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VOLUME 177

NORTH PARK CHURCH

APRIL 2022

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Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

Psalm 111:2

NPC FEATURES

DID YOU KNOW?

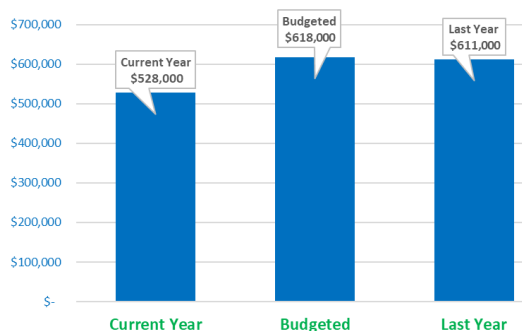
Did you know that **SAMUEL CHRISTOPHER DOYLE** was born to **STEVE & CARI** on March 20....that **ISADORA PINKERTON, EMERSON MILLER, BEN HAYTOCK** and **ELIZABETH HAYTOCK** have become confirmed members of our church....that **MILES MCKINNEY, ANNA WARBRODT, ISAAC LIBRICH**, and **BETHANY OSMOND** have completed teen shepherding interviews....that iguanas can stay under water for nearly half an hour....that **BEN HAYTOCK** has earned Eagle Scout honors....that 9-year-old, **ROBBY BROWN** led a devotional at the Father-Son LEGO event....that in Australia, eating watermelon is a Christmas tradition....that **WAYNE DARVILLE** just turned 70....that **ANNETTA LANG** is turning 85....that birthdays are fun, but too many can be bad for your health....that Super Bowl Sunday is the second-leading day of the year for avocado consumption, second only to May 5....that **VICKI HARRER** is training to run livestream....that **NPC SUMMER SUNDAYS** with 9:30 A.M. worship begin May 29....that Columbia University is the second largest landowner in New York City, after the Catholic Church....that those who read the FYI own 4% more land than those who do not? Did you know these things? I thought you should.



HISTORY CORNER

A Barna survey reports that 58% of Protestant churches describe themselves as being "seeker-sensitive." It is an attempt to exploit one side of a Pauline paradox. The paradox is that Paul could say at the Areopagus in Athens that God rules in history so that people "should seek" Him in hope that they might "find Him" (Acts 17:27) while also saying to the Romans that, as a result of the pervasiveness of sin, "no one understands, no one seeks for God" (Romans 3:21). Here is the two-sided truth: we should seek God and yet no one seeks God. This paradox reflects our condition as those who, made in the image of God, are made to know Him but who, nevertheless, are fallen and will not "honor Him as God, or give thanks to Him" (Romans 1:21). The seeker-sensitive approach typically emphasizes the one side of this paradox while significantly discounting the other, seeing sinners as more or less neutral in their disposition toward God and the gospel and therefore amenable to marketing techniques. It typically does not see sinners as those who are unable to submit to God, despite all the marketing techniques, without His intervention.

NPC GIVING THROUGH 2/28



After six months, Unified Giving of \$528,000 for our church year is 14% below our budgeted amount and 15% below last year.

EASTER EVENTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

MAUNDY THURSDAY | 7:00 P.M. | Sanctuary

Join us as we will gather to worship and remember the Lord via communion. No childcare is offered for this one-hour service.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

Join us and invite a friend to an Easter worship. We'll have no Sunday School that day.

RESURRECTION REFLECTION | 8:30 A.M. | Amphitheater

At the amphitheater in the woods (weather permitting), Pastor Ben will guide a reflection on the Resurrection and how it gives us hope to face the challenges of 2022. Around 9:00 A.M. attendees will transition to the Blue Room to enjoy a warm breakfast before the main service. All ages are welcome. If you want breakfast, email benburkholder@northparkepc.org.

WORSHIP | 10:15 A.M. | Sanctuary

FAMILY OF THE MONTH: BIVENS

Do you know who the most overqualified person NPC has ever hired to fill a vacancy might be? Meet John Bivens.

