

The Spire

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



Which is Better – Old or New?

Which is better – something old or something new? It depends upon the subject or the object, right? Some old cars are classics, but some of the newer cars with computerized fuel injection, disc brakes, independent suspension, air bags, with navigation and voice activated software are safer, smarter, thriftier and speedier. So check the “new” box as best when it comes to cars. Similarly, newer electronics such as TVs and computers are faster, sharper and loaded with many more features. They too win in the contest of new versus old. Digital watches keep better time than those old 17 jewel wind up models. New wins the debate here as well.

Now what about fine wines? Classic vintages, which improve with age, can be much better than anything new – or so I’m told. My taste is too inexperienced to know the difference, so I’ll trust the experts here. How do friends fare in the old versus new comparison? Don’t we find that a long-term, good friend has an edge over a new friend? Most of us would say so. What about new ideas, new fads, or new books?

If they haven’t been tried by a generation or two and stood the test of time, my money is with the old tried and true.

I had a literature professor in college, Dr. Thomas Howard, who said that great literature stands up to the test of time because it contains the great themes of life tested by the human experience. As the preacher in Ecclesiastes wrote, “Nothing is new under the sun.” People are people - everywhere, everyplace, every era. This is one reason why this month, we are stepping back in time to look at, “the most influential religious author of the twentieth century” – C. S. Lewis (not my words, the words of Professor Robert MacSwain in the Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis). Lewis has been dead for 50 years and yet his books are still top sellers. His children’s fiction about Narnia are top draws at the box office. Preachers like Tim Keller (in New York) have lived their whole lives reading Lewis - as have many intellectuals and leaders like Chuck Colson or Francis Collins who needed solid reasons for their faith and discovered them in Lewis’ writings.

Lewis believed that the old was

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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:

2/2/14 - 8, 9 & 10:30 Services
 Pastor Sam Schreiner - “FOMO”
5:00 p.m. Open Doors -
 Pastor Greg Doll - “Sports in America: A Spiritual Perspective”
 No dinner served today.

2/9/14 - Noroton Lectures Speaker
 Dr. Jerry Root , I John 3:1-3
 “C. S. Lewis and the Love of God”

Preaching Series on the Book of James

2/16/14 - Pastor Sam Schreiner
 James 1:1-8,12 “The Power of Perseverance”

2/23/14 - Pastor Sam Schreiner
 James 1:19-27 “Just Do It”

Upcoming Baptism Dates:

2/16 and 3/16 10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary service. To schedule a Baptism please call Leslie Ezzo at 203-309-5618.

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better than the new when it comes to literature and intellectual ideas. Even as he was publishing “new” works, he wrote an article countering the notion that only experts should read the classics and others should read modern books. Lewis pointed out that if you joined a discussion at 11:00 a.m. that started at 8:00 a.m., you could not fully comprehend what was being said? You could not understand the references to earlier conversations. You would not get jokes that require prior knowledge. Lewis believed that we are easily seduced by the errors of the time we live in if we don’t understand the wisdom from the past. The only way to sort out the good from the bad in modern notions, he wrote, was “to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books.” I thank Lewis for pointing this out to me at an early age, as I’ve learned to mix up my reading of the old and the new. I look forward to our Noroton Lecturer, Dr. Jerry Root who on the weekend of Feb 8 & 9, will once again acquaint us with one of the best Christian thinkers of the (recent) past, a treasure from the 20th century, C. S. Lewis.

Your Pastor, Partner and Friend,
Sam Schreiner

P.S. If you want to walk where Lewis lived much of his life, come join us this July on the Pilgrimage of the English Roots of our Faith when we will visit his home and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge where Lewis taught for more than 30 years.

The English Roots of Our Faith: From John Knox to C.S. Lewis

10 Day Inspirational Tour with Pastor Sam Schreiner



July 12-21, 2014

Please join Pastor Sam and other church members on the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Knox, the founder of Presbyterianism in Scotland, to explore our Presbyterian roots in the Scottish Reformation and the blossoming of Christianity in England. Enjoy the great company of fellow pilgrims as we explore together inspirational church architecture and informational tours of the historic cities of St. Andrews, Edinburgh, York, and London. Join us in strolls through the famous university towns of Oxford and Cambridge as we explore the legacy of C. S. Lewis, one of the most influential Christian writers of the 20th century.

For more information and registration visit www.norotonchurch.org.

Contact Leslie Ezzo at leslie.ezzo@norotonchurch.org
or 203-309-5618 with questions.

Important Church News!

