

The Spire

Noroton Presbyterian Church ■ www.norotonchurch.org
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Dear Friends:

When you receive this issue of the Spire we will be entering into the season of Advent. The word "advent" comes to us from the Latin *advenio* which literally means "to come." Advent is a season of preparation - preparing not only for the coming of Jesus as a baby born in Bethlehem, but at the same time looking forward to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ! Often we get so busy preparing to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus that we forget he will be coming again.

As we move week-by-week through the season of Advent we will be taking time to consider who Jesus was and is, in our sermon series entitled, "Name Calling." We will specifically focus on the names of Jesus from Isaiah 9:6, "... Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

In order to help you engage in this series we invite you to read the book on which this series is based, *Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study* by Walter Brueggemann. (Copies available through the church office.) In addition, we will send via email (also available in hard copy at NPC) a guide for lighting an Advent wreath with your family, questions to consider, as well as activities to engage you and your children as you prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

In the midst of this season of Advent, the interim work continues to move forward. We have now entered into Stage 3, a time of self-study in which we think through our history, reflecting on who we have been as a congregation, and seek God to dream about who God desires us to be and what God desires us to do in ministry and mission. This process will continue into the winter and early spring. Watch for information about how you can be a part of this process.

It is my sincere desire and prayer this Advent season that each of you set aside some time to reflect on God's indescribable gift - a child who would come to show us grace and forgiveness, die for us, and come back to life to reign in our hearts and rule the world as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

With much anticipation,
Pastor John H. Seiders
Interim Pastor

Worship Schedule

8:00 am - Chapel
9:00 & 10:30 am Sanctuary
5:00 pm Horton Hall

Complete Advent and Christmas worship schedule on the back of the calendar insert.

Upcoming Baptism Dates

1/15 at the 10:30 am Sanctuary service.
To schedule a Baptism please call Leslie Ezzo at 203-309-5618.

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Spiritual Formation



THE MAN EVENT

Last month, men from NPC and Macedonia Church gathered for “The Man Event”—a morning of fellowship and small groups, teaching, and a delicious BBQ lunch (and oh boy was it delicious indeed!). The topic for the morning was the intersection of faith and the workplace—and our speaker left the group with a number of helpful resources on this important topic. For readers of The Spire interested in exploring these resources, the following is a list of some of the resources that were recommended:

Books:

- *Work Matters* by Tom Nelson (Crossway, 2011)
- *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* by Timothy Keller, with Katherine Leary Alsdorf (Dutton, 2012)
- *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good* (IVP Books, 2014)
- *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* by Amy Sherman (IVP Books, 2011)

Online:

- **Theology of Work Project:** www.theologyofwork.org
- **The High Calling:** www.thehighcalling.org
- **Life For Leaders (Max De Pree Center for Leadership):** www.depree.org

Midweek Studies for Men

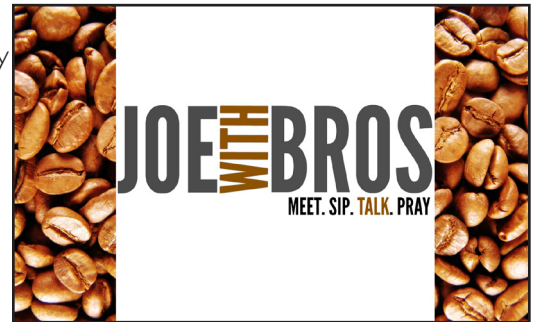
**Wednesdays
7:00 am
at the Sugar
Bowl:**

Led by different men from the group gathering for breakfast, fellowship and reflection on a passage of Scripture

**Thursdays on
Campus:**
resumes Jan. 12.

JOE WITH BROS (ADVENT 2016)

As you travel around town this month, particularly as you stop in to grab a coffee from your favorite café, you just might encounter groups of men from NPC enjoying a time of fellowship and conversation about life and the week's Advent sermon text. It's part of something we're calling “Joe with Bros”—bringing men together for faith building and fellowship, as well as time to enjoy a favorite beverage—during the Advent season. For those who might have missed signing up but would still like to participate—we would love to include you in this. You can sign-up by contacting Marlene at: marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org.



Grace and peace be yours in abundance this Advent season!

Pastor Jimmy McPherson
Associate Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Small Group Ministry ... during the Holidays

Holidays are a time when we all get pulled in separate ways, and group activities sometimes slip away as family takes top priority. But what if your blood-line family is not geographically close?

Small group communities can help to fill this gap...