Mark Sharpnack's search had come up empty so he decided to hang up a sign at the end of our driveway, "Custodian Wanted." I'm not sure if Mark had a list of qualifications but John's experience was a little more than expected. John graduated from New Castle Business College with a degree in Business Administration and Accounting. He managed the largest Goodyear Tire and Rubber store in the US (Los Angeles) for 5 years. Then for over 3 decades he ran his own landscaping company and home construction company in California.

When he (sort of) retired, John bought a home in Port Clinton, OH and remodeled it. He did such a good job that many of his neighbors in the community hired him to remodel their homes, which he did for another 10 years. In February of 2021, he bought an apartment with his wife Karen in Devlin's Pointe. No more remodeling was needed and maybe he could finally relax and enjoy bowling, golf, or hunting again? No, he drove by Mark's sign at the end of the driveway and decided to inquire about our custodian job. We were indeed blessed when he accepted the position in the spring of 2021. He was way over qualified but he was content to just work about 20 hours a week and do whatever was needed.

John grew up in the New Castle area in a good Methodist family. While he was a high school and college student he worked at the school farm and at a dairy farm nearby. At the age of 21 he would move to California where he lived for 43 years. He had a son with his first wife, Sue. Casey was a Marine, then worked for the Secret Service, and finally had a successful career as an insurance broker.

Casey was not the only child that he raised. During a 12-year period John and Sue were foster parents to 129, children most of whom were physically or sexually abused!

Sue died in 2008 and John came back to New Castle in 2010 for a high school reunion. Karen's daughter had called John and told him about the reunion. Karen's first husband had also passed away and John and Karen had been friends from 2nd grade through high school. I didn't get any romantic details from Karen but they both went to Port Clinton, OH where Karen worked with autistic children while John was remodeling houses. They were married in 2016 at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Port Clinton.

Karen has two children from her first marriage. Holly lives in Wexford and Eric lives in New Castle. Karen, like John, has a hard time relaxing in retirement and shares his passion for helping young children, so she is now working at the Tender Care at Devlin's Pointe. They do like to travel together and the have a time share in Florida. - **JIM LUDWIG**



If you have never played three truths and a lie, this is how it works. I'm going to tell you four interesting things about John but one is actually a lie. I'm not going to tell you which one is the lie so you will have to look for this humble, hardworking, angel that God sent to our church and ask him.

- 1) John's son Casey protected President Clinton as a secret service agent
- 2) John was the Future Farmers of America Club President in his Union Area High School
- 3) John had a large workshop in his home in California and made wooden trains and cars for his foster children
- 4) Two of John's former foster children are now his grandchildren
- 5) One Christmas John and Sue had 8 foster babies all in diapers

Sorry, this guy is so interesting I made it four truths and a lie. Have fun guessing.

DEAR **Peter Pan** & **CHOOSY MOM**

WILLING WITHOUT A WAY

A column to answer all your PBJ questions. If you have a PBJ question that you would like answered, send it to pbj@northparkepc.org

DEAR PETER PAN & CHOOSY MOM,

I've been blessing my neighbor and, because of this, our relationship has deepened and we have been having more conversations. How can I bring up the topic of faith in one of our conversations in a way that is natural and casual? I'd appreciate any tips you can give! — **WILLING WITH A WAY**

DEAR WILLING WITH A WAY,

This is a hurdle for many people in their conversations, me included. There are two primary ways to do this. One is to go in with some kind of plan like the following. Let's say you just read an article about some scientific discovery made by a satellite traveling the solar system (presuming you're a science nerd of sorts, but it could be any topic of interest). If your neighbor shares a similar interest you could share it with them and then go with a planned question to follow it up like this: "I'm always fascinated by discoveries like this which make me think about how it all came to be. I'm curious about your thoughts on this. How do you think the world came into existence?"

That is more of a planned approach. The other is to let the conversation flow, but stay attentive to topics or things that would naturally take you into questions of faith. A person could be complaining about the suffering in Eastern Europe, for example. An easy way to follow that up would be to ask: "How do you make sense of what happened in Ukraine? Why is it that people were willing to kill civilians in order to gain control of their land?" This conversation leads more naturally to the Fall and why the world is a broken place, but everyone has to make sense of the fact that the world is not what we might hope it to be.