The church will be closed on Presidents’ Day, Feb. 17th for the holiday. To convert to our new electrical system, we will need to shut off power to the whole church Feb. 17th and 18th. Electricity will be restored to the CE wing on Wednesday, Feb 19th. The East wing (from the main office to Sam’s office) will not be restored until end of day Thursday, Feb 20th. We will not be able to accommodate memorial services that week or any other programs or events. We will not have our phone or internet service until Feb 21st. Thank you for your patience with this necessary upgrade.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

February 2014 Progress Report



Building Progress:

Fast on the heels of approval of the building plan by Darien's P&Z Board, the Building Committee has established two sub-committees that are hard at work: the Contractor Selection Subcommittee and the Interior Design Subcommittee. The Contractor Selection committee whittled a list of twelve initial potential contractors down to eight. Over the course of two days in January, they interviewed the eight contractors and reduced the list even further. They are in the process of soliciting bids with the goal of selecting our contractor partner by Spring. Meanwhile, the Interior Design committee has met with the architect, reviewed his finish recommendations (e.g. flooring materials etc.) and have moved ahead with selections. Although there are still interior finish decisions to be made, the first set of decisions was critical for the bid process.



AND...did you notice the **new Children's Education wing windows?** Over the Christmas holiday, the Properties Team, under the direction of David Lee, were able to replace half the CE windows. Over the February break it is anticipated that the remaining half will be completed.

AND... The church cut over to the **new phone system**. With the addition of phones in the classrooms and our new phone system, we have improved both communications and safety.

AND...the **utilities upgrades** (heat, electrical, sewer/sanitary) are nearing completion, too! We are tentatively planning to cut over to our new utility systems during the February break. Scheduling is

complicated but the team is endeavoring to maximize the week the Nursery School is closed.

Praise God! Our Continuing Faithfulness!: We are generously blessed by your prayers and our financial supporters! We are excited to be able to report as of year-end 2013 both an increase in our pledges, to \$13,745,771, and in our receipts of \$9,075,000! We are now 66% of our way to completion of our pledges. The Building Committee and Session are dedicated to maximizing the utilization of the funds you have entrusted to them. The Mission Team is prayerfully considering several significant grants, thanks to your generosity. Stay tuned for exciting news from the Mission Team.

As we approach our third and final year (beginning April 1st) of the *Foundations for the Future* campaign we pray for a strong finish. Your faithfulness strengthens the Building Committee as it plans construction expenditures. If you have not pledged, but would like to do so, or if you would like to increase your pledge, please contact Dan Rosa (dan.rosa@norotonchurch.org).

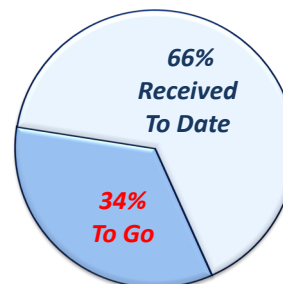
May the Lord be glorified in all we do to strengthen His foundation at NPC!

Dick and Jean Ann Bollman
Tom Taylor

Foundations for the Future Progress Team

\$13,745,771 in Gifts and Pledges over 3 years

■ Pledges To Go ■ Received to date



**Gifts received
As of
12/30/2013
\$ 9,050,000**

Adult Spiritual Formation



Souper Bowl Sunday

I was asked to speak on Souper Bowl Sunday at the Open Doors Service on the topic of "Sports in America: A Spiritual Perspective." That sermon will appropriately come on the heels of the Super Bowl Breakfast in NYC on Friday morning, January 31. Each year the NFL players elect a player for the Bart Starr Award. This award recognizes a player who demonstrates outstanding character and leadership in the home, on the field and in the community. Last year's winner, London Fletcher, said in his acceptance speech, "I embrace being a role model. I strive everyday to be a man of character and integrity."

I doubt it will come as any great surprise to you that London Fletcher is also a disciple of Jesus Christ. He is motivated by his faith and love for God.

Whether we like it or not, sports continue to assume outsized roles in our society and many of our kids look principally to athletes as role models... for good and for bad.

On that Friday morning, I will be boarding a 6:20 a.m. train with 5 football players from Darien High School and 5 football players

from New Canaan High school as well as both head coaches and a number of assistant coaches. About 30 of us in total will be putting the rivalry aside to come together around a common purpose -- to listen to their heroes talk about the importance of faith, integrity and character. My prayer is that the message will create a lifelong impact on these young men.

This is the power of the platform of sports at its finest in our culture. A platform that continues to grow and grow and grow and grow...

