Come when you can.
- **9:30 a.m. in Horton Hall:** We are currently studying the Psalms of Ascent together. Interested? Contact Marlene (marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org). Join us anytime! Childcare is limited so contact Tot Drop at 203-309-5605.

Thursday morning Moms Oasis:

- **Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in Horton Hall. April 9th ends session with Celebration Brunch.** Childcare is limited so contact Tot Drop at 203-309-5605.

Moms of Teens:

- **Thursdays 12:00-1:15 p.m. in the SHAC.** We are discussing "*The Overlooked Generation*" by Shannon Perry. We invite you to join our group and come as often as you are able. This group is led by Sallie Schmidt, sallieschmidt@gmail.com and Laurie Bessey, thebesseyfamily@yahoo.com.

Women's Lunchtime Study:

- **Gina Blaze from the New England Prayer Center (NEPC) is back for the Women's Lunchtime Study.** The group will meet in the church parlor the second Monday of every month, instead of every week. Study begins at 12 p.m. to chat and catch-up with a hard start at 12:15 p.m. and will end promptly at 1:30 p.m.

Caring & Women's Ministries



Love and faithfulness meet together; Righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Psalm 85:10

One of my favorite lines from hymnody comes from an old song called *Here is Love*. The lyric is “Heav’ns peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.” Isn’t that pretty much what God was doing in the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ? Peace and justice kissed a guilty world... and we know love because of it!

I was reminded of this old hymn when reading some reflections about Easter by Bonhoeffer. I’d love to share them with you:

The meaning of the Easter message is: God is death’s death, God love, and also Christ lives, death could not hold him against the superior power of God. God spoke a word of power over death, destroyed it, resurrected Jesus Christ. What does this mean? How can it be understood? A whole host of questions awakens in us: What about the resurrection of the body? What about the empty tomb? What about the appearances?

Certainly we assume the grave was empty. But only one thing is important: God has declared himself to Christ and has touched him with his eternal life. Now Christ lives because God lives and because God’s love lives. That is enough for us. We can brood over the ‘how.’ WE cannot change the ‘that.’

But if God lives, then so too love lives, in spite of the cross—then we don’t live in sin, then God has indeed forgiven us. He has declared himself to Jesus, but Jesus has declared himself to us. If Jesus lives then our faith gains new meaning. Then we are the most blessed of human beings. A Yes of God to guilty humanity, a new meaning for all our doing—that is Easter.

Not being deserted by God—but being full of God, not humans and their titanic victory over godhood, but God and his mighty victory over humankind, over death and sin and indignation—that is Easter.

Gratefully,
Pastor Brandi Drake,
Associate Pastor of Caring & Women’s Ministries



H.E.R.O.E.S. CARE

H.E.R.O.E.S. Care provides complete and proactive support for members of all branches of the military and their loved ones. Tens of thousands of trained caregivers and thousands of professional mental health care/service providers are working together to provide an unprecedented system of support for this most deserving subset of our population.

BUT WHY H.E.R.O.E.S. Care at NPC? It is a good question. Among the disturbing developments that have occurred recently, two stand out as areas of grave concern: the alarming increase in the number of suicides among members of the military, and the effects of post traumatic stress on a growing number of military families.

Many of these families suffer due to the lack of an effective and responsive support structure. Experts agree that a comprehensive, LOCAL system of support is needed--and that’s where H.E.R.O.E.S. Care steps in!

The need in CT is greater than you would expect, and ten of our Stephen Ministers have completed the additional eight hours of training that are required to work with military service members, both active and inactive, and their loved ones. Three of these Stephen Ministers are veterans themselves; three have family members currently serving in the armed forces; several are drawn to HEROES Care in honor of the service of Veteran fathers, uncles, brothers and friends; and at least one of us simply has a God-given yearning to reach out to this community.

Caring & Women's Ministries

Would you be interested in sharing God's love through H.E.R.O.E.S. Care? Now is the time to let us know!