Regardless of whether you took the planned or the unplanned route, once you've asked your question, listen. Once they have answered and you've fully understood (perhaps with a few more questions), ask permission: "Can I share my thoughts on that?" If they say "yes" then you have an open door to talk about how faith informs your perspective on the origins of the universe or why people choose to commit evil (i.e. sin) in our world, including ourselves. It's a good thing Jesus came to do something about that! — **PETER PAN**

DEAR WILLING WITH A WAY,

That is such a great question! It's also a difficult one to answer without knowing more, so here are some quick, general thoughts:

There are at least 3 different types of conversations we can have: small talk, personal talk and spiritual talk. In small talk, some of the usual topics include the weather, sports, and current events—things going on in the world, your shared neighborhood or school district, etc. Usually you can tell by how much a person will engage with you in this type of conversation if you can

go to the next level of conversation, personal talk.

Personal talk is a time to learn more about our acquaintances. It sounds like this is the level at which you are engaging with your neighbor. This is a time when you can ask a lot of questions to get to know one another better. One way that you can casually bring the conversation to faith is to ask your neighbor if he or she attends a church. Depending how that question is answered should influence how you proceed. If your neighbor does not have a church, but is not antagonistic toward the idea of church, you could invite them to attend a Sunday service, Compass event, VBS... If the neighbor does go to church, you can ask questions about what they like about their church or how long they've been attending... If the neighbor is antagonistic about the idea of church, you can take the conversation back to something "safer" or dig deeper into those strong feelings to inquire where that hostility from church comes from.

Some things to keep in mind as you approach your future conversations with this neighbor: enter prayerfully, remember that God is with you and sovereign over the situation, and God is able to use anything, even our blunders, for His glory!

— **CHOOSY MOM**

HOW WILL YOU BLESS THIS APRIL?

- Prepare an Easter basket of goodies and deliver it to a neighbor. Include a Bible, children's Bible, book or card with scripture about Jesus' resurrection (*John 11:25-26, 1 Peter 1:3*). Also include an invitation to our Easter service
- Pay for someone's gas
- Compliment a job well done by a cashier at a checkout lane
- Take bagels to a nearby school for their teacher's lounge. Include a card to let them know you appreciate them and are praying for them
- Volunteer to read to the elderly at a nearby senior care facility
- If you find yourself spring cleaning, donate your extras to Repurposed or post them for free on Facebook
- Ask your waiter/waitress how you can pray for them before you pray for your meal
- Over-tip a waiter/waitress
- Contact Good Samaritan Hospice House or another hospice in the area to see if you can deliver a meal for a grieving family. Include a card with a bible verse and prayer
- Sign up to serve on one of the NPC ministries that are highlighted at the April 24 NP-SEE event

Remember to pray before, during, and after you **BLESS**. "May the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands!" *Psalms 90:17* because "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." *Psalms 127:1*

Want a tangible reminder to **BLESS**? You can find these and more ideas on our **BLESS** wall in the sanctuary.

APRIL ALL CHURCH READING PLAN: LUKE



- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Luke 8:1-21 | 17 Luke 13:18-35 |
| 2 Luke 8:22-39 | 18 Luke 14:1-24 |
| 3 Luke 8:40-56 | 19 Luke 14:25-35 |
| 4 Luke 9:1-17 | 20 Luke 15:1-32 |
| 5 Luke 9:18-36 | 21 Luke 16:1-13 |
| 6 Luke 9:37-50 | 22 Luke 16:14-31 |
| 7 Luke 9:51-62 | 23 Luke 17:1-19 |
| 8 Luke 10:1-24 | 24 Luke 17:20-37 |
| 9 Luke 10:25-42 | 25 Luke 18:1-17 |
| 10 Luke 11:1-13 | 26 Luke 18:18-34 |
| 11 Luke 11:14-36 | 27 Luke 18:35-43 & Luke 19:1-10 |
| 12 Luke 11:37-53 | 28 Luke 19:11-27 |
| 13 Luke 12:1-12 | 29 Luke 19:28-44 |
| 14 Luke 12:13-34 | 30 Luke 19:45-48 & Luke 20:1-2 |
| 15 Luke 12:35-59 | |
| 16 Luke 13:1-17 | |

NPC WORSHIP

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

TREKKERS

SUNDAY, APRIL 10 | 4:30 - 6:00 P.M. | ROOM 112

All 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are invited to join us as we continue reading the book, *Press Play* by Carlos Whitaker and learning how to be confident in our daily lives based on what God says about you! A meal will be provided. Just bring your Bible and a friend! In April, we'll talk about using what God has given you to stay strong.

