

The Spire

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



Welcome to the Christian Year

Over the years members have asked me about the colors of the stoles worn by the pastors and what are the meanings behind them? The colors we wear, along with the colors of the cloths (called vestments) under the Bible and on the Pulpit in the Sanctuary, are tied to the Christian or Church year. Since the Christian Year begins in Advent, this is as good a time as any to explain this rich symbolism.

When the Jews of the first century started converting to the Christian faith, they had been used to celebrating three significant festivals a year – Passover, Tabernacles or Booths and Pentecost. The significance of the Resurrection at Passover was immediately recognized, so Easter became the first significant date which all Christians celebrated. **White** symbolizes the purity of Christ at Christmas and the victory of Christ's resurrection at Easter (white also stands for the light outshining the darkness). White is the color we use for memorials and weddings, symbolizing the victory and purity of Christ.

Acts tells us that the Holy Spirit was given to the church at Pentecost so that became a regular celebration for Christians as well. Pentecost falls 50 days after Passover and the color is **red** for the tongues of fire that symbolized the Holy Spirit (we also wear red for ordinations, also to represent the Holy Spirit gifting one for ministry).

The Romans celebrated the Winter Solstice around December 22, recognizing that from that day on, more and more sunlight would return. So in the fourth century Christians claimed this date for the birth of "The Unconquered Son of God." Advent was added to prepare for the joy of Christmas and we use **Purple** to symbolize Jesus' royalty and the penitence we need to properly receive so great a gift as the Christ Child. Purple is also used for the forty days of Lent, a season of preparation for penitent sinners who could rejoin the church at Easter.

Green is used throughout the year to symbolize the gift of "life" God has given to us. There are other days in the Christian year that receive less attention like Ascension Sunday, Trinity Sunday and All Saints day. These practices have evolved as the

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Worship Schedule

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

Upcoming Preaching Schedule:

- 12/7/14- 2nd Sunday of Advent**
 "Spend Less" - Pastor Sam Schreiner
- 12/8/14- Service of Prayer and Reflection - 7:30 p.m. Chapel**
- 12/14/14 - 3rd Sunday of Advent**
 8 & 5:00 - Pastor Brandi Drake - "Give More"
 9 & 10:30 a.m. - *Children's Christmas Pageant*
- 12/21/14 - 4th Sunday of Advent**
 Pastor Greg Doll - "Love All"
 5:00 p.m. - Pastor Brandi Drake
 Open Doors "*Advent Unplugged*"
 Special service in the Sanctuary
- 12/24/14 - Christmas Eve services:**
 3 & 5:00 p.m. - Family Service
 Lessons and Carols
 8 & 10:00 p.m. - Traditional Service
 Lessons and Carols
- 12/28/14 - 10:30 Service Only**
 Pastor Jimmy McPherson
 (no childcare or Sunday school)

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church became the dominant cultural force in society, helping the largely illiterate populations mark their holidays and seasons with the key events of the gospel story. As Presbyterians, we are not bound to follow these traditions, but our participation in them unites us with some of the more ancient churches and allows us to focus on the great gift of forgiveness and everlasting life our Lord brought to us when he was born in that humble manger in Bethlehem. So welcome to a New Church Year as we once again enter this Advent season together.

Your Pastor, Partner and Friend,
Sam Schreiner

Christmas Worship Schedule

November 30 - 1st Sunday of Advent
Pastor Greg Doll

December 7 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
Pastor Sam Schreiner

December 14 - 3rd Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. - Pastor Brandi Drake
Special Worship service at 9 & 10:30 a.m. with
Children's Christmas Pageant

December 21 - 4th Sunday of Advent
8, 9 & 10:30 a.m. - Pastor Greg Doll
5:00 p.m. - Pastor Brandi Drake
Open Doors Advent Unplugged in the Sanctuary

Christmas Eve - December 24
*3:00 & *5:00 p.m.-Services for Families
with Lessons and Carols
*Childcare available 3 years and under

8:00 and 10:00 p.m.
Traditional Lessons and Carols
with Choir and Orchestra

December 28 - 10:30 service ONLY in the Sanctuary
Pastor Jimmy McPherson
(no childcare or Sunday School)



Prime Timers CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Thursday, December 11th
12:30-2:00 p.m. in Horton Hall!

Please join us for lunch, cookies, Christmas memories and carols.

Sarah Swible, NPC Youth Ministry Coordinator will discuss her life and ministry.



If you plan to attend, please call Marlene Moffett (203-309-5620) by no later than December 8th to reserve your spot.

WE ARE CELEBRATING PASTOR SAM'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY AT NPC!

On December 1, 2004, the Reverend Samuel A. Schreiner III began his ministry at NPC as our Senior Pastor and Head of Staff. We are celebrating this milestone with a reception in Horton Hall on Sunday, December 7th at 10:00 a.m.

While many of us remember Pastor Sam's arrival, new members who have come to the area and are worshipping with us now may not know how he came to Noroton. During a recent conversation with Sam, he shared some of his memories of his journey here to NPC.

Pastor Sam was the Senior Pastor and Head of Staff at Londonderry Presbyterian Church in Londonderry, NH, where he had been for over 15 years, when our Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) contacted Sam in 2003. Our PNC had heard of Sam's work and the growth of the church in Londonderry from several sources. Sam was not a stranger to Darien. His Uncle Sam was a member of NPC, and Sam visited his uncle and cousins in Darien during the 1960s. His wife Deb also had an aunt and uncle in Darien and came to visit her cousins in the 60s as well!

As Sam talked to and met the members of our PNC, he was drawn to NPC's love of Christ, God's Word, and our commitment to Mission - both local and global. The people on the PNC impressed Sam with their tremendous faith and energy. As a young man, Sam was active in his church, volunteering in Youth Ministry and Missions. Upon graduation from college he volunteered to support his former Youth Pastor who was a missionary in a remote region of Ethiopia. His 6-9 month stay was cut short by the revolution in 1977 to 12 weeks. NPC's emphasis on Youth Ministries and Missions spoke to Sam's heart.



