

The Spire

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



Family Matters

The Christian family suffered a severe tragedy last month when 21 martyrs lost their lives to ISIS terrorists. I'm speaking of the cruel beheading of the Egyptian Christians in Libya, which we became aware of on Sunday, February 15th. I usually find something more positive to write about in this column but I can't let this violent and unjust act disappear with the next news cycle. This horrible crime in the name of religion is nothing less than evil incarnate. As we huddled in prayer this Ash Wednesday I felt a deeper unity with members of the Christian faith world wide, as many across the globe were also receiving ashes as a symbol of our mortality and the need for humility in a world torn apart by hate. With my global church family, I wore the symbol of the cross; remembering that Christ was the first martyr willing to suffer death at the hands of violent men who sought to snuff out his message of love. Since then martyrs in every century have been willing, with God's help, to follow bravely in his footsteps. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters now under such intense persecution. Pray for God to

preserve and protect these believers in Africa and the Middle East who have suffered greatly for their faith. And let us pray for our leaders and leaders of other nations, to find a way to contain and combat this violent evil that masquerades as religious faith.

Even as our hearts and prayers unite with our Christian family around the world, we have causes for thanksgiving within our own local family of faith. This month, we rejoice in the Youth Winter Summit – a cooperative Christian weekend sponsored by several Connecticut churches that will be attended by 39 teens and 8 leaders from Noroton. I'm grateful during this season of Lent for the meditations we can read together from Dr. Craig Barnes - one of my favorite Presbyterian writers (and one of our past Noroton Lecturers). I'm glad he's a part of our "family of faith." Also, this summer, as we finish construction on our property, our Children's ministry will once again partner with St. Luke's Parish to host a cooperative Vacation Bible School. Noroton is always enriched when we can share in ministry with our "extended family" in Christ. And don't forget to come and join the church family and members of our regional Presbytery

Worship Schedule

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

Upcoming Preaching Schedule:

- 3/1/15** - Pastor Greg Doll
11:30 Reception in Horton Hall
- 3/8/15** - Guest Preacher,
Rev. Dr. Heather Wright
(8, 9, 10:30 a.m. services)
Evalyn Wakusama visits (5 p.m.)
- 3/15/15** - Pastor Sam Schreiner
Hebrews 11:23-29
"Courageous Faith Makes Sacrifices-Moses"
- 3/22/15** - Pastor Sam Schreiner
II Sam 12:1-7a, 13
"Courageous Faith that Admits Mistakes"
- 3/29/15** - Palm Sunday, Communion
Pastor Sam Schreiner
Luke 19:35-40, 45-48
"Courageous Faith in the Midst of Opposition"

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on March 22 at our Open Doors service, as we celebrate the official installation of Pastor Jimmy. How grateful we are that he and Andrea have joined us in ministry here.

Finally, our church family will soon have another new pastor to welcome into our midst. Joining us in April as an Interim Associate Pastor is the Rev. John Seiders, who will fill in for the ministries Pastor Greg Doll will be leaving. John grew up in New Jersey, worked for Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and served in four Presbyterian churches in the Northeast and Texas. I've known John (and his wife Ruthie) for 35 years and I think they are some of the finest folks in the Presbyterian family. I think you will appreciate John's deep faith in Christ, his warm personality and his skillful leadership. I'm glad you will have the opportunity to get to know them as we welcome John into our family of faith.

Your Pastor, Partner and Friend,
Sam Schreiner

P.S. Please keep praying for our *Foundations for the Future* Project. We are on the last leg of the journey, and if we get better weather, it will be finished this summer! Thank you for finishing your gifts and pledges.



Goodbye to Pastor Greg

We will be celebrating Pastor Greg's ministry after the 10:30 service on Sunday, March 1st. All are welcome to join us in Horton Hall for cake. Pastor Greg will be preaching all 4 services on that Sunday.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to support the Dolls as they begin a new ministry venture in Darien, please send a check (payable to NPC) to our Business Administrator, Dan Rosa, marked, "Pastor Doll" and either mail it to 2011 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820 or drop it off at 22 Thorndal Circle. To share a personal note or card there is a basket in our mail room at the church and at our Thorndal office. Please remember to keep the Doll family in your prayers during this time of transition.



Lenten Devotionals

The Adult Spiritual Formation team would like to help you make the most of this season of Lent by emailing a daily devotional to you. There are booklets in the kiosks around the church if you do not have email access. During Lent, you will receive a devotional written by Dr. M. Craig Barnes, a former Noroton Lectures speaker. It is our hope that prayerfully reading and meditating on Dr. Barnes' messages will deepen your faith and heighten your joy on Resurrection Day. If you find you are not getting them by email and would like to, please contact marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org.