Are you a Veteran or Military Family Member? If so, would you please do us a favor? We are trying to connect with the veterans/military family members who are sitting in our pews on Sunday. We would not ask you to volunteer for anything other than to identify yourself as such, so we can more intentionally pay you the respect you have earned and deserve! Please let us know who you are!

Thanking God for this amazing opportunity to serve Him and others,

Your H.E.R.O.E.S. Care Team

Bruce Baggaley, Cleve Cleveland, Jim Haffner, Evie Knight, Leslie Lloyd, Tom Mao, Sheree Sanborn, Emily Shute, Sue Smirnoff, Cindy Terry

Contact Evie at Evie@optonline.net; 203-228-4228

DIVORCE Care®

**Divorced? Separated?
Know Someone going Through It?**

NPC is offering DivorceCare on
Mondays 7:30-9:00 p.m.
now-May 18 in the SHAC.

For more information visit divorcecare.org or
call Marlene at 203-309-5620 or email at
marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org.

Register online at www.norotonchurch.org/divorcecare/.

Children's Ministry



Minute with Mickie - Wondering and Wandering about India

When I was a young child I had a dream about a man from India coming to ask me to come to his family's home. I had this dream several times and often wondered what it could mean. As I got older I forgot about it. Then a fellow

Trinity seminary student Saji Lukos and his wife Moni asked me to come to India with their Mission called Reaching Indians Ministries International and teach in the Mission India Seminary and one of the Bible Colleges.

As I write this article this is where I am. A childhood dream from God has come to pass.

I am blessed to have the support of NPC Missions and the Children's Team to do this. As I wander through this amazing country I am being used by God in ways I could never imagine and I am being blessed by the wonderful



Mickie and some of her students at M.I. Seminary

Godly Christian men, women and children of India. I wish you were all here too. I look forward to sharing it all with you.

Jae Mashi Ki!! (Praise the Lord!)

In God's Service, Mickie O'Donnell
Director of Children's Ministry

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Children's Ministry



Mission India Bible College - Warangal



Mercy Home Orphans



Students at Bible College



A M.I. Seminary Professor and his family.

**Join us for
Vacation Bible School**

SAINT LUKE'S PARISH
NOROTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Journey
To
The Holy Land**

THE 2015 VBS
ADVENTURE

**Monday, June 22
to Thursday, June 25**
9 a.m. to noon

Friday, June 26
9 a.m. to 1:00

For ages 3-9

Register online
www.saintlukesdarien.org/vbs2015

Questions?
Lisa.nelms@saintlukesdarien.org
mickie.odonnell@norotonchurch.org

I ♥ VBS

Vacation Bible School *Journey to the Holy Land*

June 22-June 26
for ages 3-9

VBS REGISTRATION HAS BEGUN!
We will be partnering with St. Luke's Parish
again this year for VBS.

Register online at www.saintlukesdarien.org/vbs2015.

Questions?
Contact Mickie at mickie.odonnell@norotonchurch.org
or Lisa at lisa.nelms@saintlukesdarein.org.
Interested in volunteering? Contact Liz Morelli at
liz.morelli@norotonchurch.org.

Youth Ministries



I don't know about you, but the word *summit* conjures up images of mountaineers atop some great mountain after a long season of strenuous toil and not too few moments of perilous danger. The winded and beleaguered climbers now stand as victors, rewarded for their troubles with an impressive view before them. Last month we had the opportunity to take a group of some 40-youth to their own kind of *summit*. No, it wasn't atop one of the world's highest peaks, but it was alongside a great number of youth and adults from congregations across Fairfield County. And reminiscent of God meeting people on mountains in the past, many of the students who participated in this summit expressed their own powerful encounters with God.