Answering his call to NPC, Sam began his ministry, and after arriving in Darien, he immediately got the flu! The PNC members rallied around with food and doctors to turn to!

I asked Sam to share his impressions during those first months of ministry. He said that the joyful worship was a personal inspiration to him. Later, the beach service was the best surprise! He had been warned by a friend that the pace of life in Fairfield County was like going from 4th to 5th gear. There was a bit of an adjustment, as it was hard to catch up with people, entering into their lane of traffic, but fun to work with such competent people.

One surprise for Sam was the second meeting of Session that he moderated. The Building Team reported that 3 to 5 million dollars of capital needs for delayed maintenance were needed in the next five years. He also noticed that NPC was technically behind the times, so Sam suggested to the Session that we join the 21st century

with an improved web presence, more equipment to show PowerPoint teaching techniques, and other technical innovations.

All of these things are seen by Sam to be the means by which we do the main work of the church - making more disciples for Jesus Christ. He looked at our areas of discipleship, and saw that while the women had many studies, the men were being neglected. So he sought to serve our men by growing our men's ministries through our next Associate Pastor (and Greg Doll came one year after Sam). Forty Days of Purpose was launched to restart our small group ministry. There were 900 people in small groups during that study. Our Open Doors contemporary service was added, using technical innovations. Sam supported Mission trips traveling to Africa, Pakistan and the Dominican Republic, and Pastor Stuart added more Mission trips for both children and adults. Study groups have gone to Israel, Greece and Turkey. The role of Tot Drop was clarified by administering it as a self-supporting service. To help the people of the church, staff was added to build up what needed strengthening.

A verse special to Sam is **1 Timothy 5:17**. ***"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."***

Pastor Sam feels a double sense of honor to be the Senior Pastor and Head of Staff at Noroton. We have brought many blessings into Sam's life. It is a privilege to be in prayer with this body of Christ and with our many, long-term Mission partners.

Locally Sam has experienced the joy of worshipping at Macedonia, and continuing a 25-year relationship with NPC. He encouraged *Foundations*

Pastor Sam's 10th Anniversary

of the Future to give 10% of the money raised to our Mission partners encouraging us to build out God's kingdom work while we fixed up our corner of the Post Road. Sam said that the Mission "tithe" was the most gratifying money he has been able to see spent in ministry.

Sam and Deb have been married for 37 years and are devoted to their three children and grandchildren. They have always made family a priority in their lives, and they thank the Lord that each one has a heart for service.

Their daughter Abby has an MSW, and is now recruiting families for foster care for HopeTree Family Services in Richmond, VA.

Their older son Sam and his wife Chantal live in Londonderry with their

three children and one foster child. Sam works for Price, Waterhouse, Cooper in Boston.

Their younger son Jack is a missionary with Hope Force in War, WV, one of the poorest counties in the nation. Jack's work focuses on community assistance through leading Mission groups who want to rehabilitate homes for the poor, while his wife Svea teaches in a nearby middle school.

Since Deb grew up south of Boston, and since Sam's entire ministry has been in New England, we aren't surprised that they cheer for those Boston rivals of the Yankees, Jets and Giants. But each Sunday we also hear him cheering on our faith in Christ. We are thankful for Sam's 10 years at NPC, and look forward to the future as he continues to bring us the

message of the Good News of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Sheila Haskell,
for the Worship Ministries Team

Help Us Celebrate Pastor Sam's 10th Anniversary at NPC!

All are invited to join us in worship on **Sunday, December 7th** at the 10:30 a.m. service as we celebrate Pastor Sam's 10th Anniversary at NPC. A special reception will be held in Horton Hall at 10 a.m. (before the 10:30 service).

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE



If you have ever...

- Attended a memorial service on a hot day
- Been a volunteer at Vacation Bible School
- Dreamed of planning a summer wedding
- Sung in the choir on a sultry Sunday
- Realized that some day, we may not have Weed Beach for summer services

Then you know that air conditioning in the Sanctuary and Horton Hall would be an excellent addition.

Is it a must? No. BUT, if we are ever going to air condition NPC, now is the most cost efficient time to do so. The capacity has been built into the system, it has been designed and there is a bid for it.

While the Building Team has tried to stretch our dollars, they were only able to design the right size chillers without finishing all of the ductwork. Extra gifts or pledges to finish this important comfort component of our historic Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall will only be possible with year-end gifts for this purpose.

For more information or to make a gift or pledge, please contact Business Administrator, Dan Rosa (203-655-1451 or dan.rosa@norotonchurch.org) or our Building Chair, Dale LeMasters (203-972-8316).

Burt and Eleanor Palmer

Adult Spiritual Formation

Report from the Men's Retreat

It was that time of year again, fall was in the air, kids were back in school, Men's studies in Darien and New York were underway, final pushes to the end of the year for work were in full swing. What better time to slip away for a weekend with the guys and God? Well, that's exactly what it was, the best time for 67 men, or as Greg likes to call us, "his boys," to head back to our spiritual home away from home at Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, CT. It was a weekend full of spiritual guidance from Dr. Jerry Root, camaraderie over football games, hiking in the woods in dismal weather, and Christian nourishment through small groups.



The Men's Retreat is a different time. It's an opportunity to be with other Christian men away from the usual grind of daily life. We need "different times" to clear out the cobwebs in our religious and secular thinking. The weekend is a spiritual retreat in every sense of the definition: small beds, cafeteria food, faces that you recognize on people you don't know, fellowship, prayer, singing, testimonies, inspirational lessons from wise spiritual leaders, and small group discussions. And then Pastor Greg pulls the zinger – 15 minutes of silence. In the words of Jeff Marston, "Just you and God, have a nice time!"