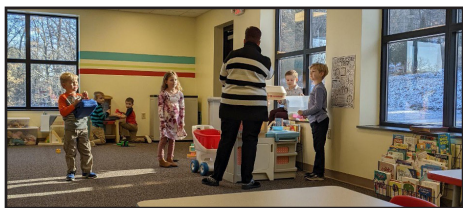
TYKES LEADER WANTED

Our new curriculum, *Explore the Bible*, offers lessons all the way down to babies and up to adults. We would like to find someone (or a few people) who would be willing to come into the Tykes room each week, read the story to them and then pray with them. Commitment is about 10 minutes each week. This is a very easy way to serve, which requires very little to no prep ahead of time. You would only need the usual requirements to serve in Children's Ministry — clearances and have attended NPC at least six months. We already have two others who are willing to get into a rotation to serve. Please contact Kelly Laird to get this ball rolling.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School is cruising along! In the kindergarten and first grade room, Miss Susan leads the kids each week in sharing how they are **PBJ**ing. Each week, a different child shares what he wrote in the **PBJ** journal when he took it home. And other kids get to share how they are **BLESS**ing others right now too! Can't wait to hear how they lived out the **J** part of **PBJ**.

In our Preschool Sunday School class, Miss Stacy loves on our kids! Recently, she taught the story that Jesus taught about being fishers of men. And her kids got to make a super cute fish craft too.



GAMES WANTED

Room 206, where we do a lot of babysitting, is in need of some gently used board games. We are looking for games that would serve kids ages 4-10. If you'd like to donate, contact Kelly Laird.



CHEN BAPTISMS

Congratulations to the Chen family! In February, Ethan (dad), Nate (son) and, Caroline (daughter) were all baptized. We rejoice with you at this great day!

KIDS' WORSHIP

We are looking for a few new faces to add to our Kids' Worship team. Why not try it out for the summer? We use a great curriculum which spells out everything you need to know to lead a lesson. And, our volunteer teams serve every 4-5 weeks! Contact Kelly if you'd like to get involved.

In Kids' Worship, we have been giving kids the time to ask God questions and then pray to Him and listen for His answer. Here are some recent great questions kids have asked. Enjoy!

Why aren't there miracles?
I ask you God, to learn about You.
Why is gold made as money?
Do you answer our prayers?
How did you make us?
Please help me try to be good and not to be nervous.
Why can't I see You?
God, I love you!
Why is gold rare?
How do you make friends?
God, please help my dad feel better.
If I see a donkey, can You make it talk?



VOLUNTEERS

Registration | March 13 - April 30

VBS Spark Studios is coming and we need volunteers! Whether you can help one morning or all five days during camp week or can only help ahead of time or could help clean up, VBS needs YOU! Consider one of the many roles you could play this year:

Aide	Karate Elective
Bible	Kickball Elective
Camp Doctor/Nurse	Lego Free Build Elective
Camp Store	Missions
Clean up	Nursery
Counselor	Painting Elective
Crafts	Photographer
Crafts Elective	Prayer Team
Dance Elective	Safety Team
Decorate	Sewing Elective
Drop Off/Pick Up Team	Snacks
Games	Water Day
Floater	Work Crew
Hand Lettering Elective	Worship Team

Camp is a week earlier this year, so we need to secure our volunteers sooner. Please register online as a volunteer if you can help this year! We would like to have our volunteers secure by the **end of April**.

CAMPERS

Registration | April 1 - May 13

It's time to register as campers! Registration is the whole month of April and just 13 days in May. Make sure to get your child or grandchild's spot in camp this year!