More than 400-people participated in this year's Winter Summit, where they were led in praise singing by the talented Andy Needham Band along with tremendous teaching from Mike Pilavachi, the founder and Director of Soul Survivor—an organization based in Watford, England, that seeks to reach, encourage, and equip young people to live their whole lives for Jesus. Throughout the retreat weekend and since that time, parents have been sharing with Sarah and I the incredible impact this weekend has had and good impression that it has made on their child. As a Pastor to youth and families, I am not only greatly encouraged by such reports—but also look forward to how God will continue to use experiences like this one to proclaim good news in our community and around the world.

Events like the Winter Summit require a lot of time and work to create and pull off, but they also require

significant vision. Not only does someone need to communicate the vision of bringing youth from across the county for such a weekend, that vision needs to be followed up by individual youth leaders adopting it for themselves and committing to work in collaborative partnership with other leaders to realize that vision. In view of this, I want to celebrate here the work of Coordinator Sarah Swible, who not only recognized the value of a Winter Summit program, but also played an active role over the course of the past year+ toward helping to make this happen. Thank you Sarah for all your hard work and dedication to our youth. Also, thank you Dave Hedges, Andrea McPherson, and Evan Drake for helping as adult leaders throughout the weekend.

New Hampshire MISSION 2015

The youth ministry has some big things planned for the month of April, including a mission team that will be serving in New Hampshire during spring break, a special middle school event on April 1st, and a whole lot more. For all the latest program updates, visit us online at: www.norotonyouth.com, follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram, or contact Jimmy McPherson or Sarah Swible in the main office.

Monthly Food Offering: We collected more than 30 cans of SPAM at youth ministry events during the month of February that were delivered to a local feeding program by one of our high school students (pictured right). Each month, the youth ministry identifies a specific food item to be collected at program events during that month as a food offering to be shared with the poor.



Grace be with you all,
Pastor Jimmy McPherson
Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries

Tot Drop



A Glimpse into the Life of the Younger Twos

We envision the day of a toddler to be fast and furious, but sometimes just the opposite is true... the pace slows exponentially as they explore and examine the world around them. Below is a glimpse into the life of the Younger Twos at NPC Tot Drop:

8:00 - Free Play. Holding her stuffed animal kitty, Arya is the first to arrive. She finds a baby doll and Zari brings her a blanket to keep the baby and the kitty warm. Arya's younger brother was born last week, and the Younger Twos are exploring the concept of families and babies.

10:15 - Snack. Amanda says to Sarah, "Look Sarah. I have strawberries too!" Sarah notices the purple container that Amanda is holding, "I have a purple cup at home." She holds out her hand for the purple lid and holds it up to her eye; from her point of view, the entire room is now purple.

10:30 - Specials. Naturalist Miss Emily arrives from the Nature Center. Alejandro bravely touches a cockroach, a gecko and even a ferret.

11:30 - Outdoor Time. The children take a nature walk around the grounds of NPC. They notice the patches of grass; spring is on the way!

11:15 - Circle and Story. The children take turns looking in the mirror, while Amanda and Zari sing, "I look in the mirror and who do I see? Luca, Luca looking back at me!"

1:00 - Nap. All is quiet; minds and bodies are rejuvenating for some afternoon fun.

3:30 - Free Play. Adrian is playing with the Legos at the sensory table. "Oh! I dropped it!" he says. "Mine broke. I'm going to fix it." Just like new walkers eventually become swift runners, new talkers demonstrate an explosion of language by two years of age.

4:30 - Gym Time. You don't really need gym time to encourage toddlers to move around, but they sure do enjoy riding bikes and throwing balls.

5:00 - Music and Movement. Bear especially loves the song, "In the Jungle, the Mighty Jungle". He sleeps like a lion... until the chorus, "Oh Wimoweh. Oh Wimoweh."

5:15 - Pick-Up. If you could bottle the happiness when parents and children reunite at the end of their busy days, it would hold you over for a lifetime!



Zari with Arya, her kitty, and the baby.



Sarah examines Amanda through the lens of a purple lid.



Alejandro bravely touches the cockroach



Singing together at circle.