And as the platform grows and grows so does the influence of athletes in our society.

And as the influence of athletes grows and grows so does the emphasis on sports in our culture...often in unhealthy ways.

So...what does the Church have to say to this culture? How can the Church influence this culture?

What would Jesus think of the Super Bowl?

Please plan to join us on **Sunday, February 2nd at 5:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary for **Souper Bowl Sunday** as we wrestle with these questions and others while also collecting soup cans for the Open Doors Shelter in Norwalk.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Greg Doll

Associate Pastor of Adult Spiritual Formation and Outreach



Adult Spiritual Formation

Noroton Lectures 2014

Featuring Guest Speaker: **Dr. Jerry Root, renowned C.S. Lewis scholar**
February 8 & 9

8:00-9:30 a.m. - Men's Breakfast

Saturday, February 8 in Horton Hall

Topic: *C. S. Lewis and the Object of the Heart's Deepest Longings*

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

10:00-11:30 a.m. - Women's Coffee

Saturday, February 8 in Horton Hall

Topic: *C. S. Lewis and the Object of the Heart's Deepest Longings*

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

7:00 -8:30 p.m. - Keynote Address

Saturday, February 8 in Horton Hall

Topic: *C. S. Lewis's Big Idea "Reality is Iconoclastic" and Why It Matters Urgently Today*

All are welcome to the evening lecture.

Sunday, February 9 - Worship Services

8:00 a.m. - Chapel / 9 & 10:30 a.m. - Sanctuary

Sermon Topic: *C. S. Lewis and the Love of God*

Join us for any of our Sunday morning services.

Registration through our website www.norotonchurch.org or by contacting Marlene Moffett at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5620.

Men's Bible Study:

"Moses and Mark: A Modern Conversation."

We continue our concurrent study of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Gospel of Mark. It will take place in NYC on Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. at The Yale Club (Clarence Day Room), 50 Vanderbilt Ave, corner of 44th St., across from the western entrance to Grand Central Station and in Horton Hall on Thursdays at 7:00 a.m.

For more information please contact Marlene at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5620.

Men's Study at the Sugar Bowl:

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

Small groups:

are a great way to get involved and make friends in the church. Small groups are made up of 8 to 12 adults who meet weekly or every other week on various days or evenings of the week for friendship and Bible study, or to read a book together. Contact Marlene at 203-309-5620 to get plugged into a group that fits your schedule and interest. You can also visit the church website www.norotonchurch.org for more info.

Weekly Prayer Meeting:

Every Thursday in the Parlor from 1:15-2:15 p.m. Come and pray for needs of our church family. Everyone is welcome – no prayer experience necessary! For more information please contact Marlene at 203-309-5620.

Would You Like to Stay Connected and Join Our Email List?

We send email blasts to the congregation with general church updates, prayer requests, special events and more. If you're not receiving these email notices and would like to, please contact Claire Bragdon in the church main office, 203-655-1451 or email claire.bragdon@norotonchurch.org to be added to the list.

Caring & Women's Ministries

But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "why did you make me like this?" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? Romans 9:20-21



Our Women's Retreat is coming!!

And you may know that this year, we're exploring the metaphor that is found throughout scripture: God as the potter—us as the clay.

I don't know about you, but I've been thinking about ways that God shapes us. Upbringing and experience, Scripture, friends... intentional discipleship and sometimes even hardship and discipline.

I wonder what kind of shape you're feeling like these days? A bowl? A plate? A sculpture? And, how did you get to that shape? What does it mean to allow the

master potter to form you and use you as his own? What does it mean when we, the lump of clay, say to the potter "why did you make me like this?"

All of these questions (and more), we'll explore together on March 7-8-9 in Warwick, NY. I'm getting excited! Space is limited, and we want you to come. So make sure you register, and I hope to see you there!

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



NPC Women's Retreat March 7-9, 2014 Warwick, NY (New month this year!) "Shaped by God"

Scripture uses the image of God as potter from Psalm through to the early Christian church.

What does it mean for us to be like clay in the potter's hands? There is always a lot of laughter, mingled with silence and reflection. Co-Chairs are Pam Zangrillo and Judy Phillips.

This year we are limited to 110 women so sign up early to guarantee your spot!

Online registration is on the NPC website under Women's Ministry.

Caring & Women's Ministries

Women's Studies

Monday Lunchtime Study:

resumes **February 3rd**, 12:00-1:30 p.m. in the Parlor. Join this thoughtful group of women as they pour through scripture and support one another in prayer! Led by Beth Peelle: 203-856-7092.