**CREATED
IN CHRIST
DESIGNED
FOR GOD'S
PURPOSE**

Camp Director | Kelly Laird
Senior Camp Director | Alison Sanders
Junior Camp Director | Kim Mycyk



**YOUTH
GROUP
SCHEDULE**

APRIL 3 Youth Group 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	APRIL 13 Small Groups 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.	APRIL 24 Youth Group 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
APRIL 10 Youth Group 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	APRIL 17 No Youth Group Due to Easter	APRIL 27 Youth Group 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.

NPC CONNECT

MAINTAINING MENTAL WELLNESS DURING A PANDEMIC

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

10:00 – 11:30 A.M. | ROOM 112

Stephen Ministry is sponsoring an April Event called, "Maintaining Mental Wellness During a Pandemic". Our very own NPC member, Kiley Librich, will be bringing her expertise and wisdom as a trained therapist to share with us. Even though the pandemic seems to be coming to a close, we might still have some lingering worries or concerns that can be affecting us in our day to day lives. Come hear what Kiley has to say. Any questions contact Rachel Sharpnack, Mark Sharpnack or Susan Meeneghan.



NP-SEE

WHAT GOD'S BEEN DOING

SUNDAY, APRIL 24 | 11:30 - 1:30 P.M. | BLUE ROOM

FIRST A STORY | On February 3, I woke up to an interesting email on my phone. The subject line read, "Front porch guest." The email read: "A homeless man is sleeping beside our church front door this morning." We came to find out later that this man's name is Joe. He is actually more of a traveler than a homeless man, and, on February 3, 2022, God had a plan for Joe that included North Park Church!

Keep in mind that, as part of **PBJ**, we have been praying for opportunities to share our faith. Over and over again I have been astounded at how God answers those prayers! Sometimes he brings us a total stranger, right to our doorstep, on the exact day that there is an early morning Men's Fellowship group scheduled to meet. That is what God did in the case of Joe!

The men in that group did not waste that opportunity! In fact, they blessed Joe employing all 5 of the ways to bless from our BAGELS acronym. After gently waking him from his slumber on the front stoop of the church, they AFFIRMED his personhood by inviting him to join them for their time together. Then they LISTENED to him, in fact they devoted most of the group time to hearing about Joe's traveling adventures. After the fellowship time ended, a few of the men invited Joe to EAT with them and gave him the GIFT of paying for his breakfast at Chubb's Diner, where they also shared JESUS and the gospel message with him. Then, one of the men SERVED Joe by giving him a ride to Cranberry.

Joe did not make a profession of faith that morning, but I can't help but wonder what God has in store for Joe next. The fact that God brought Joe that morning, not the morning before or the morning after, when there would not have been anything at the church for Joe, causes me to think that God has a plan for Joe's salvation.

God is doing amazing things! We are incredibly busy and there are so many things vying for our attention, so we often fail to see what God is doing, even when it is right in front of us. When we don't see what God has done and give Him the credit for doing it, we more easily forget Him, His power and His faithfulness, which then causes us to look to ourselves or other things that the world puts in front of us an attempt to satisfy our longings.

That's no good! So, we are going to take part of an afternoon to SEE what God is doing right here, in and through the many ministries of North Park Church!

THE DETAILS OF THE EVENT | Simply put, NP-SEE is a time that we are setting aside to hear about different ministries at North Park Church and, more specifically, to hear what God is doing in and through these ministries. God is at work in our church and we want you to SEE His splendor and majesty and give Him the glory for what He has been and is doing!

**How amazing are the
deeds of the LORD!
All who delight in Him
should ponder them.
Psalm 111:2**

We invite you to come, SEE, ponder, and delight in the amazing deeds of the Lord at NPC as we celebrate together on April 24.

We will learn about various ministries in our church, meet the leaders, hear testimony of God at work, participate in ministry related activities, and enjoy a delicious lunch together. It will be a fun time, full of joy and laughter as we recount a small portion of God's abundant grace and goodness to us!
- AMBER STITES

SIGN UP TODAY at northparkepc.org/events

MISSIONS UPDATE: GATEWAY

Dear North Park Family,

Later this year, Gateway will celebrate our 15th birthday. Originally a church plant from North Park, we are a church that ministers to the people of Slippery Rock and Grove City. Since both are college towns, we work with a good number of college students, as well as local folks.