Peace and Joy,
Beth Aparicio
NPC Tot Drop Director



This winter has been a long one, but that hasn't stopped the Nursery School students and staff from enjoying themselves. We enjoyed storyteller Karen Hall for the second time this year and meeting the animals from Animal Embassy.

Room 13 began a project early in the school year on heroes, which turned into a long-term project about helping others. They decided that they wanted to be heroes for animals, and collected 5 huge boxes of food, toys, towels and supplies to bring to the Westport Humane Society. The love and compassion that the children have shown for these animals has been just amazing. The Pre-K class visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in March as part of their ongoing exploration and study of architecture from around the world. (See photos to the right) The Nursery School held its annual Pancake Breakfast, with more than 100 people attending; they enjoyed face painting and entertainment by the Amazing Andy, and the pancakes and bacon of course!

April will hopefully bring warmer weather and spring blossoms, and caterpillars to each of the classrooms. Our students will complete their journey through Lent, with Ms. Mickie in Chapel, and celebrate Easter!

The Nursery School is in the planning phase for the 2015-16 school year and looking for additional teachers. If you know of any qualified teachers that might be interested, please ask them to send their resume to Kalie.Riordan@norotonchurch.org.

God Bless You,
Kalie Riordan and the
NPNS teachers and staff



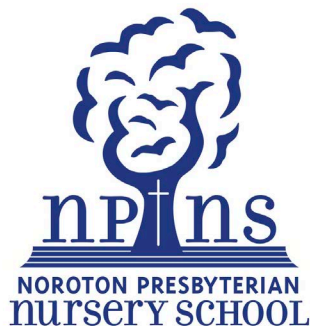
Room 13 with Officer Beth Diiorio



Holden Mohr, Tyler Hilleman and Nolan Glenday sketching in the Temple of Dendur Hall



Tucker Warnke and Matthew Prichard tracing hieroglyphs on a sarcophagus



Membership Ministry

Would you like to join NPC? You are invited to attend a New Member Class!



- Explore what it means to be a Christian and to follow Jesus
- Discuss the significance of membership and being a Presbyterian
- Learn about NPC ministries/programs, and how to get involved
- Meet others joining and expand your faith community

Free professional nursery care is provided for children 3 months to 4 years. For class information, including upcoming class schedules and [on-line registration, please see the NPC website](#) (and weekly Noroton Notes in the Sunday worship bulletin).

It's also an option to attend New Member classes for information only, and officially join within one year of the class if you so choose.

What others have said about the Membership Class:

"I loved meeting new people and learning more about NPC. We are very excited to get involved in this community."

"The small groups were very helpful in getting to know other new members, and the topics were interesting."

"We appreciated that the pastors were involved. I also met new people who are now familiar faces at church and in town."

If you have any questions or concerns about membership, please contact Julie Colbath (julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org, or 203-309-5615).

Working our faith,
Julie Colbath
Director of Membership

Please Welcome Our Newest Members



Becky Gregory Friedman resides in New Canaan, where she grew up, with her husband David and daughter Charlotte, born in January. She attended Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, where she received her BFA. Becky worked at Fortune magazine in NYC and ran her own graphic design business in CA. Most recently, she worked with her father at CoreBrand. She is now a fulltime mother and homemaker. She previously attended La Jolla Presbyterian Church where she became a Stephen Minister and First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan.



Ken Von Kohorn grew up in Connecticut and attended Yale University and Stanford Graduate School of Business. In 1976 he founded Westport-based Von Kohorn Research and Advisory, an investment advisory firm. Ken and Dana McBride, his fiancé and a longtime member of Noroton Presbyterian, recently moved to Norwalk from Darien. Pastor Sam will officiate at their June wedding. Ken has four grown children, all of whom live in the greater NYC metro area. He enjoys tennis and squash.