Tuesday Morning Bible Studies:

6:15-7:15 a.m. in the Parlor:

We are studying the Book of Hebrews right up until Easter.

9:30-11:15 a.m. in Horton Hall:

We are working on the book of James until the beginning of March.

OASIS Moms Ministry:

Thursdays 9:30-11:00 a.m. in Horton Hall. This is a study especially for moms with young children.

How can you honor God as you love and raise your kids? Come to learn, meet other moms, and be comforted. This morning is led by a team of veteran moms—what a beautiful group! *Childcare waiting list only.*

Moms of Teens:

Thursdays 12:00-1:15 in the SHAC. This group of moms have lots in common as they walk through the adolescent years of their kids together! B.Y.O lunch, and we spend time praying and reading relevant books! Led by Sallie Schmidt and Laurie Bessey.



DivorceCare is a confidential weekly seminar for people who are separated or divorced. It is a safe place where people can be around others who understand what they're experiencing, and where they can learn valuable information about healing from the hurt of divorce.

Come once or often for support and care. Join at any time! Non-members welcome.

Meets every Monday through April 7th in the Parlor, 7:15 -9:00 p.m.
No meeting on **February 17.**

\$15 for workbook with scholarships available.

Open Doors: If you haven't been lately, you haven't been!



Children's & Youth Ministries



Minute with Mickie YAY for YOU!!

February is a great month. Apart from Valentine's Day, there is a little less "holiday" feel to this month. So I think we can concentrate more on doing things together as a family, focusing on growing in our faith and planning out how we are going to spend our spring and summer months. The Children's Ministry Department at NPC has been busy planning out the remainder of the school year with activities and teaching topics that will help you and your children learn more about the Bible, Jesus and the Church so that YOU all are really ready for Lent and Easter. The Youth Ministries Department has strategically planned out ministry objectives and plans for NPC Teens as well: Sunday morning teaching for Middle School teens, Confirmation for 8th graders, Worship experiences for High School, Harbor, Ignite, Small Group Bible studies, Retreats, Mission trips, Outreach activities and more. There is a purpose for all of it. And there are lots of opportunities for YOU and your family to participate. We are very excited. All we need is YOU! Go to www.norotonchurch.org and check it all out

My job here at NPC is to equip parents and other leaders to share the Gospel message with children and youth. We have learned over the years that YOU are the most important and influential person in your child's life. As a matter of fact, YOU (parents) are more than twice as influential in spiritual matters as the church pastor and over three times as influential as Sunday School teachers or Youth Directors. WOW!

So the question now is "How are YOU growing and learning and sharing your faith with your family?" AH HA! That's where we come in (the Directors and Pastoral Staff at NPC). We provide incredible opportunities for YOU, sometimes with your children and sometimes without. So pick a few of these to get involved in. You'll be glad you did and your kids will say "YAY" because they really do well when you are involved.

Special events in February:

- February 2nd – High School Football Party - bring a can of soup for Open Doors Shelter
- February 7th at 7pm for **FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT**. Come with your blankets and Jammies. Bring a snack to share and a pair of PJ's to give to Open Doors Shelter. We'll have popcorn and water. A special showing of the Disney film "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" will help kick off the Noroton Lectures weekend as we focus on the writings and theology of C.S. Lewis. (Not appropriate for preschool children)
- February 8th – Noroton Lectures with Dr. Jerry Root (see page 5 for more details)
- February 9th - Take-it-Home Event at 4:00 p.m. for families with 3rd Graders. Learn about Family Worship and Communion
- February 28th - March 2nd - High School Retreat



Sundays:

- **Elementary Horton Hall Huddle Leader:** In February we are studying the Book of Mark (Jesus' ministry, parables and miracles)
- **Middle School Class in the Parlor:** Learning about Jesus' ministry through DVDs and activities
- **Open Door Worship:** at 5:00 p.m. and Family Dinner (best \$5 deal in town!!)
- **Ignite:** for 9th-12th grade High school youth

Tuesdays:

- **Women's Bible Studies** (see page 7 for more details)
- **Men's Bible Study:** in NYC (see page 5 for more details)

Children & Youth Ministries

Wednesdays:

- **JAM:** for Kindergarten-5th grade children. Music, snack, crafts, puppetry and more!
- **Harbor:** for 6th-8th grade Middle School youth in the SHAC

Thursdays:

- **Men's Bible Study:** in Horton Hall (see *page 5 for more details*)
- **OASIS** – Parenting DVD and discussion for Moms with young children (see *page 7 for more details*)

Throughout the week – Middle School and High School small groups studying the book of Mark.