The opportunity to focus on your beliefs away from the pressures of daily life is a gift. To have them challenged and reinforced by someone as wise as this year's speaker Jerry Root is even more special. I'm grateful that our church organizes these weekends away with such powerful speakers who challenge my thinking. I

know I returned home refreshed, reinvigorated and reconnected with myself, my God and my brothers in Christ.

There's nothing quite like spending a weekend with men of faith from this church and the Macedonia Church. It can be hard to find the time to meet and truly connect with others on Sundays, which makes this time away even more meaningful. Retreat weekend is a time for personal and spiritual reflection, and also time to bond over matters of faith, junk food and of course, college football.

"Incarnation Center is a perfect place to hang out together, just far enough away and in the middle of nowhere."

– Eric Emel

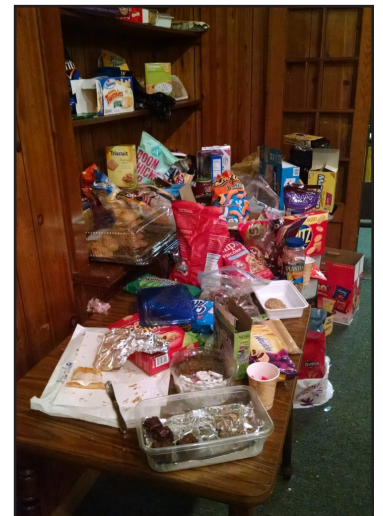
Whether it was debating the merits of SEC vs. Big 10 vs. ACC football, the wisdom of going for a hike in the middle of a Nor'easter, or sitting by a fire sharing stories about our lives, or the all-important nap time (a scheduled activity), the Men's retreat is an amazing opportunity to be reinvigorated with the Holy Spirit, and support one another in our walks with Christ.

Rob Bayles sums it up nicely:

"The Retreat gives us the opportunity to actually connect with that guy who's hand you shook during the service and talk to him; to be able to talk about our faith without being concerned whether people want to hear it. And of course, the junk food table was outstanding!"

Next year's event, and every one for the foreseeable future, will be held the second week of October at Incarnation Center. I'll be there, and I hope you will too.

Clay Colbath,
2014 Men's Retreat Leader



Adult Studies

Noroton Lecture 2015

Guest Speaker
Dr. John G. Stackhouse, Jr.



Event Schedule

Saturday, February 7

8-9:30 a.m.

Men's Breakfast

Topic: *The World Is Not Enough:*

Lessons on Masculinity from James Bond and Jesus Christ

All men are invited to join us for a continental breakfast, fellowship and a lecture.

10-11:30 a.m.

Women's Coffee

Topic: *Why Women Don't Lead... and Why All Women Should Care*

All women are invited to join us for coffee, refreshments, fellowship and a lecture.

7-8:30 p.m. - **Keynote Address**

Topic: *Doesn't Anyone Care about the Big Things?*

How to Commend the Gospel to a Busy Neighbor

All are welcome to the evening lecture in our fellowship hall.

Please register for these events at www.norotonchurch.org

(go to ministries menu > Adult Spiritual Formation > Noroton Lectures)

Sunday, February 8 - Worship Services

8 a.m. - Chapel / 9 & 10:30 a.m. - Sanctuary

Sermon: *"Is He Saved?"—and Other Questions Christians Shouldn't Ask*

Join us for any of our Sunday morning services.

Men's Studies

Men's Bible Study

- Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. in NYC at The Yale Club, 50 Vanderbilt Ave, corner of 44th across from the west entrance to Grand Central. Study meets until Dec. 16 and then will resume Jan. 6.
- Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. in Horton Hall with continental breakfast. Study meets until Dec. 18 and then will resume Jan. 8.

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. **Holiday Breakfast on Dec. 16.** We will resume Jan. 6. Come when you can.
- 9:30 a.m. in living rooms around town: **Celebration Brunch on Dec. 9.** We will resume Jan. 6 with a new study. Interested? Contact Marlene (marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org) to receive your "location." 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. **Brunch on Dec. 4.** We will resume Jan. 8 with a new topic. Childcare is limited so contact Tot Drop at 203-309-5605.

Moms of Teens:

- The group is reading *Bonding with your TEEN through BOUNDARIES*, by June Hunt. **Thursdays 12:00 - 1:15 p.m.** in the SHAC. Come as often as you are able. This group is led by Sallie Schmidt and Laurie Bessey. For more information contact Sallie at sallieschmidt@gmail.com or Laurie at thebesseyfamily@yahoo.com. Study meets until Dec. 18 and then will resume Jan. 8.



Wellness and Worship Together!



Carve out an hour to strengthen your body, calm your mind, and nourish your soul with Christian yoga in a safe, nonjudgmental, supportive space at NPC. Please arrive a few 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 with certified yoga instructor Jenny Voelker (RYT-200). In the month of December we will meet **Friday, December 5th, 12th, and 19th at 9:30-10:30 am.** There is no class December 26th and January 2nd due to holidays. After the break, classes resume again on **Friday, January 9th.** Please dress comfortably and bring a yoga mat. Blocks are wonderful too if you have them. **Anyone with serious injuries or medical concerns should discuss practicing yoga with his or her doctor.**

Caring & Women's Ministries



Advent Conspiracy: Worship Fully

Feeling the pressure yet? Have you decided what you're going to do for Christmas? When will you decorate? Got your cards yet? When will you send them? What will you purchase?

Who will you try to please? Where will you spend the precious weekends in December? And remind me: Why are we doing this?

As we walk through Advent this year following the **Advent Conspiracy**, I believe we're challenged to ask the 'why' question with more rigor. Rick McKinley (one of the founders of Advent Conspiracy) has made me think a lot about what I bring to Christmas:

He has stated that we are formed by what we worship. And that during Advent and Christmas, our culture is one that worships at the altar of consumerism.