Brayden and Heather Mathews reside in Darien and have lived in town for just over a year. Brayden works in Institutional Sales at JP Morgan and Heather is a stay at home mom. They have two children, Kinsley (2) and Brenner (4 months), and enjoy fitness, outdoor activities, and the beach. Brayden and Heather decided to move to Darien to provide greater exposure to the outdoors and a more active lifestyle for their family.

Membership Ministry



Jay Nicholas currently resides in Darien. He has two children, Ryan (14) and Makenna (12). He works at UBS where he is a member of the investment committee with a focus on hedge fund investing. Jay has been a member of different churches in San Antonio, Denver, and Chicago prior to moving to CT. Jay enjoys skiing, sailing, hiking, and golf.



Andrew and Stella Clarke have three children, Lewis (20), Amy (17), and Sarah-Jane (14). They live in Darien. Stella works part time at NPC as Mission Associate and Andrew is a Creative Director in an Ad Agency in Boston. Originally from the UK, they lived for some years in Singapore and moved to Minnesota in 2005 and Darien in 2007.

Mission Ministry



Hearing God's call - An unexpected weekend away with Young Life!

After 20 years of marriage, I thought I had heard most of my husband's (Steve's) stories and interesting life experiences, until November 14, 2014, when we received an email from Stella Clarke with the subject line: "Adult Volunteers Urgently needed to help with Darien Teens!" Stella explained that there were 30 High School students from Darien and Norwalk who were ready and willing to go to a Young Life outreach weekend at Lake Champion, NY, in early December, but the whole trip could be cancelled for lack of adult male volunteers. She also invoked a theme from Jimmy McPherson's sermon the previous week, inviting us to "love students, not with what we don't have,

but with what we have." Steve shared this email with me and told me something I didn't know about him -- that in the late 80's, when he was single and living in New York City, he had been a counselor at a Young Life camp in Saranac for a whole week! He had witnessed the Lord Jesus Christ make a big difference in many young lives as they heard and embraced some wonderful, almost too-good-to-be-true news -- the gospel! Steve was ready to volunteer for the upcoming weekend and I decided that I didn't want to miss out, either!

Actually, God had been preparing both of us for this. Over a week before, we had invited some families to our home for "Coffee & Dessert" and an opportu-

nity to meet Jen Gros, the new Young Life leader in Darien. When Brandon and Kristin Neike, previous Darien YL leaders, accepted a new ministry call in Ohio in July, 2014, they left a big void. That same summer, sixteen Darien high-schoolers attended Young Life camp in Saranac and God was clearly working in their lives. Jen Gros, Young Life Area Director in Norwalk, couldn't stop thinking about them and the possibility that YL Darien might shut down for lack of leadership. She was burdened enough to drive up to Saranac, NY to meet them personally and assure them that she would do everything possible to keep YL going in Darien. It wasn't long before Eric and Erika Allen

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Mission Ministry

and their family, opened up their home and hearts to the YL teens. Jen, who already has a full time job as YL Area Director, stepped up to the plate to provide the leadership we needed until new leaders could be found. Now YL Campaigners meets every Friday morning before school in the Allen home – complete with welcome smiles, hugs, a hearty breakfast and Bible study. Once a month the Allens go all out to make their home a very fun and welcoming place for YL Club.

At our “Coffee & Dessert”, Jen shared her faith story and how as a teenager, Young Life had provided a safe place for her to bring her friends and introduce them to Jesus. She has since devoted her life to this ministry, and her love and concern for our youth are so evident. That evening, we got a glimpse into Jen’s heart and the prospect of spending a weekend with her at YL camp became all the more compelling. When we learned that our friends, Hannah Bergman, and fellow choir member, David Claiborne, had also volunteered to come, we were in! We were even more intrigued when we saw that the list of teens attending included kids who

had been in school with our daughter, Natalie, since kindergarten, or who had been in our Sunday school classes at NPC over the years. Even so, we confess that the thought of spending a whole weekend with these teens was rather daunting. By now, our contact with them had been reduced to the briefest “Hi!” as we crossed paths in the vicinity of DHS or around town. We wondered if we were even cool enough to connect with them anymore, but Jimmy’s words kept coming to mind – “...love them, not with what we don’t have, but with what we have.” So we committed to go, and we started to pray for the weekend and for the kids.