Small groups, like families, can represent the best of 'belonging'.

Some seasonal reflections ...

of what being in community (small group) might include during this season:

- Attending services with your 'family'
- Invitation to family meal (when yours are miles away)
- Singing Christmas carols ... at your home, or bringing that joy to others
- Enjoying experience of Christmas decorations around town
- Gift and/or cookie exchange
- Joy of shopping with a 'sister' or 'brother'
- 'Gifting' children of all ages with that special present (maybe your smile!)
- A place to share family memories and traditions
- A place to share griefs and receive comfort



Serving together - if your small group is looking for something specific beyond NPC's annual partnerships (e.g., Angel and Dove), you might consider:

- Serving at a local shelter (Norwalk Open Doors is a mission partner)
- Bringing joy to a neighborhood family in need (beyond what you as one person could do)
 - Ask church for families in need, and serve them food and gifts.
 - Contact a neighborhood school and ask them to connect you with a family in need of food/gifts.
- Write letters to soldiers who are deployed, or ask our HEROES coordinator of a specific family in need.
- Bless our pastor(s) ... a gift card to a local restaurant, show, or coffee establishment.

Looking for material/curriculum specific to the season?

(This could be for group or individual study.)

Here are just a few to consider during this holiday season:

- *Advent Conspiracy*, by Rick McKinley
Promoting substituting compassion for consumption.
- *Hidden Christmas*, by Tim Keller
Discussing message of hope and salvation.
- *Purpose of Christmas*, by Rick Warren
Covering celebration, salvation, reconciliation.
- *The Women of Christmas*
Discussing Elizabeth, Mary, Anna
- *The Thrill of Hope*, by Andy Stanley
The Story (Zechariah, yours, Luke's)



Need help finding a fresh way to experience the JOY of Christmas?

. Hope you'll contact me!

Blessings this Christmas season,

Valerie Muller

Director Small Group Ministry

valerie.muller@norotonchurch.org



Women's and Caring Ministries



It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace-
Hebrews 13:9b

My cousins and I have an 'insider' phrase that we are using as our extended family wrestles through some difficult issues: **Goat Rodeo.**

I looked it up on Urban Dictionary: Goat Rodeo: *A chaotic situation, often one that involves several people, each with a different agenda/vision/perception of what's going on; a situation that is very difficult, despite energy and efforts, to instill any sense or order into.*

Yup. Goat Rodeo is exactly what my people are wrestling with this season in California.

It got me to thinking: Christmas has some *goat rodeo* elements to it. How many different visions/perceptions/agendas are there at your home as you prepare for the holiday? Who's in charge? Do others know that they're not in charge?

My house feels like a goat rodeo more often than not, with a dog, a cat, two teen-aged boys and parents constantly moving in all kinds of directions. Add Christmas into the mix, and we have a potential for a very entertaining rodeo. And these are good years. This is joyful chaos!

I believe that the Christmas story in scripture also has some 'goat rodeo' elements: Mary and Joseph were eventually at peace: But what about their parents? The shepherds running around Bethlehem in the middle of the night with wacky news? No pun intended, but sounds like goats to me. Three Magi setting off to follow a star? A star? And what about Herod?

Who's in charge? What's the agenda?

Well- God is in charge, of course. And Redemption is the agenda.

I wonder how much the individual players in Scripture knew about the big picture of God's redemption plan? I love the way that God brings order out of chaos. The way that we are so often brought to the edge and limit of our own abilities. The way that we are forced to see that we, in and of ourselves, are deeply flawed. It's the *grace* of God that reaches down into our goat-rodeos and rescues us. And when we are lifted out by grace, we often can see the bigger picture: how we fit into the beautiful big picture of the *grace of God*.

My prayer for us this Christmas is that we will be able to look outside of our own chaotic circumstances- our own *goat rodeos* and see the way that God's grace is reaching in to pull us out! Using a vulnerable infant, some wacky shepherds and a jealous king.

In Joyful Anticipation~
Pastor Brandi Drake

Associate Pastor of Caring & Women's Ministries

Women's Studies

6:15 am Women's Bible

Study: Tuesdays at
6:15 am in the Parlor
Dec. 6 - Breakfast then a
Holiday break, resumes Jan. 10.

Topic: *I Corinthians - Love and Admonition.*

9:15 am Women's Bible

Study: Tuesdays,
9:15 am in Horton Hall
Dec. 13- Brunch then a Holiday
break, resumes Jan. 10.