Where will YOU get involved? Let's shout "YAY" for everyone as we do these things together. It's going to be a great February!!

Mickie O'Donnell

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



Over the past few months, we have been working hard to plan and execute ministry activities for the youth in our community, and February is sure to be a blast!

On February 2nd, we will kick off the month by having a Football Party in the SHAC. Come on over at 6:00 p.m. for traditional football watching, snacks and hanging out with friends until the game is over. This is a great event that we have a lot of fun with every year.

In addition, our regular programming has started back up and we are very excited to explore and transform with you. This semester we will be going through the Gospel of Mark, exploring the life of Jesus, what He did, where He went, and why it's so great to love Him. We will be covering this topic at Ignite (all High School students), Harbor (all Middle School students), and Sunday School (all Middle School students). We are especially excited about this topic because it allows us to really get to know Jesus, and to build a strong relationship with Him.

February 12th we will be having an incredible Valentine's Day party at Harbor!! This is going to be an awesome night, full of games and snacks and good times. It will be a time of relaxation and excellence as we get to have time together as a group and laugh and grow together.

February 28th to March 2nd we will be having our

first High School Retreat! It really doesn't get more exciting than this. We will be heading up to the Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, CT to spend an excellent amount of time together hanging out, spending time with God, and having a blast doing all sorts of activities. We will be engaged on a ropes course, ride llamas, and many other incredible things you would not get to do unless you join us! Worried because you might have a lot of homework that week? Well, you don't have to, because we will have time set aside for you to get all that done, and you won't miss out on any of the fun. We will also have worship and talks designed to hit you right where you are and help propel you into a greater, deeper relationship with God. You don't want to miss this! Get ready to embark on the greatest retreat in the history of time!

For more information on all our activities, and for the meeting times of our youth groups, please visit the Youth Ministries page of the website, and check your emails for updates on all we are doing!

Blessed to be serving with you!
Tom Fagan & Sarah Swible,
Youth Ministries Coordinators



Congregational Life Ministry

Coming Soon ...

NPC's 3rd Annual Chili Cookoff!

Mark your calendars *NOW* for this popular event!

It is scheduled for: **Saturday evening, March 22nd, 6:15-8:30 p.m.**

We have some space limitations in Horton Hall, so reservations for chili entrées will be on a first-come basis. We will also ask for folks to let us know about desired seating. You do not need to participate in the cookoff to attend; we need tasters/voters too!

Fill out the form in this article, look around the church for forms, or go online at www.norotonchurch.org.

More information to come in March Spire, in Noroton Notes, posters, and eblasts.

Hope to see you! It is a great night of eating and laughing with friends and enjoying a wide range of chili recipes.

Remember Noroton Lectures ... the second weekend in February!

We are blessed to have a renowned scholar on C.S.Lewis, Dr. Jerry Root, come to NPC this year. We have a number of opportunities to hear him: Saturday morning, evening, and Sunday too!

The ASF team has kindly scheduled our lecturer for two sessions on Saturday morning, one each for men and women separately, allowing other activities in our busy schedules to still be fulfilled.

Make sure to sign up; information on page 5 in the Spire and on our website.

See you there.



In fellowship together,
Valerie Muller
Director of Congregational Life
valerie.muller@norotonchurch.org
203-309-5650 or 203-655-1451



Saturday, March 22nd
6:15-8:30 p.m.

CHILI COOK-OFF! REGISTRATION

Name of Individual, Family or Group: _____

Individuals Attending: _____
(# and Names)

Contact Person Info

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Chili Dish Name (If Known): _____

Check here if you haven't decided yet []

Type of Chili: [] Beef [] Vegetarian [] Poultry [] All-Other Meat

[] Also Spicy! [] *Eating/Judging ONLY!*

Cornbread: [] Sweet [] Traditional

Questions?: valerie.muller@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5650

Membership Ministry



Join the 7 Minute Team! (Doesn't that sound cool?)

AKA Worship Greeters... It takes just 7 minutes for visitors to form an impression of NPC! Be part of making it positive by serving as a warm and welcoming greeter before the 9 and 10:30 a.m. services, or after worship at a visitor station we are seeking to set up. Please give me a call at the new direct dial number below or send an email.

Sign up Now for the Next Membership Class

Join NPC this spring and get more engaged in your faith and the life of the Church!

Class will be held on four **Sundays, March 16, 23, 30 and April 30**, from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m., except the last class, which will be extended to Noon for membership vows, followed by a lunch reception for new members and

their families. New members will be introduced to the congregation at worship on April 13.