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

We will share together as a congregation Maundy Thursday Simple Supper on Thursday, April 2 in Horton Hall (plan to arrive promptly for 7:00 p.m.). Register at www.norotonchurch.org or contact Marlene at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org or by phone 203-309-5620. The Simple Supper will be followed by our traditional Maundy Thursday service at 8 p.m. in the Sanctuary. There is no childcare for the supper or the service.



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



March 2015 Progress Report

“You examine us every morning and test us every moment.” Job 7:18

It is comforting to know that God is with us every day and every step of our *Foundations for the Future* journey. And this project has indeed been “tested” but perhaps not in the way you are thinking. In a project as large and comprehensive there are many costs that are necessary but can't be seen. One of them is...testing. Testing? Testing what or whom?

Glad you asked! Testing began long before we even had architectural drawings. Soil plugs were taken and tested to make sure the soil had the right mix of materials for compaction and a suitable foundation for our new building.

And then there was drainage. In preparation for our plan review by Darien's Environmental Protection Commission and Planning & Zoning Commission, permeation rates, drainage patterns and runoff all had to be validated.

But it hardly stopped there! Work on our 1950's Children Education Wing raised all new areas for concern and testing, in particular lead paint and asbestos. Before any of the windows could be removed and replaced, the rooms were sealed in plastic and paint samples were taken. But did you know that the air was also tested? An air quality benchmark was established and “before and after” test results were sent to the state for review. Only after their approval could we reoccupy the classrooms.

The new construction is also going through various tests. Because the concrete foundation is such an im-

portant structural component, the concrete was sampled to insure the materials met specific quality control standards.

Speaking of quality control, when the foundation water proofing materials were applied both the manufacturers rep and an independent expert were on site to validate that our contractor followed the manufacturers installation process. After all, we are constructing a building not an ark!

But we aren't done yet. When the masonry goes up it will be tested as well. And the playground materials from surfaces to equipment will be inspected and tested for safety and compliance with state regulations.

To be sure, some of the testing we have done is required by state regulations. But some of the testing is also done to insure quality standards are met so manufacturers warranties are not invalidated. Your building committee is dedicated and thorough but they don't claim to be experts in all areas of construction.

Perhaps your patience and endurance have been “tested” by the inconveniences of the construction project? If so, remember these words from James: 1:12 - *“God blesses those who Patiently Endure TESTING and TEMPTATION. Afterward they will receive the CROWN OF LIFE that God has promised to those who love Him.”*

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



Adult Spiritual Formation



This morning I woke up early to discover that it is very cold outside. I open up the Weather Channel app on my phone to learn that it is near-record cold for many locations in the eastern half of our nation. The forecast calls for snow in Atlanta, temperatures in the teens in South Carolina and in the mid-30's in Florida. Somehow, I don't think this is what Major League Baseball players had in mind when they thought about heading south for Spring Training this week. Although, I also think it is a safe bet to assume that they are not getting any sympathy from the residents of Boston. It has been a bitterly cold 2015 so far. I actually like winter and I like snow a lot. Snow is when God turns on all the lights. I've said over the years that if it is going to be cold it might as well be pretty. I also realize that winter is just a season. Spring eventually shows up, it always has and always will. We all cling to that hope. Not many of us can live in the high latitudes.

Pastoral ministry also has seasons. I hoped that this season of ministry would go on forever. I guess I should have known better. But I will always be thankful for the long season of ministry at NPC. It felt like a perpetual summer. Every day with you was a gift.

Like Paul told the parishioners in Philippi, I will always give thanks when I remember you. That is the truth. I will always be immensely grateful that we partnered together in the Gospel ministry for over 9 years and that we grew together in our faith in Jesus Christ. I will always be grateful for all the lessons I learned from you. I will always be grateful for all the grace you extended to me in my weakness and for allowing me the freedom to fail. I will always be grateful for the way you cared for my family. I will always be grateful for the lavish prize of your friendship. I will always be grateful for the way you never let me take myself too seriously. I will always be grateful for the many words and notes of encouragement. I will always be grateful for the way you challenged me to be a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. I will always be grateful for the way you responded with support for my new sense of call. I will always be grateful for your love. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to continue serving with you in our community.

I am grateful for a new season. I am grateful for a new post in the Kingdom. I am grateful for you. Thank you.

With deep bonds of affection and love,
Pastor Greg Doll,

Associate Pastor of Adult Spiritual Formation & Outreach

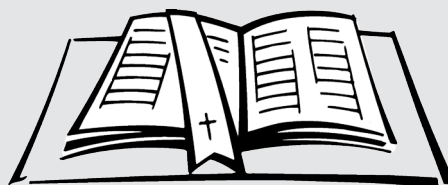
Men's Studies

Men's Bible Study

- Pastor Greg will continue to teach **Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. in Horton Hall** with continental breakfast, through the month of March.

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.