The cold and rain did not dampen the spirit of excitement at the Young Life outreach weekend at Lake Champion, Dec. 5-7! Over 400 teens were gathered there from New York, West Point, Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut. Those kids came expecting to have fun and to find a safe place they could ask questions about faith and God, and they were not disappointed! There were so many opportunities for the kids to interact and get to know each other better, whether in the game room or in

the cabins or in the dining room sharing meals and lots of fun banter between tables. Every day we gathered together in the big Club Room to laugh at witty skits, sing together and then hear the greatest love story ever told as the speaker explained the parable of the prodigal son. All of this set the tone for deeper discussions in the cabins. The teens openly shared their challenges and struggles and how God was drawing them into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Steve and I came home with a deeper love and understanding for our teens! God opened a door for us that weekend and our involvement with them continues. We are so grateful for the support NPC has given over the years to Young Life, a ministry that has been in Darien since 1957! Know that your investment continues to transform young lives in Darien and bear much fruit for God’s Kingdom!

Priscilla Hartokolis
Priscilla is a member of NPC and also serves on the Mission team.

Mission Opportunities



Knitting! Would you like to help knit baby blankets or squares to be made into blankets for babies at Hopeline PRC? If you have any knitting needles or wool that you would like to donate to new knitters or would like to participate please contact Stella Clarke at stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org.

Hanna Massad (Missionary to the people of Gaza and the Iraqi/Syrian refugees) and his family will be visiting us this summer, June 19 to July 15, It would be wonderful if we could extend some love and hospitality to Hanna and his wife and two daughters while they are here. Please contact Stella if you have some accommodations or a car which the family might use while they are visiting. (Either for part or all of the time).

Open Door Shelter – next NPC service dates are April 4 and May 2. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Holly Hough (hough7@optonline.net). We have a new opportunity preparing and serving the Sunday lunch and preparing sandwiches etc., for bag lunches for distribution on Sunday afternoon, please contact Holly if you might be interested in forming a family/group to provide this service.

For more information about NPC Missions, please contact Stella Clarke at stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org or check the [NPC website](#).



The American Ideal

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:12

This verse epitomizes this year's JAM musical! April 26th, during both the 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services, our JAM choir will put on a "live television show"!

Lights! Camera! Ego! Well, that is, if you're a contestant on one of the many reality t.v. shows filling the airwaves today. Entertaining? Maybe. Harmless? Hardly. "The American Ideal" takes a light hearted poke at modern reality t.v., where 4 contestants: Anita Ward, Willa Wynn, Neil Downe, and Emma Tate - compete to be "The American Ideal".

The theme of the show is 'Gospel Music Night' but some of the contestants are struggling with where the true focus should be. Through humor, and of course song and dance, the contestants learn a valuable lesson about humility, and God's love.

Our JAM kids are very excited to put on this show for NPC. They are extremely talented and funny, but they also know that their many gifts come from God! During the show, they all learn, and also teach us to not just worry about ourselves, but to let each other shine and lift each other up. Our focus needs to be on God, but he also wants us to love one another. This show is a great parallel for life and the greatest commandment as Jesus taught us in Matthew 22:37-39 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

God bless you!
Jenifer Condon
Music Assistant



Congregational Life Ministry



Roll the drums ... Clap those hands Our 4th Annual Chili Cook-Off was a roaring success!



We once again had great member/friend *participation in whipping up favorite (or new) chili dishes* for those in attendance to taste/judge. Ballots were provided to everyone who attended (children and adults alike); one ballot for each of five categories.