The class is interesting, faith-deepening and fun! For more information and to register, please contact me.

New volunteers are also always needed for the membership classes. Please join in!

Have you Tried the On-line Church Directory?

Email me for the user name and password to access the on-line directory. You can check your own information, update your photo, and learn new names and faces. I can also give you a copy of the colorful printed directory, which includes many pictures of all NPC's ministries and programs, as well as member portraits.

Working our faith,
Julie Colbath

Director of Membership

julie.colbath@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5615

Tot Drop



Mud + "Digger" = Tot Drop excitement

The sparkling, new, vinyl clad replacement windows installed over the Christmas break in Tot Drop rooms provide more than energy efficiency in our classrooms! They also offer a ringside seat to observe the endless mountains of mud that the bright yellow construction excavator moves from one place to another in the initial phases of *Foundations for the Future* work. Best seen from the Twos classroom, the children are captivated by every shovelful that is filled and dumped outside their window!

Teachers are enjoying the excitement generated and are building on the enthusiasm this unique experience offers for new learning. They are not quite so enthusiastic when

the digging goes on from 1:00-3:00—naptime—but the children are even learning to sleep through drilling, digging and dumping—most of the time.

Parents also see another bright side of the action: they say breakfast goes quickly at home as children are eager to get back to Tot Drop to see what the digger is doing; it also makes it much easier for Moms who need to dash off to work after dropping off their son or daughter to have such an exciting distraction/attraction for their little one.

The good news: there's surely more excitement ahead!

In His service,
Carol Scott

Director of NPC Tot Drop



"Digger" Watch



Mountain of Mud



The Great Digger

Mission Ministry

Macedonia Church – Testimony of Elder Tony

My name is Elder Tony and I am one of the brothers who came out of the prison system and a product of the Macedonia Ministry. God has truly done so much for me and the following are just some of the key highlights of my story.

I grew up in the PT Barnum apartments, one of the toughest projects in Bridgeport CT where I lived for over 20 years. My mother was a church going woman who raised me up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Unfortunately, the absence of my father in the home and the lack of a positive male figure, negatively impacted my life. After graduating high school in 1984, I made a decision to pursue “street life” and was a drug dealer from 1985 to 1991 and began carrying a handgun for protection and make a name for myself in the streets. This decision caused my life to speed up at a fast-pace with quick money and partying in night clubs. This lifestyle led to shoot-outs over drug blocks in certain parts of the projects.

One day, myself and another drug dealer had an altercation that led to a shoot-out. Unfortunately, I accidentally shot a little boy who got caught in the crossfire. Thankfully, the boy was alright. The boy’s mother (who was a Christian) asked me to turn myself into the police and I told her I would but never did. Whenever she would see me, she would let me know that she put the situation into God’s hand and “He was going to get me.” If I had known he would get me like this, I would have turned my life over to him a long time ago!

After that incident, I went on the run from the law and found myself in another shoot-out trying to defend my life after a drug deal that had gone bad. I shot the man in self-defense and I am forever thankful he did not die. In an effort to escape the pressures of life, I began using drugs trying to numb myself and avoid dealing with reality. I was beginning to hit rock bottom and desperately wanted to get off drugs, but couldn’t because by then I was addicted.

I remember using drugs all night and Pat Robertson of the “700 Club” was on TV. He began speaking through the television that night. I really don’t remember everything he said, but what stuck out to me was when he said; “You are tired, you tried everything else, try Jesus.”

He offered the sinners prayer and I repeated everything he said, because I was desperate. I must say I did not feel anything at the time but I know, from that prayer God began a work in me. I heard a still small voice saying “If you really want to know me stay on your knees and call on Jesus.” I did exactly what I heard and had a personal encounter as I called on the name of Jesus. My life has never been the same.

After that encounter with God, I turned myself into the police and went to prison for the crimes that I committed. While in prison, I attended a church service conducted by Macedonia Church on Christmas Day in 1992. I heard the testimony of many of the people who had come into prison to minister. I said in my heart “I want what they have.” At that time, Elder Ray Dancy was the Chaplain and he would walk through the prison going from cell to cell talking to the inmates about Jesus and ministering to them. I really desired the peace I saw on him and I wanted to one day become a prison volunteer. God has done it all for me. He restored my life and brought me from the pit to the palace.