Adult Spiritual Formation

prime timers

Thursday, March 19th at 2:00 p.m. in Horton Hall

Dwayne Condon, NPC Director of Music, will discuss his work at NPC and his contributions to others through musical arrangement.

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

Wellness and Worship Together!



Take care of yourself with Christian yoga in a safe, nonjudgmental space at NPC. Please arrive 5-10 minutes early so you have time to settle and begin with a quieting meditation. All ages and abilities are welcome. Suggested donation is \$5-10/class. We meet in Horton Hall on Fridays at 9:30-10:30 am. We will meet Fridays, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27 (not 3/6 because of womens' retreat)

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

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

Small Group Ministry

**We believe that God has called us
to live in community.**

Acts 2:46: *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

Scripture tells us that the early church met together **both** for worship in the church (the temple), **and** for fellowship in their homes. We believe that we could benefit from pursuing the activity suggested in this template. We would like to make it easier for members to meet outside of worship time in smaller gatherings of people committed to each other's journey of faith.

We want to encourage you, and equip you, to get the most out of these gatherings ... whether you decide to take on a leadership role or one of participation.

Does the thought of 'facilitating' a small group excite (or scare) you? You might be surprised at what you discover attending training sessions; this is true for veterans and new-bees alike. Amongst other things, you will learn about how *imperfect leaders* have found success, and even joy, in stepping into various roles in small group ministry.

Adult Spiritual Formation is planning to offer training sessions several times throughout the year. This will be for facilitators and participants. And, we will be gathering and sharing some first-hand stories from NPC members/friends that demonstrate the blessing and growth experienced in leading and/or participating in small groups over the years.

So, what do we do with the gift and opportunities that God gives us?

Let's explore this together over the coming months!



Small Group
Studies

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

Caring & Women's Ministries



~ *An Invitation* ~ Men and Women of NPC

Every day you see people who are hurting – those who have lost a job, lost a loved one, are going through a divorce, or are battling a serious or even terminal illness.

Do you wonder what to say? How to express your concern without embarrassing yourself or your friend?

If you would like to learn more about effective ways to care for your hurting colleagues, friends and loved ones, **please consider Stephen Ministry and let us know if you are interested!**

If you are interested particularly in caring for those in the military community, **please consider H.E.R.O.E.S Care and let us know you are interested!**

Stephen Ministers are lay people, just like you, who are fully trained to bring distinctively Christian care to those in need. They use both words and deeds to express Christ's love to those who are hurting – listening and comforting, calling on the training they receive and employing the tools of faith in one-to-one, confidential care.

H.E.R.O.E.S. Caregivers or HSV's (Hometown Support Volunteers) are trained Stephen Ministers who receive additional training to meet the unique needs of current and former service members and their loved ones.

Finding new Stephen Ministers and HSV's is the next step for our congregation's Stephen Ministry. Right now we are praying for the individuals God is calling to join our next training class beginning in January 2016. Are we praying for you?

Is God calling you to this quiet but profound ministry?

For more information about Stephen Ministry/H.E.R.O.E.S. Care, you can:

1. Contact

Pastor Brandi Drake: 203-655-1451
brandi.drake@norotonchurch.org

Leslie Lloyd: 203-912-2743
leslie.w.lloyd@gmail.com

Evie Knight: 203-228-4228
evie@optonline.net

2. Check out www.norotonchurch.org.

3. Pick up an application in the mail room and return it to the designated basket.

Gratefully,
The Stephen Ministry Leadership Team
Pastor Brandi Drake, Jim Haffner, Mindy Houck,
Evie Knight (H.E.R.O.E.S. Care Outpost Leader),
Leslie Lloyd, Clare Myers, Katy Rahe, Rod Rahe,
Cindy Terry, and Sandra Volin

Caring & Women's Ministries

Women's Studies

Tuesday morning Bible Studies:

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

Thursday morning Moms Oasis:

- **Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in Horton Hall.** Childcare is limited so contact Tot Drop at 203-309-5605.

Moms of Teens:

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

Women's Lunchtime Study:

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



NPC Women's Retreat

March 6-8, 2015. Theme: "Come As You Are" with Guest Speaker: Tammy Letts.
Retreat Leaders: Judy Phillips & Holly Jespersen.

For more information and to register please go to www.norotonwomen.com or contact Marlene at marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org.

DIVORCE *Care*[®]

Divorced? Separated? Know Someone going Through It?

NPC will offer DivorceCare on Mondays 7:30-9:00 p.m. from March 2-May 18 in the SHAC.

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

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

Children's Ministry

Minute with Mickie – Wondering About Why We Celebrate Easter



It's March ~ YAY!! We can begin to think about Spring. It is also the Lenten Season, so we can begin to think about Easter too.