Not only did you plant us, but you are significant partners with us on campus! Together with other churches in our presbytery, we partner with the CCO so Ben Makin can serve Christ through Gateway at both SRU and GCC. We are so grateful as we join in on what God is doing on campus. We are reaching more students than ever in our history, and in turn, they are becoming future church leaders, pastors, and new disciples.

For instance, let me introduce you to Simagen (pronounced Se-maug-an). Simagen is an SRU student who has been part of our church for some time. Earlier this year when he needed a ride to the airport, I gladly swung by his apartment to pick him up. As we rolled down 79, I asked him a question that I thought was simple enough, "How did you get connected to the Harbor and to Gateway?" For the rest of the ride, Simagen told me his story. Simagen was born in Ethiopia, and with his brother, lived there for the first few years of his life. His family went to church, and he started to grow in his faith. However, family turmoil led Simagen and his brother to be adopted by an American family stationed in Europe as they were in the military. Their new family brought stability in a number of areas, but it was not a Christian home. By the end of high school, they had moved stateside and settled in Colorado. Around the time for Simagen to begin college, his mother took a job at... Slippery Rock University! Simagen joined her and started classes at SRU. Also, this was right in the middle of the pandemic, so Simagen Zoomed into class and tried to get started.

Meanwhile, Gateway and the Harbor were working hard to adapt to all the COVID regulations so we could continue to connect with our community in the name of Christ. We posted our meeting times, and Simagen - full of questions about his faith - boldly showed up at the Harbor. Our students welcomed him, and he, in turn, continued to pursue his newly rekindled faith. Now, in 2022, Simagen is a regular and significant presence at the Harbor and on Sunday morning at Gateway. He is regularly reading Scripture all while learning to celebrate his faith in the context of a local church. We can't wait to see what is next.

Simagen's story is a powerful reminder of God's patience, pursuit, and providence. Simagen's church in Ethiopia prayed for him at his baptism, and they might have wondered how God would keep his promise. Meanwhile, God said (through what had to be a smile) - "Oh, don't worry about him. After a few continents and a million miles, I have a church in WEXFORD that is going to provide for the ministry that I'm going to use to welcome Simagen back to Me."

Thank you for your partnership at Grove City College and Slippery Rock University. God will continue to call the next generation to Himself, by God's grace, we get to be a part of it!

All for Christ,
Rev. Christopher White

SIERRA LEONE UPDATE

Last year during the height of the pandemic, through your generosity we raised over \$40,000 to help construct a church in Rokassa, Sierra Leone. Throughout the past year, the church building has been constructed and furnished with sound equipment and chairs. Those in Sierra Leone are grateful for your assistance in constructing this building that assists them in worshipping in the rainy and dry seasons. Some day, we look forward to worshipping God alongside these brothers and sisters in the age to come.

Here are some pictures of the completed church building.
Thank you North Park Church! - **PASTOR BEN**



**YOU'RE
INVITED**

EASTER
AT NORTH PARK CHURCH

APRIL 14

**Maundy
Thursday**

7:00 P.M. | Sanctuary
Communion service
No child-care available
Not Livestreamed

APRIL 17

**Resurrection
Reflection**

8:30 A.M. | Amphitheater
Breakfast Afterwards

Worship

10:15 A.M. | Sanctuary



ANNIVERSARIES

15 Joe & Joyce Wanninger

27 Brian & Laura Osmond
Carl & Carol Shoemaker

BIRTHDAYS

1 Jeanne Safreed

5 Susan Burke

Yvonne Darville

Allison LaBarre

Joe Wanninger

7 Joy Murphy

8 Jeff Mattson

9 Tim LaBarre

10 Elizabeth Arnold

11 Kelly Laird

Heather Mattson

12 Beth Watson

13 Laura Daly

13 Emily Faber

14 Dennis Johns

23 Tim Holt

24 Clint Van'tLand

25 Deb Holt

April Sanders

Rebekah Stites

26 Andrew Hoover

27 Chloe Havener

Bill Jacobs

Rick Rivero

28 Judy Jacobs

29 Joyce Kish