Topic- *I Corinthians - Love and Admonition* (Childcare available-
registration required.)

MOPs is at NPC!

Meets: Dec. 14 and Jan. 11

Mothers Of Preschoolers will meet every other Wednesday from 9:15-11:30 am. What to expect: Breakfast (snacks for the little ones), Speakers, Small Groups, Crafts and Childcare. Email darienmops@gmail.com to RSVP or for more information.

Mom's of Teens book study group. The group meets on **Thursdays** from 12-1:30 pm in the SHAC. We invite you to join this group and come as often as you are able. The group is led by Laurie Bessey and Sallie Schmidt.

Women's and Caring Ministries



Register for the 2017 Women's Retreat January 27-29



This year's Retreat will feature The Rev. Dr. Andrea Mueller, *Canon for Prayer and Healing*. Join us for a weekend that's all about creating space for God. Together with Andrea, we will explore how the Holy Spirit is our Companion—who helps us cross the bridge into greater intimacy with Christ.

Retreat will be at the Incarnation Center, 253 Bushy Hill Rd., Ivoryton, CT 06442.

Please register online at www.norotonwomen.com before **January 15, 2017** to avoid late fee.

Cost for a single room is \$250 and for a double/triple is \$225/person regardless of what building you are in.

Questions about online registration can be directed to Marlene Moffett at 203-309-5620 or marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org. Event co-chairs: Liz Byrne (byrne.lizzy@gmail.com) and Amanda Craig (acraig612@gmail.com).

Join us for our Christmas Celebration and Adult Fellowship Luncheon

(for those in their 50's, 60's, 70's +)

Thursday, December 15
12:30 to 2:30 pm
Schreiner Mission Room

"Acapella", a Darien-based all women a cappella group that has been singing together for 15 years will perform.

For more information contact Marion Smith at marion.smith@norotonchurch.org or 203-273-1422 or Marlene Moffett at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5620.



Children's Ministry



Minute with Mickie – What do you Wonder about?

You know me, I LOVE to wonder about stuff. It's one of the reasons why I got my Masters in Philosophy from Aberdeen University in Scotland. I'm just a curious sort of person. I think I got that from my mother. As I was growing up, whenever I would ask a question her response was most likely "Hmmm, good question, I wonder about that too. What do you think?" And off we would go, thinking critically and discussing. Rarely do I remember pat answers or the proverbial dismissal, "Go look it up." No, in my family, we wondered about stuff and talked and debated and researched and laughed!

This is the approach that our Children's Ministry's Sunday School teaching takes as well. We wonder about God's Word and God's Stories. We wonder about the projects that we do as we re-tell those stories. We wonder about the historical context, about what the story is telling us about God, and why God wanted us to know this particular story. I also encourage your children to wonder about with whom they might need to share the story since we know that God's Word is

meant to be shared and re-told. I encourage them to tell YOU the story. Every week. We wonder.

Every few months, your children are given the story booklets that contain the Bible stories as well as various Wonder Questions that YOU can wonder about with them. These booklets also contain hands-on activities to do together at home. It is our theological belief that God is personally revealed to us through the Bible and so, we encourage you to wonder about what God is telling you through God's Word. Aren't you the least bit curious? I would hope so.

Wondering is the seedbed of critical thinking. Critical thinking is a must for the people of God who live in a world where rash judgment, ignorance, lying, deceit, politicking, greed, self-aggrandizement, unkindness emotional chaos and conclusion jumping are the rule of the day. In the same way that you, as a parent, are intimately involved with your children's secular education, sports, extra-curricular activities, choice of friends, and their technology input, please be involved with their spiritual education. Join them in the journey



Wonder-filled events for December will help bring awe and wonder into your Advent/ Christmas Season. Don't miss them!

December 2 - Caroling by Candlelight - Begins 6:30 pm in the Chapel and then moves to Skylight Lobby. Bring your favorite Christmas Dessert to share.

December 11 - at 9 and 10:30 am worship services - Our Spontaneous Christmas Pageant

December 24 - Christmas Eve services for Families at *new times* - 2:00 and 4:00 pm!

Then in January we begin a whole new Wonder-Series of Bible stories about God, the Son, Jesus, his disciples, his miracles, his death, his resurrection, his appearances, his ascension and the work of God, the Holy Spirit building God's Church. I can hardly wait!