Consumerism says the things we purchase can promise to bring to us a spiritual awakening. (Seen a car or perfume ad recently?) We create a mythology around what we buy: infuse material things with promises. It's not a car, it's a status symbol, comfort, luxury. It's not an outfit: It's the key to making you look good.

The promise wears off after a week or so, but there will be something else to buy then to renew that feeling:

Another Messiah will come and save my soul. Maybe a flatscreen TV next.

The dangers in this approach to Christmas are numerous, but perhaps the biggest threat is that we may begin to view Christ himself as a commodity.

The truth is that the material world is good, but it's not ultimate. Things are here not to fulfill us, but to attach us to God and to one another. We use things. We worship God. We use things. We love people. In consumerism religion, we use people to worship things. Where's the joy in that?

This is an amazing opportunity to live as a peculiar people in a culture that is essentially owned by another kingdom.

So, how? I'm going to ask myself a question every time I shop or do something to mark the season: Who am I worshipping as I purchase this? How will it shape me? How will it affect the person I'm gifting? Where will the joy be, and will it point him or her to Christ, who gives most joyously? Join me?

Pastor Brandi Drake,
Associate Pastor of Caring & Women's Ministries



A SERVICE OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

For those entering the holiday season while grieving or experiencing loss.

On **Monday, December 8** at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel, we have a prayer and worship service specially designed for those of us who are entering this season of festivity with heavy hearts. We will reflect, pray, and consider ways to approach grief in this season. Please consider joining us.

Children's & Youth Ministries



Minute with Mickie Putting Wonder and Mystery back into Advent and Christmas

This holiday season, you and your family have the opportunity to be part of a secret mission - IF you choose to accept. What mission? Well, it's a conspiracy. A conspiracy to take back the holidays from the craziness of the culture that has stolen Christmas and taken Jesus out of it. That's right! It's time for us to reclaim the Advent/Christmas season and make sure the mystery and wonder of Jesus' birth is what we celebrate instead of commercialism, decorations, presents and consumerism at its most frenetic.

Interested? Do you want to accept this mission? Here's the plan.

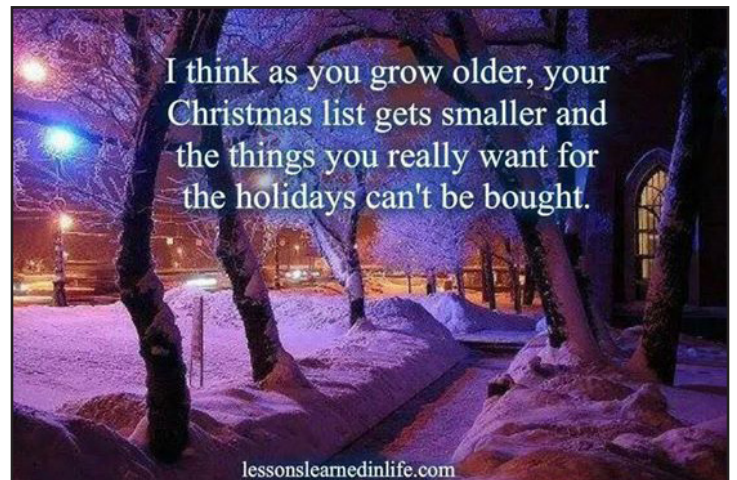
1. Maybe we can bring our fancy Christmas Cards with a picture of our family to hang it on our tree in Horton Hall. If everyone does this, we can save lots of money to give to Missions instead and everyone can come and look at each other's family pictures right here at NPC wishing each other a blessed Christmas.
2. Make **Caroling By Candlelight** on **Dec. 5th** help set the tone for your entire Holiday Season. Come to sing, hear the story, lift lit candles, get your Advent calendars and pick up Mission projects to donate to as a way of sharing the love of Jesus to those in need.
3. Ask your children to do secret acts of kindness for friends and family instead of just buying presents.
4. Spend time before bedtime every night during Advent as a family, reading Christmas stories, doing your Advent calendar, sipping warm milk, eating one Christmas cookie and making lists of things to give away for others in need.
5. Keep a family journal of all the secret things that you are going to do that are NOT costing money or making you "holiday crazy"!
6. Keep track of all the money you can save NOT doing what the culture expects you to do but that Jesus doesn't need you to do and give to Missions.

Beginning November 30th, bring your family picture to Horton Hall and put it on our special new Christmas tree and pick up your new "**Jesse Tree**" projects - more on what that means at www.npckids.com and then get ready to have your children AND YOUR WHOLE FAMILY participate in the Dec. 14 **Christmas Pageant** at either 9:00 or 10:30 worship services. David and I are going to join the conspiracy; will you? Doing this might just help us all, as a community of faith, put Jesus' miraculous incarnational birth back as the central theme of the season. Participating in this Conspiracy might just help put the mystery and wonder back into the season. This is your Conspiracy assignment - are you up for it?? Can you do it?

See you on Sunday!!

Mickie O'Donnell

Director of Children's Ministry
& Interim Director of Youth Ministry



Children's Ministry Christmas Events

Caroling by Candlelight – Dec. 5th - at 6:30 p.m.
We begin in the Chapel and conclude with fellowship and treats in Horton Hall.

Christmas Pageant Sunday – Dec. 14th at both 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary services.

Christmas Eve Family Services – Dec. 24th 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Children's & Youth Ministries



2014 in Review

December, here we are! It's hard to believe the things we can accomplish in one year. At about this time, we start to set goals for the new year, things we would like to improve or change.

As I think through all that has been accomplished in 2014, I truly am grateful. Together, as a church, as leaders, volunteers, families and students we have done so much to accomplish God's work here in Darien and around the world. Enjoy a few pictures that represent just a small piece of what took place in Youth Ministry in 2014.

Sarah Swible,
Youth Ministries Coordinator



Harbor



High School Girls' Sleepover



Memorial Day Parade



Ignite



SHAC Remodel



Where's Waldo

continued on next page...