During the month of March I am blessed to have an awesome experience of teaching in India at both a Mission

India Seminary and Bible College, leading workshops at two Leadership Conferences, speaking at Graduation Ceremonies as well as speaking at a rural church. Thankfully, NPC's Mission Team is helping to support my experience as I partner with my long-time colleague, Saji Lukos and his wife, Moni, who founded the ministry called "Reaching Indians Ministry International." We were seminary students together many years ago. What a blessing.

During this time away, our Elementary Sunday School children will receive excellent teaching from our capable volunteers, led by the Children's Ministry Team and Ms. Liz. It is our hope that I will be able to upload videos while in India to the NPC Kids website and keep a blog of the experience so that we can give our children a taste of missions yet again. I'm so excited. Naturally, all your prayers will be essential and I thank you in advance.

Since it is the Lenten Season, our educational focus this month will be all about "Why Do We Celebrate Easter" as our Horton Hall lesson series. We want your children to become deeply immersed in the understanding of the Lenten/Easter season since it is so central to our saving faith in Christ. Buck Denver and all his friends will lead the way as we watch short DVD segments and then play games and have activities under the tents. You can watch these at home too from your computer if you have the password for "Right Now Media" – contact me by email and I'll invite you in if you haven't done so already. You can also go to www.npckids.com and go to the Sunday School pages to download activities to do at home. We really want to give you all you need to grow with your children in faith and Biblical knowledge even if you can't get to NPC each Sunday.

So why do we celebrate Easter? Simply put - without Christ's sacrificial death and the fact (yes, it's a fact of history) that Jesus came alive again, we could never be freed from our sins or know God or go to heaven. Romans 1:4 says: "*But the Holy Spirit proved that Jesus is the powerful Son of God, because he was raised from death.*" No one else but God himself could do this – and what does it mean? "*God sent Christ to be our sacrifice. Christ offered his life's blood, so that by faith in him we could come to God.*" (Romans 3:25) "*Sin pays off with death. But God's gift is eternal life given by Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23). So Lent is not about giving up something superfluous and Easter is not about bunnies and chocolate. No, it's about realizing what it cost Jesus to provide us with the opportunity to have eternal life with God in heaven and the ability to be empowered by the Holy Spirit while living a life pleasing to God here on earth. Without Jesus' death and resurrection there is no hope and no future. Our children are learning to take to heart the wonderful verse from Jeremiah 29:11 "*I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.*" What a gift! Let's celebrate LENT and EASTER as true followers of Jesus.

See you on Sunday!!
Mickie O'Donnell
Director of Children's Ministry



Youth Ministries



If someone were to overhear a younger version of myself say something to the effect that I would be attending the “black out” event, there would be good reason for concern—even alarm.

Images of teenagers knocking each other out through a variety of means is not a practice that brings delight to any sane adult, and the idea of a gathering where such would be encouraged should not be sanctioned. But last month, middle school students across Darien and the surrounding communities shared with their families and friends their interest in attending our first ever BLACK OUT event at NPC — a program that turned out to be our biggest attended middle school event of the year.



The youth ministry will be introducing more events in the coming months, in addition to our weekly programs for middle school students on Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. in Horton Hall and high school students on Sundays at 6:30 p.m. in the SHAC. For all the latest program updates, visit us online at: www.norotonyouth.com, follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram, or contact Jimmy McPherson or Sarah Swible in the NPC office.



Now before anyone gets the wrong idea—no middle schoolers were harmed in the making of this program. Instead, youth ministry BLACK OUTS are intended to mark the changing of the liturgical season—specifically as we enter the seasons of Advent and Lent. These special program events are scheduled on the meeting date just before the start of the new season, with all participants being invited to wear black to the event. In addition, there is a theme for each event—with this season's being Noroton Ninja Academy. Youth representing grades 6-8 participated in a series of ninja themed activities, heard teaching on the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) from youth coordinator Sarah Swible, and enjoyed delicious Asian cuisine from a local restaurant.

January Food Offering Update: We collected more than 35 jars of peanut butter and jelly at youth ministry events during the month of January that were delivered to a local feeding program by a few of our middle school students (pictured below). Each month, the youth ministry identifies a specific food item to be collected at program events during that month as a food offering to be shared with the poor.

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





What Does Kindness Look Like?

The three-year old children of NPC Tot Drop love to share what they are thinking, and we love to see their moral character grow along with their cognitive, social and physical abilities. This month, the children are sharing their developing understanding of kindness, complete with illustrations.

According to the children's drawings, 1) helpfulness, 2) empathy and 3) consideration are the three components that seem to comprise kindness.

Helpfulness:

Eliza (3.3) explains that she is kind when "I help my Mom clean the ice off the car." After another moment she adds, "And it is really hard!"

Olivia (3.6) knows that she is kind when "I give my dog a treat."