Children's Ministry

of faith in Christ. Wonder together about God, about God's Word, about theology, about what it means to be a Christ-follower, about what God did when God, the son (Jesus) became a human being to die for us, about what it means to have the power of God, the Holy Spirit, actually dwell with us when we believe. These are awesome things to wonder about. Trust God to provide you with, not pat answers, but with God's very presence and God's very Words to lead you into all truth. As Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 - "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,

a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Children's Ministry at NPC is trying to help you and your children be that approved worker in the world, rightly handling the word of truth. Go ahead, participate with your children right here on Sunday morning and at home. Wonder together.

Now, I'm wondering what you will do.
Mickie O'Donnell
Director of Children's Ministry

Trunk or Treat

Our Trunk or Treat tradition began 4 years ago in response to Super Storm Sandy. So many were out of power, so much damage. Halloween was almost cancelled. Well, NPC wasn't having that! At record time, with the help of others, we pulled together a last minute Trunk or Treat that was hugely attended and Halloween for some was saved! There are not many better feelings than when a community bands together. This tradition has continued successfully ever since.

This past October was no exception. It is always a treat for me to see all the children dressed up in costume (and some adults as well...), the cars all decorated and everyone relaxing and simply having a good time. Our upper lot was filled with familiar families and friends as well as new faces. Even the weather cooperated! The rain held off until 4 p.m. - perfect timing. The highlight was learning that children gave candy BACK to cars when they learned some cars were running out of candy, so kids who had yet to come would not miss out! SO PROUD of our kids!!!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Childs and Amy Barber for coordinating this event with me and a shout out to Mary and Becky Thompson for their help as well!

Enough said...a picture is worth a thousand words...besides...I have to start working on **Caroling by Candlelight** (12/2) and our **Spontaneous Christmas Pageant** (12/11) - see you then!

Liz Morelli,
Children's Ministry Associate and Admin



Arrghh- where's your loot matie?!



Pastor John Sieder, from one 1st responder to another...



Selfie time!



Liz, Children's Ministry Associate...don't just give the candy, BE the candy...



Our Youth Ministry (and wife!), Jack, Sarah, Jimmy and Andrea ... eat more chicken!

Children Ministry



FAMILY CAMP IS COMING IN 2017!

Join us as we head to Spruce Lake Retreat Center in Canadensis, PA on **August 4-6, 2017.**

Cost is \$215 per participant.

Registrations will open on December 1.

www.norotonchurch.org/familycamp

NPNS



The month of November was filled with many activities. The children again participated in collecting food items for Person-to-Person, which they then delivered on our annual walk. It was a brisk fall day and the joy in the children's eyes as they crunched through the leaves, was delightful.

Engaging the children in conversations about how they can help others 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 arrives 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 children are looking forward to Ms. Mickie and Miss Susanne coming around to each of the classrooms sharing 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.

Blessings,
Kalie Riordan and the
NPNS teachers and staff





Middle School Ministry

One of my favorite Christmas memories comes from 6th grade. My 6th grade class collected items to be donated to children in need. Together we had a celebration, packing our boxes and wrapping them up, then sending them off. I loved every part of that experience.

During this Advent season, we celebrate the greatest gift God could have ever given us, Jesus. In celebration, the Middle Schoolers will be collecting 150 pairs of Dickie's Men's Dri-tech comfort crew work socks to donate to the Open Doors Shelter in Norwalk. In addition, we will be holding a holiday celebration for Middle School on Wednesday, December 21 beginning

at 7pm. Santa, Mrs. Claus, a few reindeer, and so much more will be making an appearance. Students are asked to bring a "tag sale worthy" yankee swap gift from their home, and a pair of socks to contribute to our sock drive to the event. They will also have the option of staying late that evening to help deliver the socks to the Open Door Shelter that evening.

Looking forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior together.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Sarah Swible,
Middle School Ministry Coordinator

High School Ministry

Normally, I try to write a fun story or blurb in this about who I am, what I hope the High School Ministry strives to be, or minimally an anecdote to a point, but this time I want to express something much more meaningful than any of these.

What I want to express is something very simple, but yet so profound that it has changed the fabric of all of our humanity. It is this: Jesus, the Messiah, came to this world, fully God and fully man. Christmas to me is such a wonderful time of year because it is the church's best attempts at celebrating the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

There is a stirring joy to this time of year. There is a mystical hope that Jesus has already come and will come again one day. The anticipation is almost too much. Oh what a joy it is to celebrate the miraculous birth of our savior every year! I hope and pray you all have a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Some Upcoming Dates to Consider:

- Dec. 4 - HSM After Hours
- Dec. 16 - See Star Wars Rogue One
- Dec. 18 - HSM Christmas Party, 7:00 pm SHAC

For additional program dates, times, and locations, visit our online calendar at www.norotonyouth.com.