Children's & Youth Ministries



VWAP



DR Mission Trip



HS Prom After Party



HS Retreat

Christmas Happenings in Youth Ministry

- **November 30** - High School Students are invited to the SHAC to watch *Elf*, drink hot chocolate, and eat cookies.
- **December 4** - Middle School *Christmas Extravaganza at the Depot* from 7-8:30 p.m. This is a Christmas party joining with Darien WyldLife and other churches in Darien. Come hang out with us and have a great time!
- **December 7** - All Middle School and High School students are invited to join us as we head to the *Fairfield County Youth Summit* in Greenwich. We are meeting at 5 p.m. and will return by 8 p.m. If you are interested, please click here to sign up.
- **December 10** - *Middle School Christmas Party* from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Come watch *Elf* in the SHAC. We'll bring the pizza, and you can bring your favorite Christmas goodies!
- **December 14** - All High Schoolers are invited to our annual *Progressive Dinner*. Meet at the church at 6:15 p.m. Bring a \$10 Yankee Swap gift. Please sign up to let us know you are coming.
- **December 21** - We will be going to *Open Doors Advent Unplugged*. After service, join Pastor Jimmy and Sarah at the Darien Diner.



This month has been a busy and exciting one for NPC Tot Drop. We are growing and changing as quickly as our building and our children! Detailed below are a few of our recent highlights:

- 1) Tot Drop transformed their new office and staff workroom into a resource for both teachers and parents. Located near the new west side entrance, the office is a place for private conferences, staff meetings, and lively lunches.
- 2) We hired two teachers in order to fully staff our Ones and Twos classrooms. In addition, we hired an Education Consultant to ensure that our teachers are trained in compliance to state recommendations and regulations.
- 3) We welcomed six new families into our ministry; we are excited to be watching our Tot Drop family expand.
- 4) Along with NPNS, Children's Ministry and Oasis, NPC Tot Drop is currently in the process of planning a Parent Night, featuring guest speakers Heather Wright and Susan Gestal, from the Greenwich Center for Hope and Renewal.
- 5) We transitioned to a new side entrance, and new parking accommodations, as we watch the NPC *Foundations for the Future* Project make tremendous strides.
- 6) Finally, we submitted preliminary plans for our new outdoor space, which will accommodate the needs of the younger children in a natural setting. This is a particularly exciting endeavor for Tot Drop, as the children will be able to utilize our combined outdoor classroom and playground for a variety of explorations, including science (water, sand and gardening), math (loose parts for building), art (an easel and chalkboard), music (a musical fence), imaginative play (a playhouse) as well as active play (a balance beam as well as a track for bikes and push toys).

Peace and Joy,
Beth Aparicio
NPC Tot Drop Director



The one-year old children and their teachers, Kate Reed and Janice Baryluk, head back to the classroom after a mid-morning of play and fresh air.



Tot Drop two-year olds pose for the camera.



The three-year old children relax on the temporary playground bench with their teacher, Veronica Pasten.

Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School



The month of November was filled with many activities including our fundraiser on the 14th, with a wonderful turn out. The children again participated in collecting food items for Person-to-Person, which the children then delivered on our annual walk. Engaging the children to help families in need gave them an opportunity to be grateful for their own homes full of food. The students celebrated Thanksgiving with a Feast of Thankfulness, where they focused on what they were each thankful for and shared that with their classes. The students continued a long time tradition at NPNS, by making Cranberry Relish for their families.

As December arrived with a flurry of activity, the children are very busy preparing themselves for the best Christmas present. While all of the children love talking about what they hope they will receive under their tree Christmas morning, the teachers have begun focusing on the true meaning of Christmas, Jesus.

The Pre-K will again go to the Senior Center to sing and spread holiday cheer to those that live there. The children have been preparing and practicing songs for this special day and are very excited!

The children are looking forward to Ms. Mickie coming around to each of the classrooms telling the Christmas story and teaching the children about Advent, the season of waiting.

It is hard for all of us to wait, and especially hard for children at this time of year. So I encourage all of you to take a few moments each day to sit and read a Christmas story with your children, listen to them retell the story of Christmas, and to enjoy this most wonderful and magical time of year.

We wish you all a blessed Christmas season.

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



Ryan Fisch, Chip Moles, and Eliza Garvey working cooperatively.



Alex Edelman, Luke Feng and Emma Kayhan help with a cooking project.



Maddie Mettler, Caitlyn Heinz and Nora Lee sort fall leaves.



William Stramandinoli turns the hopper wheel at the SMNC.

Congregational Life Ministry



Celebrating our Volunteers!

What magnificent **GIFTS** many of you have been to the ministries here at NPC this year!

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 2nd (that's the Tuesday after Thanksgiving weekend!).

Our team once again has the great pleasure to host a gathering that celebrates and thanks those who help make the many programs we provide possible. This year over 400 snail mail invitations were mailed.

When: Tuesday, December 2nd
Starts at 6:30 p.m.
Ends around 7:45-8 p.m.

(Right before any individual scheduled team meetings occur. Check with your team leader to see if you are meeting.)

Where: Horton Hall

Our team will provide refreshments for the evening ... hot and cold appetizers and beverages.

This evening provides a great opportunity for volunteers from ALL ministry areas to be together at the same time in the same place, simply enjoying each other's company. Perhaps you will even meet someone new from another ministry!



The gathering is also usually the first opportunity we all have to sing Christmas carols together ... so tune up your voices and be ready to make suggestions to Dwayne for our traditional sing-a-long.

IF you did volunteer this calendar year (whether for 15 minutes one Sunday as greeter, or participating weekly on a more in-depth basis), we want to make sure to celebrate/thank you. If for some reason you did NOT receive an invite in the mail, PLEASE know you ARE invited, and simply join us that evening! (And, please do let me know, so we can try not to miss you again ...)

Some teams still hold a meeting, as the first Tuesday of the month is normally Team Night, so be sure to check with your group to see whether or not your meeting has been suspended.