Prizes awarded to those *that tasters judged as 'favorites'* went to:

Beef Category:

- 1st Prize: Charmin Family - "Beef-y Chili"
- 2nd Prize: Kwun Family - "Chili 'Kwun' Carne"
- 3rd Prize: Sordini Family - "More, Please"

Poultry Category:

- 1st Prize: Pastor Jimmy & Friends - "Big Country Chili"
- 2nd Prize: Mettler Family - "Simple Chili"

All Other Meat: (e.g., Pork, Sausage, Combos)

- 1st Prize: Magrath Family - "Cincinnati Chili"

Vegetarian:

- 1st Prize: Holly Jespersen - "Spicy Veggie"

Spicy!:

- 1st Prize: Lou DeLoma - "Fiesta Turkey"

Cornbread:

- 1st prize: Henry Family - "Two Brother's Rock Star"
- 2nd prize: Schroeder Family - "Sch Sweet"

Photos here for those who were unable to attend to experience some of the great fun that young and old(er) had during this fellowship evening!



*Congratulations to ALL our participants ...
chefs and tasters/judges alike!*



Congregational Life



[Click here for more photos!](#)

If you have ideas for similar member-participant fun-filled events, please contact me to discuss.

Having fun together in community,
Valerie Muller

Director of Community and Communications
(Including Congregational Life Ministry activities)
valerie.muller@norotonchurch.org & 203-309-5650



Flower Team



The flower team will be decorating for Easter on **Friday, April 3rd and Saturday, April 4th** at 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary and welcome others to join us.

Contact Meredith Schoff and Marion Smith at flowersnpc@gmail.com for more information.



The flower team is in need of small vases for rearrangements of Sanctuary flowers each Sunday. Please drop clean vases in the flower room or contact us for pick up.

Holy Week Service Schedule



Maundy Thursday, April 2:

7:00 p.m. Simple Supper in Horton Hall

Limited spaces, registration required.

[Please register online at www.norotonchurch.org](http://www.norotonchurch.org)

or contact Marlene Moffett at 203-309-5620

or email marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org

8:00 p.m. Communion & Tenebrae Service in the Sanctuary

All are welcome.

(Childcare not offered for dinner or service)



Walk with the Cross, Friday, April 3:

10:30 a.m. Meet at 1st Congregational Church, Darien.

Join others in our community as we walk down

the Post Rd. to St. Luke's. Join us for part or all of
the Journey.



Good Friday Ecumenical Service, April 3:

12:00-3:00 p.m. St. Luke's Church,

"Voices Before the Cross"

(You are welcome to come pray, and go as needed)



Open Doors Easter Unplugged, Sat. April 4:

5:00 p.m. Horton Hall - No dinner served this week.



Easter Sunday, April 5:

6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service at **Weed Beach**

Preaching: Pastor Jimmy McPherson

8:00 a.m. Sanctuary Service with Choir & Brass

Preaching: Pastor Sam Schreiner

No childcare or Sunday School

9:30 & 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Services with Choir & Brass

Preaching: Pastor Sam Schreiner

Childcare up to 3 years

3's-K: Regular Sunday School classes

1st-5th grades: Chapel

6th-12th grades: Remain in Sanctuary

(No Open Doors Service Today)



April 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 6:30 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade - April 1st Middle School Event	Maundy Thursday 9:30 a.m. Oasis 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Simple Supper 8:00 p.m. Communion and Tenebrae Sanctuary service 9:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	Good Friday NPC Offices close at noon.	5:00 p.m. Open Doors Easter Unplugged
5 Easter Sunday 6:00 Sunrise Service - Weed Beach 8:00 a.m. Sanctuary Service 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Service	6 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare	7 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Team Night Fellowship 7:45 p.m. Team Night	8 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	9 9:30 a.m. Oasis Celebration Brunch 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	10 9:30 a.m. Christian Yoga	11
12 New Hampshire Mission Trip 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's -8th Grades 5:00 p.m. Open Doors	13 New Hampshire Mission Trip 12:00 p.m. Women's Luncheon Study 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare	14 New Hampshire Mission Trip	15 New Hampshire Mission Trip 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	16 New Hampshire Mission Trip 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 2:00 p.m. Prime Timers 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	17 New Hampshire Mission Trip	18
19 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's -8th Grades 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. High School Ministry	20 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare	21 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 8:00 p.m. Session	22 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	23 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	24 9:30 a.m. Christian Yoga	25
26 JAM Musical 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's -K 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. High School Ministry	27 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare	28 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	29 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	30 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.		