Jack Hein,
High School Ministry Coordinator





Educaring at NPCC

Magda Gerber, a passionate advocate for both children and parents, coined the word “educaring.” It is a term that refers to the role that both parents and teachers play in the caring and educating of young children. Educaring is when parents and teachers care while they educate and educate while they care.

Educaring is an integral part of our philosophy at NPCC. At NPCC we believe that children are eager explorers, born with a natural curiosity about the world. We believe that nurturing this curiosity with respectful appreciation and careful listening is the foundation to successful learning. During learning activities (i.e. story and music) as well as caring activities (i.e. diapering and feeding), we encourage all of our children, even our youngest infants, to become active participants rather than passive recipients.

As educarers, our role at NPCC is to create an environment in which young children are both secure and challenged. We give them plenty of time for uninterrupted play, trusting in their curiosity and competence. As educarers, we support their beginning steps toward self-directed, life-long learning, providing the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and moral foundation needed to navigate our diverse and complex world.

Peace and Joy,
Beth Aparicio
Director of NPCC



Music and Fine Arts

'Tis the Season!



Many people from NPC have told me that it just doesn't feel like Advent/Christmas until they've attended our annual Advent Vespers Concert in our historic Chapel. This event features the NPC Chamber Singers and soloists, and the Fontenay Chamber Players. The Chapel's acoustics are perfect for this combination of voices and instruments, and the Chapel is always beautifully decorated. The two services are on Sunday, December 11, at 4 and 6 pm. Plan on arriving early as the Chapel is always full for this event.

On Christmas Eve, the NPC Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra will be featured in a Service of Lessons and Carols. There will be two Lessons and Carols services that evening in addition to the two Family Services offered in the afternoon. The Lessons and Carols Services will take place at 7 and 9 pm. **Please note the new times.** Plan to come and enjoy the choir and orchestra. You will get a chance to sing some of your favorite Carols and bask in the richness of the Christmas story through music and Scripture.

Dwayne Condon,
Director of Music and Fine Arts



Please Welcome Our Newest Members!



Stef Jones resides in Darien with her husband, Simon, and their 1 year old son, James. She volunteers with Young Life, American Red Cross, and works at the Darien YMCA. She studied social work at Miami University and NYU.



Geoff and Bridget Lasda live in Holly Cove, Stamford with their son, Cameron (17 months) and their dog, Jackson. They recently moved to the area from Minnesota, but are originally from the northeast. They were delighted to find such a warm community within NPC and look forward to getting their family more involved.



Mark Lindsay resides in Darien with his wife Donna and son TJ. He is a film producer, executive producer and consultant in the entertainment industry. He is originally from North Carolina and is transferring his membership from First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich.



Josh and Haley Sonneland moved to Darien last September and have a nine month old daughter named Amelia. Haley works in communications at Sacred Heart in Greenwich, and Josh works for Alliance-Bernstein in NYC. Both attended Davidson College in NC, where she played DI lacrosse and he played soccer. Josh is originally from Sun Valley, ID and Seattle, WA, while Haley grew up in Darien.



Pat Stafford is a retired educator who lives in Stamford. She has two daughters, one here on the east coast and the other in the Chicago area. She also has a 10-year old grandson, Harrison, and a new granddaughter, Francesca, born in Oct. Pat is a classically trained pianist who takes joy in sharing music with others, a tradition that dates back to her childhood church. She loves to play golf and is trying to get back into the swing of it.



Catherine Suh went to NPC growing up, and she is pleased to officially become an adult member. Catherine works in advertising with fashion and luxury companies. Previously, she lived in D.C. and NYC and attended Redeemer Presbyterian while living in Manhattan. Catherine is also an attorney and graduated from Cornell Law School and Cornell University. She enjoys swimming, biking, and running.

Outreach



In Search of: Sunday Greeters and Welcome Station Helpers

If you enjoy making people feel special with your smile and warmth, please join the Welcoming Team. It's easy, short and flexible!

It takes just 7 minutes for people to form a first impression of a church. Be part of the ministry that makes a great impression and shows what a strong family-like community NPC is.