Empathy:

When asked to draw what kindness looks like, Charlotte (3.2) draws a picture of herself and her brother. She tells her teachers, "I give my brother a hug when he's sad."

Hazelle (3.7) shares, "I give a heart to make my Mom feel better."

Consideration:

"I show my sister how to play gentle with my baby," says Caitlyn (3.2).

And Crystal (3.7), the youngest sister of four brothers, reveals, "I take turns playing with my brothers."

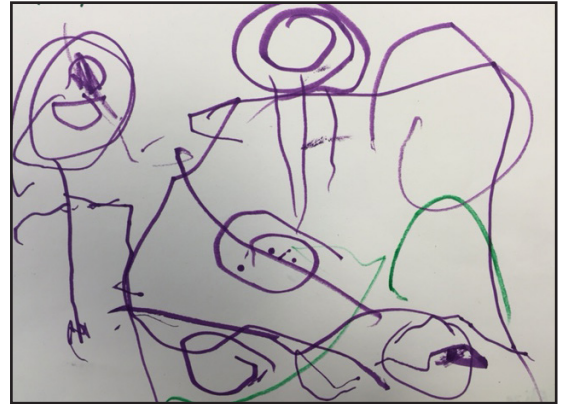
It is true that wishing or telling our children to be kind, won't necessarily make them more caring or compassionate. But if we...

- 1) make kindness a priority,
- 2) provide opportunities to discuss and practice caring and gratitude,
- 3) act as strong moral role models, and
- 4) teach them resiliency,

...then we can help them to develop and cultivate kindness.

That is our challenge at Tot Drop. That is our challenge as adults.

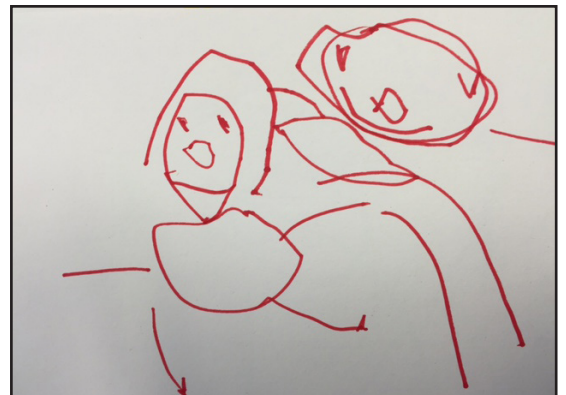
Peace and Joy,
Beth Aparicio
NPC Tot Drop Director



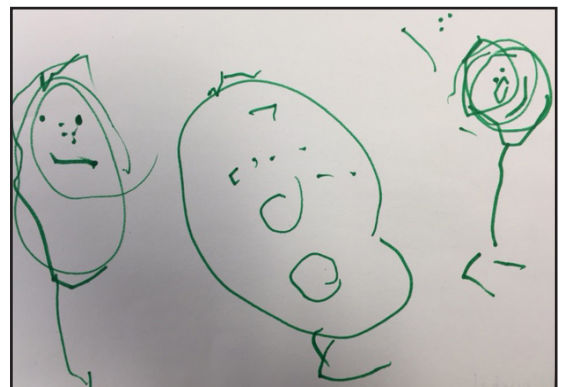
Eliza helping her Mom clean the ice off the car.



Olivia giving her dog a treat



Charlotte giving her brother a hug.



Crystal taking turns playing with her brothers.



February and March have been filled with sledding and snowman building. It has been a delight to hear the laughter of the children as they sled down the hill they build on the playground. I even caught a glimpse of a teacher or two taking a ride! We have completed the registration process for the

2015-16 school year, and we are very excited about the new families who will be joining us here at NPNS. The teachers had their own field trip into New York, to see The Wonder of Learning exhibition, where they had an opportunity to see and learn more about our Reggio philosophy. They are also busy preparing for our spring Parent\Teacher conferences.

We have had many visitors come to the school this month. Karen Hall with Acting Out, brought with her Chester, her trunk, to help tell many wonderful stories to the children. The Darien Nature Center brought in live versions of the animals in "The Mitten" to visit the two year olds, and the dental hygienist came in to talk to the children about keeping their teeth healthy. Our Pre-K also had a field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to see the Tomb Chapel of Raemki, in the Egyptian wing, as they have been studying famous architecture.

We have a few openings in our programs for next year. If you know of any families who are looking for placement please ask them to give us a call at 203-655-3223.

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



Snow Watching



Emmy, Piper and Claire "Acting Out" stories



Hailley and Reintz With Ms. Karen



Sledding fun with room 10

Congregational Life Ministry



4th ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

Get on your mark, get set ... COOK!

We will be hosting the **4th ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF**
on **Saturday, March 14th!**

And, we would love to include YOU in the fun.