In Loving Memory of...

March 9th:
Irene Ohm

March 14th:
Li Yu Pan

*...now home to be with the Lord.
(Philippians 1:23)*

Join us in celebrating the following Baptisms...

March 15th:
Lillian Christine Boyle, daughter of
Hugh and Heather Boyle

Upcoming Baptism Dates:

4/19 and 5/17 at the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service To schedule a Baptism please call Leslie Ezzo at 203-309-5618.

HORTON SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are now available for those wishing to apply for the Lawrence McColl Horton Scholarship and may be picked up at the new church offices, 22 Thorndal Circle, Darien, third floor. The application is also available on the [church website under "Resources"](#). Those applying must be members of Noroton Presbyterian Church and seniors in high school or preparatory school. Basis for the award is a written form showing need for financial assistance and an interview with the scholarship committee. The scholarship is a grant toward room, board and/or tuition and is sent directly to the college. Deadline for the return of the application is May 8, 2015.

DANKS SEMINARY APPLICATIONS

Applications are now available for the Edward R. Danks Seminary Scholarship and may be picked up in the church office or [downloaded from the church website under "Resources"](#). Those applying must be or have been members of NPC and/or have served on the NPC staff. Basis for the award is a written form showing need for financial assistance and an interview with the scholarship committee.

If you would like to submit an article for the May 2015 issue please submit it before April 15 to Rose Cunningham by email at rose.cunningham@norotonchurch.org.

NPC Program Staff

Pastor Samuel A. Schreiner III 203-309-5618 <i>Pastor and Team Leader</i>	Valerie Muller..... 203-309-5650 <i>Director of Community and Communications</i>	Kalie Riordan 203-655-3223 <i>Director Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School</i>
Pastor Brandi Drake.....203-309-5620 <i>Associate Pastor of Caring & Women's Ministry</i>	Dwayne Condon.....203-309-5614 <i>Director of Music & Fine Arts</i>	Julie Colbath203-309-5615 <i>Director of Membership</i>
Pastor Jimmy McPherson203-309-5619 <i>Associate Pastor Youth</i>	Mickie O'Donnell..... 203-309-5622 <i>Director of Children's Ministry</i>	Dan Rosa.....203-309-5608 <i>Business Administrator</i>
	Stella Clarke..... 203-309-5645 <i>Mission Ministry Associate</i>	David Lee.....203-309-5609 <i>Director of Properties</i>
	Beth Aparicio 203-309-5605 <i>NPC Tot Drop Director</i>	



Welcome

Rev. John Seiders, Interim Associate Pastor for Adult Spiritual Formation

Rev. John Seiders will begin as Interim Associate Pastor for Adult Spiritual Formation on April 12, 2015. His service in this pastoral position will include men's ministry, outreach, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, small group ministry, and discipleship.

Originally from New Jersey, John has served various leadership roles in both church and para-church contexts in New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Texas.

John graduated from Rutgers University and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and is currently pursuing his Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell in Pastoral Skills and Leadership.

In his spare time he enjoys reading, gardening, working out, and serving as a Chaplain with the San Antonio Fire Department. He is an avid college football fan. He would jump at the chance to go with you to watch the New York Football Giants play. He is married to Ruthie and has two daughters Bekah, who is married to Craig, and Anna – both of whom are math teachers in the greater Boston area.

Pastor John can be reached via email john.seiders@norotonchurch.org or by calling the church office 203-655-1451. Marlene Moffett will continue as Administrative Assistant to the Adult Spiritual Formation ministry.