Today I am an ordained Elder at Macedonia Church, and a State of Connecticut prison volunteer conducting monthly Bible Studies at the Bridgeport Correctional Facility where I once served time. I have been employed as a salesman at Klaff’s Inc. for 14 years. I am also a certified locksmith, a homeowner and resident of Stratford, CT. My wife Angela (of almost 13 years) and I have completed the Foster Care Training and received a certificate from the Family & Children’s Agency, Inc. in Norwalk, CT. In addition, I am working towards becoming a certified Recovery Coach so that I can continue reaching out to men and women who are addicted to drugs.



NPC Mission
Sharing Christ's Love

InterVarsity New England – Scott Brill

This is a story about how God uses networks:

I've been planting an InterVarsity Christian Fellowship chapter at Assumption College (Worcester, MA) as a member of the college's Campus Ministry staff team. Last December, at a Student Affairs Christmas party, I met Nick, the Athletic Director of the college. More than a quarter of the student body participates in an NCAA sport on campus, and most of them have a very difficult time connecting with existing ministries – and with God. Aware of this, I engaged him in a conversation about it, and he expressed an openness to any initiatives IVCF might want to try with athletes. In doing some research on this, it became clear that a ministry specifically focused on athletes, led by an athlete, could potentially bear fruit

In the spring semester, we hired Mickey as an IV athletes staff for the schools in Worcester. He had started an athletes' ministry while a student at Stonehill College – another of our Catholic college chapter plants. This fall, Mickey began reaching out to athletes at Assumption. One of the first athletes he met was Cassandra, a sophomore from the track team. She had been hard into the party culture as a freshman, but experienced a reawakening of faith in Jesus as she began to attend the Sunday night athletes' study, along with about a dozen other athletes. And overall, the IVCF chapter at Assumption has grown this fall from 4 to almost 20 students!

At a regional NCAA meet in early December of this year, Cassandra and some of the other track athletes from InterVarsity met up with another runner from Bridgewater State who is involved in IV on that campus. They began to circulate amongst all the runners asking them if they'd like to pray for before the meet. This resulted in a pre-meet prayer circle of more than 40 runners from more than a dozen campuses!

From a Christmas party conversation to a ministry that's strongly impacting a campus, and rippling out to many other campuses in about a year – is a testimony to the powerful ways God uses all kinds of networks to spread the impact of His Kingdom!

Praise and glory to God!

Ways to Serve

“Serving a Smile”

Come and help serve lunch at the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk! The next NPC service dates are March 1st and April 5th. Please contact Holly Hough, hhough7@optonline.net to sign up!

Souper Bowl Sunday - February 2

Please bring a can of soup to services on Super Bowl Sunday. We will donate all the soup collected to Open Door Shelter to stock up their food pantry.

FMSC

The joint churches core team which helps organize our Darien Feed My Starving Children MobilePack is looking for one or two volunteers to join the team to help with publicity and liaising with FMSC. Please contact Stella Clarke for more information or talk to one of the core team (Sallie Schmidt, Linda Yim, Trish Ryan, Beth Gardella, Tracy Nagle). This year's event will take place in October.

God at work through the Mission Ministry that NPC supports

Over the past few weeks our Mission Team has been collecting testimonies from all our mission partners showing how God is at work through their ministries. They are inspiring and encouraging reading and bring great glory to God. This month you can read testimonies from Macedonia church and InterVarsity and I will share more next month.

Serving our Savior together,
Stella Clarke
Mission Associate
203-309-5645
stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org

A Word from the Nominating Team

Becoming an Ordained Officer at NPC:

For 150 years, Noroton Presbyterian Church has stood as a beacon of hope bringing the good news of Jesus Christ's transforming love to Fairfield County. Carrying on a tradition of strong leadership and caring ministry, our parish is blessed to have Pastor Sam Schreiner at the helm, supported by Pastors Greg Doll and Brandi Drake, who serve our congregation with vibrant commitment, thoughtfulness and love.

In addition to our wondrous staff, NPC is further blessed to have a dynamic, committed roster of church officers, (aka Deacons and Elders) to assist in the leadership and continued growth of NPC. These ordained church members are charged with the joy and responsibility of sharing leadership with our staff, offering directly to the continued growth of our church family and the development of our church programs. Please pray and consider the prophet who, when he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I."

Elders are chosen by the congregation to exercise leadership in the governance of the local church. They are individuals of faith, dedication and good judgment, who on occasion, assist with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Elders at NPC serve on the Session as ministry team members. Session teams are Children, Youth, Worship & Fine Arts, Adult Spiritual Formation, Properties, Missions, Congregational Life, Outreach, Finance, Human Resources, and Stewardship. Time involved includes an evening Session meeting and an evening Team meeting each month in addition to other duties as determined by each ministry team.