So ... come make merry with your NPC community, and kick off the season remembering the GIFT that we really celebrate this season ... the birth of the Son of God!



Please Help Welcome our Newest Members

Mid-month November, a new member's class was held in the SHAC. You will find their photos and bios elsewhere in this issue of Spire.

Especially during the holidays when we are so busy with our own families/friends/activities, please be on the lookout for those who may be trying to figure out their way around our campus, and who would definitely appreciate a kind hello and invite to Horton Hall for a cup of coffee! Please help us welcome them.

Wishing you and your families a most blessed Christmas season!

Valerie Muller

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



Membership Ministry

Please Welcome Our Newest Members



Arthur and Amanda Allen live a block from NPC with their daughters Xander (3) and Milly (8 mos.), and their dog Brutus. Arthur grew up in Northport, NY. He graduated from Kings Point (USMMA) where he played lacrosse. After spending time at sea, he joined a liquid bulk shipping company in Wilton. Amanda grew up in NC. She holds a BS from Duke and an MBA from NYU. After investment banking and private equity careers she now works in corporate finance at Starwood Hotels in Stamford.



Heather and Hugh Boyle reside in Darien with their newborn daughter Lillian. They met in Washington before moving to NYC to pursue careers in finance and fashion, respectively. Hugh attended Ohio Wesleyan and is a VP of Institutional Sales at Voya Investment Management. Heather attended Virginia Tech and is a Senior Wholesale Manager at menswear brand Bonobos. They have their hands full with their new baby but the couple enjoys travelling, the beach, sports, and friends. They attended both Redeemer and Madison Avenue Presbyterian Churches before moving to CT.



Lisa and Sam Anderson have three children, Dylan (10), Ashley (8) and Hailey (2). They moved to Darien in 2013 from NYC where they were members of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. Lisa was formerly a Director at Citigroup and is now a homemaker. Sam is a Partner at Medley Capital and was formerly at Goldman Sachs. Their family enjoys a variety of sports and outdoor activities including skiing, biking and fishing.



Florence Kaye moved to Darien in May to be close to her family. She is a retired high school principal. She enjoys cooking, reading and yoga.



Join us for the Next New Member Class on January 31

A half-day class, Noon to 5:30 p.m., will take place on Sat., Jan. 31 for those wishing to join NPC. New members will be welcomed into the congregation on the next day, usually at the 10:30 service. If you have questions, please contact Julie Colbath. Registration is required and can be completed online at the NPC website using the membership ministry page (or we have a paper form you can complete). It's also an option to attend the class for information only, and take your membership vows within one year, if you so choose. Membership classes are faith-strengthening, interesting and fun.

Working our faith,
Julie Colbath
Director of Membership
203-309-5615 or
julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org

Advent Conspiracy

There are several ways that we can respond this season to the **Advent Conspiracy** teachings to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love All. Let us consider how we can bless others this Christmas season, through prayer, service and giving, all for the glory of God.

Send your sponsored child a message or gift:

If you sponsored a child in the recent NPC World Vision Child Sponsorship Drive you might like to go on-line and send an email greeting or gift to the child you sponsored in Palmera. If you are not sure how to go about this please contact Stella Clarke at stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org or Maria Orr at orr_maria@gmail.com.

Contribute a gift for the music school in Palmera:

If you would like to send a special gift to the community of Palmera there is an opportunity to support the Music School in the community.

- Gift Options
- \$30 - can help purchase percussion accessories
 - \$50 - can help provide Conga Drums
 - \$100 - can help purchase an Electric Double Base
 - \$200 - can help supply a music course with instruction materials
 - \$4,000 - can support the Vocals course at the Music School for one year with a vocal instructor
 - \$5,800 - can provide the operational support required to keep the school running effectively by supporting the school principal for one year

More information is available on the church website. Checks can be made payable to Noroton Presbyterian Church with World Vision Music School in the memo line.

Contribute to a special offering on Christmas Eve:

A special offering will be taken on Christmas Eve at all services which will be shared between those in need locally and the relief work of Hanna Massad to Iraqi and Syrian refugees. The offering will be taken on Christmas Eve at all services. If you will be away for the holidays you can contribute in advance by writing a check to NPC with Christmas offering in the memo line and dropping it at Thorndal office or in the offering plate.



Open Door Shelter: the next NPC service dates are Sunday, December 21 and Saturday, January 3. To sign up please contact Holly Hough (hough7@optonline.net).

Dove Delivery: Sunday, December 14

Please contact Sandra MacVicar (smacvicar40@gmail.com) if you can help with loading or driving the boxes of holiday meals for needy families to the distribution center.

Angel Tree Delivery: Saturday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

Please contact Dom Lettera (dominicll@yahoo.com) if you can help deliver gifts to the children on behalf of their incarcerated parent.

Please pray for all our Mission partners: that they will be strengthened, protected and upheld by the power of the Holy Spirit as they shine the light of Christ around the world. Pray that God will bless their ministries and make them fruitful.

Serving our Savior together,
Stella Clarke
Mission Associate

203-309-5645 or stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org



Mission Ministry

City of Hope, Tanzania

Teamwork Ministries International is so very grateful to enjoy the support of Noroton Presbyterian Church, as we fulfill our mission to encourage and support Hope Community Development's mission at the City of Hope in Ntagacha, Tanzania. Your continuing operating support has made you one of our top supporters, and your recent grant of \$100,000 to underwrite a new dorm for our boarding students will be a significant contribution to moving the City of Hope toward self-sustainability.

With your support, we are raising up a generation of leaders in Africa who are profoundly Christian in worldview, character, and deed, each of them working diligently to build God's kingdom and exemplify what it means to be a man or woman of God.

Recognizing that God's children are body, soul, and spirit, we develop our leaders by investing in their education, health, relationships, vocation, and spiritual formation, while emphasizing justice and the equality of all people before God.