Flow of the evening:

- 6:15–6:30 pm - **Chili competitors** need to be onsite/set up in Horton Hall
- 6:15–6:45 pm - **All attendees/(including tasters only)** sign in and receive ballots
- 6:45–7:30 pm - Attendees meander and visit with each other
Taste/judge competitor offerings
Vote for favorites
- 7:45–8:00 pm - Ballot counting
- 8:00 pm - Prizes awarded for all categories

Who can compete?

The simple answer is 'anyone who wants to'. If you have a favorite (or secret!) recipe to make and share ... we would love for you to compete! There is no age limitation; you can be an individual or group (your family; your study group or dog walker friends; etc.). You can enter a tried-and-true offering, or be bold and experiment with a new-to-you one.

Winners are 'favorites' of those present that evening. So, maybe (???) keeping it simple is the key...

There are **multiple categories**, and we would love to have a minimum of four competitors in EACH to make for a good competition!

- Beef
- Poultry
- All other meat-based
- Vegetarian
- Spicy*
- Cornbread (sweet and/or traditional Southern)

*(If your recipe is 'spicy', you actually have the opportunity to win prizes in two categories!)

Tasting/Judging

EVERYONE who attends receives a ballot for each category -- adults/kids; chefs/friends.

You do NOT have to cook to participate in the judging aspects of the evening.

Registration

You DO NEED to register for this event, as we have some space limitations, and need to account for power circuitry issues. There is a spot on the registration form for 'tasting/judging only' if you are not planning to compete; we need you to register too. (Thanks.)

Please fill out a registration form – available here in the Spire, online at www.norotonchurch.org under News/Events, or in the Narthex at sanctuary entrances and Horton Hall (ON the announcement posters!). Drop them in the offering baskets, or return to the office or mailroom. Online registrations will come direct to the team.

As hosts, we will provide basic toppings, salad, a few dessert sweets, and beverages.

We will also have some Chicken Nuggets for young ones whose pallet does not yet include chili flavorings.

Folks who have attended this event in past years made us PROMISE to hold it again this year! We hope you will join friends for this evening of laughter and good eats!

Having fun together,
Valerie Muller

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

Congregational Life Ministry



Saturday, March 14th
6:15-8:30 p.m.

CHILI COOK-OFF! REGISTRATION

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE!](#)

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

Music & Fine Arts



Aloha!

As I write, I'm waiting for an outdoor table at a restaurant in Paia, on the island of Maui. I was thinking of my colleagues and the congregants of NPC and decided to switch to the weather app on my phone to check the temperature in Darien. I always scroll down to see the "real feel" figure which takes into account the wind chill. At the moment, the real feel in Darien is -18 degrees! I almost hate to mention it, but here on Maui it's after sundown and the temperature is an incredible 72 degrees.

So what's my point? What's the connection between the temperature on Maui and music ministry at NPC? I can't really think of one except to say that I'm grateful for all of the wonderful volunteers who brave the cold to

show up for rehearsals and services so we can all try to glorify God together through music. Volunteering always involves some sort of sacrifice. Sometimes it means showing up when you would rather stay at home under a warm blanket, and other times showing up when the weather invites you to enjoy the outdoors. I just want you all to know that I'm grateful.

Oh, one more thing, if you sing or play an instrument, please consider becoming involved with the wonderful Music Department volunteers in serving God and your church. I would love to hear from you at dwayne.condon@norotonchurch.org.

Mahalo and God bless you!
Dwayne Condon
Director of Music

Membership Ministry

HOW ENGAGING AM I? TAKE THIS 5 QUESTION QUIZ TO FIND OUT!

Here's a simple self-assessment to encourage us to create a more welcoming atmosphere at NPC and to fully engage newcomers and each other in the life of the church.

As a member or regular attender, do I:

1. Invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join me at worship or special events (such as the upcoming Fourth Annual Chili Cook-Off on March 14)? Yes No
2. Go out of my way to greet others and introduce myself, especially people I have not seen before or don't know? (Try talking only with someone you don't know for 3 minutes following worship.) Yes No
3. Share with others how I am involved at NPC (small groups, Bible study, missions, etc.) and how the experience has changed my faith and me? Yes No
4. Seek service opportunities, no matter how small, that use my talents and gifts? (For example, greet before worship once a month – a 15 min. commitment!) Yes No
5. Sign the friendship pad each time I attend worship - providing clear information -- and encourage others in my pew to do the same? (It's a great way to learn others' names) Yes No

Scoring:

Less than a perfect 5 means you are human and in the right place. Pick 1 or 2 items from the list above to focus on, and keep trying!

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



YOU ARE INVITED to a New Member Class on March 21

For those wishing to join NPC, a Saturday half-day class will be offered on March 21 from Noon to 5:30 p.m. New members will also be welcomed into the congregation on Sunday, March 22 at the 10:30 service. Registration by March 13 is encouraged.