We are in great need of volunteers to:

- Greet for 15 minutes before the 9 or 10:30 services, and stay helping for 10 minutes after the services begin to assist late-comers
- Help at the Welcome Station for 15 minutes at the coffee hour immediately after the 9 and 10:30 services

Sign up as your schedule allows:

- Pick a regular Sunday of each month (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th) that works with your schedule OR serve for a stretch of time when you know you are available.
- Volunteers are needed now through mid-June 2017.
- Substitutes are available if you have a conflict.

Contact julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org.

NPC WANTS YOU! **The Outreach Team is Expanding!**

The Outreach Team is responsible for creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for visitors and those seeking to become members, as well as to share NPC's Ministries and programs with the greater community in the hope that they will enter into a relationship with Christ.

The team has historically focused on greeters, new member classes, Alpha courses and some periodic community outreach events.

We are now considering a half-dozen new initiatives with the desire to create an even more welcoming culture at NPC! Please consider adding your thoughtful input and creative ideas to these endeavors.

Our focus is toward new and younger members and couples with young children, but all are welcome. We would like to add to our team by January 2017. Interested? Contact julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org or approach any member of the Outreach Team on a Sunday or whenever you see them (Lynn Haffner, Scott Holcombe, Chris Mead, David Mettler, Claudia Roux and Laurie Valandra).

"Get Connected"

Sunday, Jan. 8, after both the 9 and 10:30 services
(in Schreiner Mission Room)

- Are you new to NPC and curious to know more?
- Have you been attending, but desire to be more engaged?
- Do you have friends and neighbors you'd like to introduce to NPC?

Please join us for a short program followed by conversation and light bites. Informally chat with pastors, staff and members about our mission, and ways to get more connected to your faith and others in the NPC community.

Interested in Becoming a Member of NPC? **Hold the date for the Feb. 4 New Member Class**

Saturday, Feb. 4, morning only (time TBD). New members will be welcomed into the Congregation at the 10:30 service on Sunday Feb. 12. Free professional nursery care is provided for children 3 months to 4 years.

Here's what members of the October 2016 class had to say about their experience:

- *It was useful, relevant, and important in making my decision to be a member of NPC.*
- *I really enjoyed learning the history of NPC and the Presbyterian faith in general.*
- *I liked the format - i.e. speaker then small group*

discussion. It was also nice to get information about the various ministries and programs NPC has to offer.

- I found it really rewarding to be able to share and hear other's faith statements.

Pre-registration is needed. To register online and for more class information, see the membership ministry page on the NPC website (www.norotonchurch.org) or contact julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org.

Community Concert: February 11, 2017 for a special evening celebrating LOVE!

"I will sing and make music to the Lord." (Psalm 27:6)

The opening line of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night is "If music be the food of love, play on". Music touches our soul in many ways, and often helps us connect with the people around us as we listen, dance and sing together. Join us as NPC's instrumentalists and soloists perform special LOVE selections that are sure to warm your heart and soul.

Working our Faith,
Julie Colbath
Director of Membership

Mission Ministry

Refugee Resettlement Co-Sponsorship

"Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:3-4

One year ago here at NPC, I attended a talk by Chris George, Executive Director of New Haven based IRIS- Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services. I wanted to hear his talk because I knew what God commanded us to do to help the poor and oppressed, but to be honest, I was afraid. I had visions of giving aid to someone who would want to do harm to our community.

During the talk, I learned the vetting process is thorough and extensive, and no one is actually resettled unless their identity, background, motives, and affiliations have been investigated beyond doubt. The initial vetting is conducted by the U.N.'s refugee agency, which usually refers the most vulnerable applicants to the U.S. At the top of the list are survivors of torture, victims of sexual violence, targets of political persecution, the medically needy, and single mothers with children.

I learned there are nine U.S. government agencies, including the State Department, the Department of Defense and the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center who conduct background checks of their own. Officials with the Department of Homeland Security travel abroad to conduct in-person interviews with every applicant. Fingerprints and iris scans are matched against criminal

databases. Biographical information such as past visa applications are scrutinized to ensure the applicant's story coheres. The process takes 18 to 24 months, and some 50% are rejected.

After learning about the process, I began to understand how safe it was and felt that if God wanted me to be a part of this ministry, he would go before me if I would fully trust him. So, I became part of the NPC Refugee Co-Sponsorship Team. We are deep into our preparations and I can tell you, the joy is unmeasureable. Knowing our obedience will provide a new life to a family who has no hope, is such a blessing. I believe love will conquer hate and those who are given hope and love will choose it over hate. *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" Matthew 25:35.*



Sandy McPherson

Mission Ministry

Service Opportunities

Help Deliver Angel Tree Gifts to children of incarcerated parents - **Saturday, Dec. 17** - contact Dom Lettera domicl@yahoo.com to sign up.