Deacons are chosen by the congregation to minister to those who are in need or may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. Deacons are persons of love, sympathy and sound judgment; they form a fellowship of compassion and welcoming. Deacon ministry teams include Homebound, Flower Outreach, Sunday Fellowship, Hospitality, Welcoming/Ushers, Media and Caregiving. The time involved includes a monthly meeting

and work within a team ministry area. The congregational Nominating Team is currently working to select candidates for the offices of Elder and Deacon and we want YOU to assist us by providing names of people who would welcome service at NPC.

You are also encouraged to recommend yourself!

Nominating Team members are:

Diane Gilliam (chair)
Carleton Cleveland
Beth Gardella
Phil Kwun
Kim Lewis
David Mace
Laura Smalley

We welcome your questions and comments and invite you to fill out the form on this page to forward your recommendations to us. Place the form in the offering plate, send it to the office, or email to Diane Gilliam at dianegilliam@optonline.net.

I suggest the following persons for the office of Elder (E) or Deacon (D)

Name

E or D

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

We cannot promise that every person suggested will be nominated to the congregation for an office of elected leadership. However, we do promise that every person suggested will be carefully and prayerfully considered.

February 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	I
2 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 6:00 p.m.HS Super Bowl Party	3 12:00 p.m. Women's Luncheon Study 7:15 p.m. DivorceCare	4 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NIC) 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Team Night Fellowship 7:45 p.m. Team Night Presentation 8:00 p.m. Team Night Meetings	5 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Class Make-Up 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	6 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis Moms 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	7 7:00 p.m. Family Movie Night	8 Noroton Lectures 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast 10:00 a.m. Women's Coffee 7:00 p.m. Keynote Address	
9 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-8th Grades 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 4:00 p.m. Take-it-Home Event 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. Ignite	10 12:00 p.m. Women's Luncheon Study 7:15 p.m. DivorceCare	11 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NIC) 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	12 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Class Make-Up 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	13 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis Moms 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 2:00 p.m. Prime Timers 7:00 p.m. Handbell Choir Reh. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	14	15	
16 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-8th Grades 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. Ignite	17 Presidents' Day NPC Offices Closed	18	19	20	21	22	
Building closed due to power conversion.							
23 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's-8th Grades 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. Ignite	24 12:00 p.m. Women's Luncheon Study 7:15 p.m. DivorceCare	25 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study (NIC) 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 8:00 p.m. Session Meeting	26 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Class Make-Up 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade	27 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis Moms 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Handbell Choir Reh. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh.	28 High School Retreat		

In Loving Memory of...

January 7th:
Betsy Petersen

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

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Anyone who wishes to give flowers to the glory of God and in honor or memory of a loved one should call Claire Bragdon in the Church Office. The cost is \$50 and the donor may request a date for the flowers.

A check payable to NPC may be placed in the Flower Team mailbox in the Mail Room. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Open Doors

ARE YOU ON FACEBOOK? So are we! "Like" our page - "Open Doors at Noroton Presbyterian" - for updates on sermon topics, links to cool sites, and to find out what's for dinner. Questions? Contact Seana (Seanagt@aol.com).

Prime Timers

NEW DATE!

Thursday, February 13th at 2:00 p.m.
Pastor Sam Schreiner will share about his favorite authors.

For more information contact
Marlene Moffett (203-309-5620)
or Rita Hornlein (203-357-1504).

If you would like to submit an article for the March 2014 issue please submit it before February 14 to Rose Cunningham by email at rose.cunningham@norotonchurch.org.

NPC Program Staff

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Pastor and Team Leader
Pastor Brandi Drake..... 203-655-1451
Associate Pastor of Caring & Women's Ministry
Pastor Greg Doll..... 203-655-1451
Associate Pastor Adult Spiritual Formation & Outreach
Valerie Muller..... 203-309-5650
Director of Congregational Life

Dwayne Condon..... 203-655-1451
Director of Music & Fine Arts
Mickie O'Donnell..... 203-655-1451
Director of Children's Ministry
& *Interim Director of Youth Ministry*
Stella Clarke..... 203-309-5645
Mission Ministry Associate
Carol Scott..... 203-309-5605
NPC Tot Drop Director

Martha Duff..... 203-655-3223
Director Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School
Julie Colbath 203-309-5615
Director of Membership
Dan Rosa..... 203-655-1451
Business Administrator
David Lee..... 203-655-1451
Director of Properties