Membership classes are faith-strengthening, interesting and rewarding! Here's what three families that just joined had to say about their experience with the New Member Class:

"We LOVED the membership class! It was very thorough and the staff was extremely welcoming."

"Overall I thought it was a great introduction to the church. It was a very enjoyable experience and it was much better than I expected it to be. I think I learned things that would have taken me a long time to find out. Both my husband and I thought it was much better than the orientation we had to our prior church."

"All the leaders were very friendly, knowledgeable, and hospitable."

Free professional care is available for children 3 mos. to 4 years.

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 classes for information only, and take your membership vows within one year of the class.

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

Mission News



GW Carver Career Fair

On Thursday January 29th, NPC Mission partnered with The George Washington Carver Center to host the 10th annual Carver Career Fair for Norwalk middle and high school students. Over 200 kids attended the fair and had the opportunity to talk to a large variety of professionals about their career paths and the education needed to obtain certain careers. Special thanks to NPC volunteers who shared their time and passion for their careers with the youth!

NPC supports the Carver Center effort on 3 major projects: The Career Fair, Mother's Day Celebration meal ("Mothers and Others"), and Thanksgiving Food Drive. Please contact Trish Ryan at pmr49@att.net if you'd like to get involved in volunteering with the Carver Center.



Two short stories illustrating the need of the people of Gaza that Hanna Massad is ministering to and how his simple acts of bringing a food parcel brings the hope and comfort of Christ.

Hanna writes.*We visited the Imad family who live in the Gaza Strip. This family consists of 8 people, the parents and 6 children ages 3-10 years old . We gave this family help with a food parcel and a couple of chickens. This family had their home destroyed completely in the last war in Gaza 2014, and the family was already suffering poverty before war, now they do not have a house to shelter them.*



We offered them a food parcel and a couple of chickens and when one of their children knew the parcel of food contained the chickens, she started to scream and to sing (chickens ..chickens!!!), because she had not eaten chicken for the last three months.



The woman you see in this picture is a widow with five children. Her husband, their father, died in a Gaza prison several months ago. There is no work for her, so she and her family depend entirely upon charity. We have been helping her and her family for some time now and will continue to do so. This was how Jesus taught us to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God, not only in words but also in deeds. This is how we introduce widows to their Husband, Jesus, and orphans to their heavenly Father.

continued on next page...

Mission Ministry

Thank you to all who contributed to our Christmas Eve offering which we sent as an additional gift to support the work that Hanna is doing with the Iraqi refugees in Jordan. Hanna has recently sent us the update below:

Greetings from Amman! I trust you are doing well? I have been very busy leading the Iraqi Refugee Church. We now minister to more than 600 families!

Having the privilege of serving my Iraqi refugee brothers and sisters, who have been through horrible persecution from ISIS, is one of the greatest blessings of my life.

The Lord continues to surprise me by how he provides for the ministry he has entrusted us with and by the way he moves your hearts, my friends, to donate with joy to help your Iraqi refugee brothers and sisters.

There are two things which particularly warm my heart. First is the trust that the Lord has put in us to minister to his people. And, secondly, is the trust which I receive from all of you. You stand with us in this work all the time, encouraging us and praying for us and in so doing, you truly share in the work which God has called us to do.

Recently we started about 10 different small groups which meet in people's homes. There, as we study the Bible together, we focus not just on the people's physical needs but also on their spiritual needs.

We still meet as a congregation every Tuesday, for worship, at 6pm. However, the sanctuary (including other church facilities) which holds about 500 people, can no longer contain all the people who want to be there!

As you know Iraqi refugees cannot work in Jordan and many of their children do not go to school. So, in partnership with other groups, we have started an evening school which begins next Tuesday and will run four evenings per week.

Blessings!

Hanna

Thank you!!

To all who brought soup for the Open Door Shelter on Feb 1!

Thank you to all who are faithfully praying for our Mission Partners!

Opportunities!

Would you be willing to be a prayer partner for one of the children at **Nambale Magnet School, Kenya**? If so please contact Marilyn Parker at parkerma@juno.com.

If you are interested in learning more about **mission opportunities in Cuba** please contact Stella Clarke or any member of the mission team.

Would you be willing to serve as a volunteer at the new **Hopeline Pregnancy Resource Center** in Stamford? If so please contact Stella Clarke for information.

Open Door Shelter – next NPC service dates March 7 and April 4. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Holly Hough (hough7@optonline.net).

For more information about NPC mission please contact Stella Clarke stella.clarke@norotonchurch.org or check the NPC website.