Highlights of the year in progress:

The City of Hope continues to raise 100 orphans and children at risk who are in our care, and prepare them to take their places in the communities where they choose to settle, and to educate another 300 mostly-local children and to employ roughly 60 adults.

As we continue the development of the mission's infrastructure, we are using the building projects to train our children in trade skills. As our children mature, we are entrusting to them higher level tasks, like helping with the accounting. In fact, a couple of our children have already advanced to the point where they have become

employees at the City of Hope. We fully expect that some of our children will become nurses at our clinic within the next 5 to 10 years.

This year we have seen the completion of a new latrine and a new cistern to catch the rain from the new dining hall. We also completed a renovation of the home for our children to better separate the boys from the girls as they reach their teen years. Also, a new kitchen and dining hall (really a hall for many purposes), is nearly complete (it will be in full use by the



end of October). Currently in the final stages of construction are small office buildings near the entrance and storage buildings to store the food we produce. We have acquired some instruments for our children, and engaged a music teacher. Finally, a new sports field is being prepared.

This year we started training at our clinic. American dentists trained our staff in filling and extracting teeth, and American doctors and nurses participated in training nurses in the region. These doctors and dentists were recruited to participate in their mission trips by Dr. Ty Hopkins, a TMII board member, and chief doctor at the City of Hope for half the year. Nurses came from the Duke medical school, which remains a partner of City of

Hope, participating in annual mission trips.

Key initiatives for coming year:

The team at the City of Hope is prepared to start work on the dormitory that NPC has agreed to support financially. That work will start toward the end of this year, and will continue as the lead project for the start of 2015.

It is already abundantly clear that, as more of our children are reaching the secondary school level, we need to assure them of a quality secondary education. Currently, the children we have at that level number about 20. They either walk or bicycle five miles to a state school of little standing. As well, many more day students who graduate from our primary school are left on their own. Planning for this major initiative advanced during 2014, and it will be our highest priority for new capital expenditures in 2015.

The seeds planted to transform our clinic into a teaching clinic are starting to sprout, and this important initiative will be further nurtured in the coming year.

Happily, we have been blessed with a dedicated grant to build a new athletic field, and work has been started. It is possible that this project will be significantly enhanced by a new supporter, the local gold mining company. In either case, the children will have this important central activity resource significantly upgraded in 2015.

Cliff van Voorhees,
On behalf of City of Hope, Tanzania



'Tis the Season

I've always thought that the Advent and Christmas seasons have inspired some of the most beautiful music ever written. We would like to invite you to experience some of this wonderful music in the incredible acoustics

of our historic Chapel. On **Sunday,**

December 14th at 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. we will be presenting our annual **Advent Choral Vespers**. This will be an hour long concert with our 24 voice Chamber Singers and Chamber Orchestra and we will also feature some of our fabulous soloists. Please invite your friends and neighbors to this special evening and plan on arriving early for best seating. We provide child care by reservation at the 4:00 p.m. Vespers. Call Tot Drop at 203-202-9441 or 203-309-5652 to register.

On **Sunday, December 21st** we will have our annual **Open Doors Advent Unplugged** service during the regular Open Doors service time, 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This will be a beautiful multi-media experience with Advent videos and scriptures, and you will be able to sing many of your favorite Christmas carols accompanied by acoustic instruments.

If you are in town on **Christmas Eve**, we offer two Candlelight Services at 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. These services follow a lessons and carols format that features our Chancel Choir, Chamber Orchestra and soloists. This is always a great way to welcome the birth of our Savior.

Blessings!

Dwayne Condon,

Director of Music & Fine Arts

The Worship and Fine Arts Ministry of Noroton Presbyterian Church presents

Advent Choral Vespers

December 14, 2014
4:00* and 6:00 p.m.
in the NPC Chapel

Featuring
The NPC Chamber Singers and Orchestra

NPC's historic, beautifully decorated & candlelit chapel will reverberate with the music of the season presented by the 24 voice ensemble.

*There will be childcare provided for ages 3 and under only at 4:00 p.m.
Contact Tot Drop 203-202-9441 or 203-309-5652 for childcare reservations.

Noroton Presbyterian Church

Open Doors Advent Unplugged

December 21, 2014
5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Come join us for this popular tradition
in the beauty of the NPC Sanctuary.

NPC History

The Clock/Bruggerhof House



When the Noroton Ave. entrance to our church parking lot opened in October, I noticed that the white house where the Doll family used to live, and where Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries Jimmy McPherson and his wife Andrea will live, is now much more prominent. The white barn and red barn known as the SHAC are also more visible as a part of the northern boundary of the new parking lot. Having learned about the importance of this property when doing research for the 150th anniversary for our church in 2013, I decided this summer to investigate the land records in the Darien Town Hall and the Stamford Government building.

Darien was originally a part of Stamford and was known as Middlesex Parish. In 1820 the town separated from Stamford and was given the name of Darien. What a surprise it was for me to find that the very first

land record in the Darien Town Hall dated April 25, 1820 mentions one of the original members of NPC and the land he owned! The document cites "land bounded on the north by a part of the dwelling house and land distributed to Lewis E. Clock ... and a barn stands thereon." (Darien Land Records Book One, Page One.) A town map from 1867 shows the Clock house, but this land record proves the existence of the house in 1820. Unfortunately the Stamford Land Records were not specific about the age of houses before 1820 so I could not determine the exact year the house was built. Lewis Clock, a farmer, was one of the original 21 charter members of NPC along with his wife Phebe. He was the Chair of the first Board of Trustees and served as Treasurer of the church until 1889 at the time of his death. And, most importantly, Lewis sold "one acre more or less" of his land to the church in Decem-

ber 1865 for the first structure, now our chapel. The price was \$720 and he contributed \$200 of the total amount!