Help transport Dove Holiday Meal packages from NPC to Stamford Warehouse Sunday morning **Dec. 18**. Please contact Sandra MacVicar at smacvicar40@gmail.com to sign up.

Serve at the Open Door Shelter - **Dec. 3, 18 and January 7**, contact Holly Hough hough7@optonline.net to help prepare/serve the lunchtime meal at the Shelter (over 16).

Refugee Co-sponsorship Ministry – Update

As we move ahead partnering with Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), the local refugee resettlement non-profit in New Haven we are learning all about the excellent system in place to quickly help refugee families that arrive to move to self-sufficiency.

The over-riding goal is to help refugees regain control over their lives and become engaged, self-sustaining members of the community.

Our part in the process is to act as **Friend, Advocate and Helper**, especially in the early days when there is a huge cultural adjustment and many demands on the family to register for social services/schools/look for employment/attend health assessments/learn English/ navigate the

transport system and more! IRIS is experienced in managing this process and guiding us as we partner with them.

We already have a core team who are preparing in advance for the family, researching resources that will be needed and gathering household supplies/furniture for their home. (You may have already helped with this!) If you would like to be added to the list of volunteers willing to give some time to this ministry please contact Sandy McPherson at sandy.k.mcpherson@gmail.com, who will match volunteers to needs as they arise.

If you know of any businesses that have employment opportunities that do not require a good understanding of English we are eager to make a connection. Please contact David Mace at davidmace@optonline.net.

We do not know yet when or who will arrive in Connecticut needing our help.

We are thankful to God for this opportunity to minister to those He chooses for us and pray for them on their journey here.



Stella Clarke
Director of Missions

Flower Team



Deck the Halls

The Flower Team is decorating for Advent and welcomes others to join us during any of these days/times:

Sat. Nov 26, 9:30-11:30 am,
Thurs. Dec 1, 9:30-11:30 am and 3:30-5:30 pm,
and Fri. Dec. 2, at 9:30 am.



Congregational Life Ministry

KICK OFF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH YOUR NPC COMMUNITY



We will once again **C E L E B R A T E** those who served
(aka volunteered) in some way ... large or small ...
throughout the calendar year 2016.

When: December 6th

Time: 6:15 to 8 pm

We will gather in the Skylight Lobby for several hours for:

FUN ... FOOD ... FELLOWSHIP !!!

We hold this event on December Team Night as many who serve already have that date marked in their calendars; we hope others who have served but are not officially on a team will also join us!

- This celebration extends the often rushed few minutes of social time we have on regular team nights, or during Sunday refreshments, allowing us all to spend a little more time with others we often only see-in-passing.

More of our younger people got involved in serving this year, due in large part to our first Service Day; we hope the timing allows some of them to join us as well.

Postcard invitations have been mailed. If yours got 'lost in your stack of mail', or we inadvertently missed your name, please just come.

Joyfully looking forward to the Christmas Season,

Valerie Muller

Director, Community and Communications



In Loving Memory of...

October 26th
Marshall W. Neale

November 1st
Florence Gordon

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

Advent 2016 Devotional Guide

emailed Fridays (for coming Sunday)
Prayers. Candle Lighting Readings. Discussion Questions.
Suggested Activities for families.



Limited Print copies available
around the church.

'Names for the Messiah'
Author: Walter Brueggemann
Resource used for Advent sermon series.
Available in Main Office during weekdays.
Suggested donation: \$8.00

To sign up, email norotonchurch@norotonchurch.org.

Join us in celebrating the following Baptisms...

October 16th

Julia Biddle Coyle, daughter of Ryan and Kate Coyle

Join us in celebrating the following Wedding...

November 26th

Florence Kaye and Jack Howell

If you would like to submit an article for the January/February 2017 issue please submit it before December 4 to Rose Cunningham by email at rose.cunningham@norotonchurch.org.