Serving our Savior together,
Stella Clarke

Mission Associate

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



March 2015

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | 7 |
|---|--|---|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 9 & 10:30 a.m. Classes for 3's -5th Grades 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class 11:30 a.m. Celebration for Pastor Greg 5:00 p.m. Open Doors 6:30 p.m. High School Ministry | 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare | 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Team Night Fellowship 7:45 p.m. Team Night | 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade | 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh. | Women's Retreat | Women's Retreat | Women's Retreat |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| Women's Retreat 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. High School Ministry | 12:00 p.m. Women's Luncheon Study 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare | 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study | 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade | 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh. | 9:30 a.m. Christian Yoga | 6:15 p.m. Chili Cook-off | |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | |
| 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. High School Ministry | 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare | 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 8:00 p.m. Session | 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade | 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh. | 9:30 a.m. Christian Yoga | 12:00 p.m. New Member Class | |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |
| 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. High School Ministry | 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare | 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study | 7:00 a.m. Men's Study-Sugar Bowl 4:00 p.m. J.A.M. Choir 7:00 p.m. Harbor 6th-8th Grade | 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Oasis 12:00 p.m. Moms of Teens 1:15 p.m. Prayer Group Mtg. 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Reh. | 9:30 a.m. Christian Yoga | | |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | | |
| Palm Sunday 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. High School Ministry | 7:30 p.m. DivorceCare | 6:15 a.m. Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study | | | | | |

Holy Week Service Schedule



Palm Sunday, March 29:

Communion Sunday • Preaching: Pastor Sam Schreiner

8:00 a.m. Chapel

9:00 & 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Services

5:00 p.m. Open Doors



Maundy Thursday, April 2:

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

Limited spaces, registration required.

Please register online at www.norotonchurch.org

or contact Marlene Moffett at 203-309-5620

or email marlene.moffett@norotonchurch.org

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

All are welcome.

(Childcare not offered for dinner or service)



Walk with the Cross, Friday, April 3:

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

Join others in our community as we walk down
the Post Rd. to St. Luke's.



Good Friday Ecumenical Service, April 3:

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

"Voices Before the Cross"

(You are welcome to come and go as needed)



Open Doors Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4:

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

Childcare 3 mos. to 3 years



Easter Sunday, April 5:

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

Preaching: Pastor Jimmy McPherson

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

Preaching: Pastor Sam Schreiner

No childcare or Sunday School

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

Preaching: Pastor Sam Schreiner

Childcare up to 3 years

3's-K: Regular Sunday School classes

1st-5th grades: Chapel

6th-12th grades: Remain in Sanctuary

(No Open Doors Service Today)

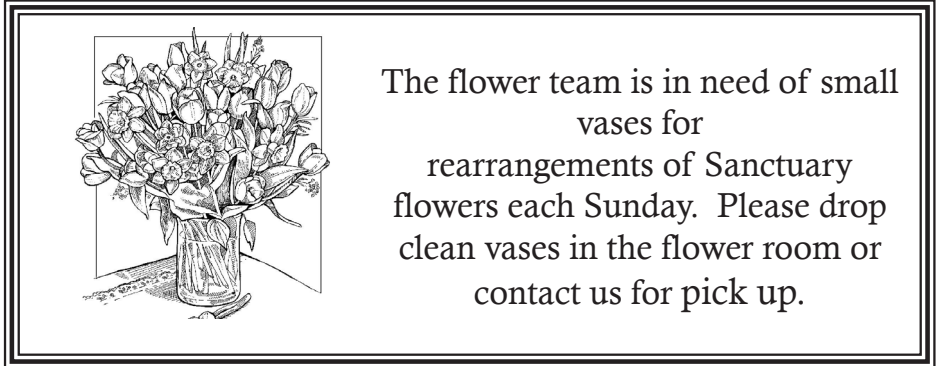


Flower Team



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

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



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



2015 Easter Flower Memorial Donations

If you would like to make a donation (in the amount of your choice) in memory of a loved one, please fill out the donation envelope located in your pew. Please make your check payable to NPC and note in the memo section: Easter flowers. Donation envelopes may be placed in the offertory plate, in the flower team box in the mailroom or returned to the church main office at 22 Thorndal Circle. Please include your donation when returning your envelope. Donations received will go toward the purchase of all the flowers used during Easter including the Sanctuary flowers, and the cross on the Post Road. We will continue to have the list of memorial names in the Easter Sunday worship bulletin.

If you have questions, please contact Meredith Schoff or Marion Smith at flowersnpc@gmail.com.

Donations Should Be Received No Later Than: Monday, March 23rd

In loving memory of: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

Given in love by: _____

Join us in celebrating the following Baptisms...

February 15th:

Kyle Catherine Edgar,
daughter of Brad and Lauren Edgar

Reville Kelly and William Wood LeVeen,
children of Andrew and Grayson LeVeen

Upcoming Baptism Dates:

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

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

NPC Program Staff

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