In 1874 Clock sold the tract of land with the house and white barn to F.W. Bruggerhof. Frederick Bruggerhof was another of the great founders, leaders and benefactors of our church. He lived in the large house on the Post Rd. just east of what is now the Christian Science Church. His house still stands and is today named "Garden Gate" at 2265 Post Rd. He must have had the church and his daughters in mind when he bought the Clock property since he already owned a large home. His youngest daughter Carrie married Franklin Jones in 1889. On October 13, 1894 Frederick Bruggerhof sold the former Clock house and property for \$9,000 to his daughter Carrie which was especially important since her husband died the next year after

six years of marriage, leaving her with a young boy whom she raised and educated as a widow. Twenty-six years after her husband died Carrie met General Henry Hodges who had returned a hero from the First World War. His wife had died and he and Carrie married and spent 28 years together in her house on Noroton Ave. Both served many years as Trustees of the church and many Trustee meetings were held in their house.

When I was a child growing up in Darien we called the Clock/Bruggerhof house the Hodges house. General and Mrs. Hodges lived there. The town records prove, however,

that the house belonged to Carrie and not to General Hodges. In 1946 Carrie Bruggerhof Jones Hodges gave the corner lot (her sweeping front yard!) to the church and the church began planning the sanctuary which was completed in 1953.

When Carrie died in 1949 her will stated that all of her property on the corner of Noroton Ave. and the Post Rd. was to be given to the Noroton Presbyterian Church. This included her house, barns and land.

Under the wonderful direction of Properties Director David Lee the Clock/Bruggerhof house has under-

gone great renovation this summer and fall including the addition of insulation to help with heating, foundation repair, upgraded plumbing, a new electric panel, a new water tank, some new windows, built in book shelves, new painting inside and outside and new carpeting. The oldest manse of the five owned by our church will now be the home of our newest pastor and his wife. What an important history this house provides!

Rosemary Mace

Faith for the Future

Faith for the Future

Helping NPC grow as a Spirit-filled Community

Faith for the Future was formed to identify best practices that will strengthen the community of faith at Noroton Presbyterian Church. The vision of the task force is to nurture a Spirit-filled church that engages all, so they feel they are a part of the community of Christ and are drawn to learn more about and build a relationship with Him.

The task force is comprised of nine members, representing many of NPC's ministries: Lou DeLoma, Adult Spiritual Formation; Sheila Haskell, Worship; Chris Mead, Outreach; David Norman, Missions; Judy Phillips, Congregational Life; Lea Ann Roberson, Youth; George Thacker, HR; Ginna Yerrall, Children's Ministry; Claudia Roux, Moderator.

Please pray for this team as they move forward with this work. Specifically, please pray that we be led by and listen to the Holy Spirit's direction, that we proceed with clarity of goals and communication, and embrace cross-ministry insights.

If you have thoughts or ideas, we encourage you to contact the appropriate person/team above. If you wish to reach out to these members, please ask the main office for their email addresses.

Thank you for your prayers for this important work of the Church.

In Loving Memory of...

November 2nd:
Charles E. Schatvet Jr.

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

Many Hands Make Light Work!

Please join the flower team to help decorate for Advent and Christmas on Sunday **Nov. 30th** starting at 2 p.m., Monday, **Dec. 1st** at 9:30 a.m. in Horton Hall, and Friday **Dec. 5th** at 9:30 a.m. (to assist with Children's Ministry decorating of the Chapel). All are welcome to join us! Please email us at flowersnpc@gmail.com for more information.



Join us in celebrating the following Baptisms...

November 30th:

Reagan Qiwei Cling and Reese Zhiren Cling,
children of Janet and Michael Cling

Upcoming Baptism Dates:

12/21 & 1/18 at the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service
To schedule a Baptism please call Leslie Ezzo at
203-309-5618.

Please Serve Once a Month as a Worship Greeter!

The commitment is just once a month for 15 minutes, and something you can do as a family. With construction at the church, it will be even more important to have greeters in place to welcome both visitors and regular worshipers, and to help everyone navigate the parking lot and building. Please contact Julie Colbath.

If you would like to submit an article for the January 2015 issue please submit it before December 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>	Dwayne Condon..... 203-309-5614 <i>Director of Music & Fine Arts</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>	Mickie O'Donnell..... 203-309-5622 <i>Director of Children's Ministry & Interim Director of Youth Ministry</i>	Julie Colbath 203-309-5615 <i>Director of Membership</i>
Pastor Greg Doll..... 203-309-5620 <i>Associate Pastor Adult Spiritual Formation & Outreach</i>	Stella Clarke..... 203-309-5645 <i>Mission Ministry Associate</i>	Dan Rosa..... 203-309-5608 <i>Business Administrator</i>
Valerie Muller..... 203-309-5650 <i>Director of Community and Communications</i>	Beth Aparicio 203-309-5605 <i>NPC Tot Drop Director</i>	David Lee..... 203-309-5609 <i>Director of Properties</i>

December 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NYC) 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Volunteer Celebration	7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 7th-8th Grade	7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis Moms Brunch 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	6:30 p.m. Caroling by Candlelight	
9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-5th Grades 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. Ignite	7:30 p.m. Service of Prayer and Reflection	6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NYC) 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study - Brunch	7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Make-up 7:00 p.m. Harbor 7th-8th Grade - Middle School Christmas Party	7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 12:30 p.m. Prime Timers - Christmas Luncheon 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.		
9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-K 9 & 10:30 a.m. Special Service Children's Christmas Pageant 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 4:00 p.m. Advent Choral Vespers 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:00 p.m. Advent Choral Vespers 6:15 p.m. Youth Progressive Dinner		6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study Breakfast 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NYC)	7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Make-up	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.		
9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-5th Grades 5:00 p.m. Open Doors Advent Unplugged 6:30 p.m. High School Gathering - Danden Diner			Christmas Eve *3:00 & *5:00 p.m. - Family Service Lessons & Carols *Childcare available 3 years and under 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. Traditional Lessons and Carols with Choir	Christmas Day		
10:30 a.m. Service ONLY						