NPC Program Staff

Pastor John H. Seiders..... 203-309-5618

Interim Pastor

Pastor Brandi Drake..... 203-309-5620

Associate Pastor of Caring & Women's Ministry

Pastor Jimmy McPherson 203-309-5619

Associate Pastor Spiritual Formation

Valerie Muller..... 203-309-5650

Director of Community and Communications

Dwayne Condon..... 203-309-5614

Director of Music & Fine Arts

Mickie O'Donnell..... 203-309-5622

Director of Children's Ministry

Stella Clarke..... 203-309-5645

Director of Missions

Beth Aparicio 203-309-5605

Director of Noroton Presbyterian Child Care

Kalie Riordan 203-655-3223

Director Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School

Julie Colbath 203-309-5615

Director of Membership

Dan Rosa..... 203-309-5608

Business Administrator

David Lee..... 203-309-5609

Director of Properties

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

11/27 - 1st Sunday of Advent
Pastor Jimmy McPherson

12/4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
Rev. Dr. Ruthie Seiders

12/11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent
8:00 am & 5:00 pm
Pastor John Seiders
9:00 & 10:30 am

Children's Christmas Pageant

12/18 - 4th Sunday of Advent
8:00, 9:00, and 10:30 am
Pastor Brandi Drake
5:00 pm *Service of Light* - Chapel

12/24 - Christmas Eve

Please note new service times.

2:00* & 4:00* pm
Services for Families
Pastor Brandi Drake

*Child care available 3 years and under

7:00 & 9:00 pm
Inspirational Music and Carols
with Choir and Orchestra
Pastor John Seiders

12/25 - Christmas Day
10:30 am One Service Only
Pastor John Seiders

1/1 - New Year's Day
10:30 am One Service Only

Caroling by Candlelight

Friday, December 2
6:30 pm in the Chapel



ALL are invited!

We begin at 6:30 pm in the Chapel for Christmas caroling and Advent discovery then move to the Skylight Lobby.

Bring your favorite Christmas Dessert to share.
(Drop off in Skylight Lobby, then come to Chapel)

Questions? Contact Liz or Mickie.

Advent Choral Vespers

December 11, 2016

4:00* and 6:00 pm in the Chapel

Featuring
*The NPC Chamber Singers and
The Fontenay Chamber Players*

NPC's historic, beautifully decorated
& candlelit chapel will reverberate
with the music of the season.



*There will be childcare provided for ages 3 and under only at 4:00 pm

Contact NPCC at 203-309-5605 for childcare reservations.

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:00 am Chapel Service 9 & 10:30 am Sanctuary Services 9 & 10:30 am Classes for 3's -5th grade 2:30 pm Session Christmas Party 5:00 pm Service in Horton Hall		6:15 am Women's Bible Study Breakfast 9:15 am Women's Bible Study 6:15 pm Volunteer Celebration Party	7:00 am Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 pm J.A.M Choir 7:00 pm Harbor (6th-8th grade)	12:00 pm Moms of Teens 1:00 pm Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 pm Chancel Choir Reh.	9:30 am Advent Decorating 6:30 pm Caroling by Candlelight	7:30 am Faithful in Prayer 9:30 am Advent Decorating
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:00 am Chapel Service 9 & 10:30 am Sanctuary Services 9 & 10:30 am Children's Christmas Pageant 9:00 am Confirmation Class 4:00 pm Advent Choral Vespers 6:00 pm Advent Choral Vespers 6:00 pm High School Ministry	7:30 pm Special Session Meeting	9:15 am Women's Bible Study Brunch 4:00 pm Confirmation Class Make-Up 8:00 pm Faithful in Prayer	7:00 am Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 9:15 am MOPS 4:00 pm J.A.M Choir 7:00 pm Harbor (6th-8th grade)	1:00 pm Prayer Group Mtg. 12:00 pm Moms of Teens 12:30 pm Adult Fellowship Christmas Luncheon 8:00 pm Chancel Choir Reh.	Time TBD: Youth Rogue One Trip	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:00 am Chapel Service 9 & 10:30 am Sanctuary Services 9 & 10:30 am Classes for 3's -8th grade 9:00 am Confirmation Class 5:00 pm Service of Light 6:00 pm High School Ministry - Christmas Party		4:00 pm Confirmation Class Make-Up	7:00 am Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 pm J.A.M Choir 7:00 pm Harbor (6th-8th grade) Christmas Party	1:00 pm Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 pm Chancel Choir Reh.	NPC Offices closed 1/2 Day	Christmas Eve 2:00 & 4:00 pm Services for Families 7:00 & 9:00 pm Inspirational Music and Carols with Choir and Orchestra
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Christmas Day ONE Service Only 10:30 am Sanctuary Service	NPC Offices Closed		7:00 am Men's Study-Sugar Bowl			